

Cartoon created false parallel on Tebow, Collins

In an [editorial cartoon](#) published in the Star Tribune on May 4, Scott Stantis depicted two well-known athletes divulging personal information. The juxtaposition of the two distinctly different responses by the media seemed to imply some incongruity, perhaps even unfairness, perhaps even an anti-Christian bias.

But the cartoonist is wrong. For any of those types of contrast to occur, there would have to be some substantive parallel in the situations of the two statements. But there is none, only the superficial parallel set up by his depiction.

Any attempt to claim the situations are similar fails on at least two counts. [Tim Tebow](#) has proclaimed his Christianity on numerous occasions, first hitting the media back in his college days. Any additional statements are just repetition. Not news. It is much like an athlete who keeps claiming how great he is. Don't tell us. Show us by your performance. That goes for athletic accomplishments, and it goes for Christianity.

On the other hand, [Jason Collins](#) came out as gay. This was his first public statement on the subject. In fact, it was the first such public statement by an active professional basketball player. That's news. If he keeps proclaiming it after each victory or each triple-double, the media will tell him that's enough already.

But on a more important level, what makes the two situations different is the societal circumstances within which the statements were made. Christian protestations notwithstanding, we are still a Christian-saturated society. Drive almost anywhere, and you see crosses over Christian churches. Go to the mall, and you see T-shirts with New Testament Bible verses and neck chains with cross pendants, even Christian tattoos. While it may be assertive, even a little bold, to be outspoken about one's Christianity, it is not courageous. It fits right in with the larger culture.

But recent positive strides also notwithstanding, our society as a whole still tends to look askance at homosexuality. Unlike Christians in the United States, homosexuals truly have been persecuted, denied civil rights, bullied, even killed. Especially in an arena of machismo such as professional sports, it took real courage for Collins to come out. The fact that it took until 2013 for the first such public disclosure by an active NBA player is testament to that.

No parallel. No unfairness. The cartoonist got it wrong.

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