

## **Mike Kennedy's statement re: anti-bias law on Huckleberries:**

The fact that this ordinance request comes from one of the most important organizations we have in town, The Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations, is important. Regardless of one's feelings, biblical or otherwise, on homosexuality, this ordinance really shouldn't be that controversial. There is no mention of marriage or any of the other matters that are of great concern to some.

This is about equality, not social or political maneuvering. I would encourage everyone to read the Boise ordinance and read the statement issued by the Task Force today addressing some of the questions raised.

In response to Councilman Adams who called me out personally today on this agenda item, I made a clear point in my comments that I am a Christian, of the Roman Catholic variety. I am not a theologian and don't profess to be. I am occasionally chagrined by members of my church who speak for Catholics, but I am also far more often humbled by the members of the church who shun the high profile political initiatives in favor of actually feeding the poor, housing the homeless, and taking care of the least of our brothers and sisters. That to me is the mission of the church.

My most basic interpretation of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and the history of the better angels of my Roman Catholic church compel me to treat everyone equally under the secular law and with as much personal love and dignity as I can muster. I struggle with the second half of that but I'm still working.

Tony Stewart said something today that resonated with me (paraphrasing): "the law can't compel us to love one another, but it can compel us to treat one another lovingly" - in this case - with basic equal rights.

This is a secular matter in a multi-cultural, multi-religious world. And if I have to err, I will err on the side of human equality, human dignity, and basic human rights. Everything else is window dressing.

The preamble to the Constitution refers to our permanent goal of striving to form a more perfect union. I think this ordinance, small, unnecessary, and inconsequential as it may be to some, is working toward that larger goal. And to some people, I know this ordinance could well rekindle the hope that the system works for them, too. That's America to me.