



# Ads condemn Gay Games

by Joe Altwasser

VANCOUVER (CUP) — Religious and student leaders have condemned full-page newspaper advertisements signed by anonymous "christians" which claim that a gay athletic event will bring down the wrath of God onto Vancouver and the University of British Columbia.

Estimated to have cost \$15,000, the ads were published the first

weekend of November in the city's two daily papers and headlined "Time is running out."

The ads "are awful," said University of British Columbia United Church chaplain Brad Newcombe, "They may fuel homophobia and they also give religious backing to the persecution of a specific group in society."

"There is an absence of love in these words and an oppressive spirit in their goals. This denies justice and all people of faith and love need to speak out against such material.... These people are preaching a Christianity without Christ."

Controversy over Gay Games 1990 erupted a year ago when UBC initially refused to rent out facilities for the event, which will bring 5000 athletes to Vancouver from across the world.

UBC president David Strangway explained the decision at the time by saying "if it's a political statement they're trying to make, I don't think the university is the place to make political statements."

Strangway added that he couldn't understand why gay athletes didn't participate in "normal" athletic events: "Why should we become involved in a third variant of activities?"

He eventually reversed the decision.

Though chaplain Newcombe opposes censorship, he said ads which are discriminatory should be signed, "so there is a degree of accountability and responsibility for these type of ideas."

But advertising representative Susan Cornwall said it's a matter of freedom of the press.

The ads, Cornwall said, were sent to lawyers and given the go-ahead.

According to Cornwall, standard practice was followed in the placement of the ads. This requires only a box number and a billing address, which were provided. The ads also contained a phone number at which only a pre-recorded message could be heard.

Ian Haysom, Editor-in-Chief of the *Vancouver Province*, also defended their right to print the ads but said they were not endorsed from an editorial standpoint.

Mark Keister, Arts representative for the UBC student council, said he was not shocked by the ads because there has been a history of both printed and physical attacks on the gay community in Vancouver.

The *Vancouver Sun* has several times refused to publish advertisements submitted by gay groups.

Said Keister: "People say God told them to hate people and you can't argue with that."

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