Narrator: Kathleen Saadat (KAS)
Interviewer: Cameron Chambers (CC)
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Excerpt from interview, lines 552-622

KAS: […] I can talk with people about changing the dynamic that we've always had. And I can talk with almost anyone, if they're willing to talk with me. I don't have to draw a line and say I won't talk to so and so. Yes I'll talk to Republicans, yes I will talk to people who don't like gay people, yes I would… I have a great story. My friend Frances Portillo does workshops and trainings for diversity. And she called me one day and she said, "I got this woman up from Southern Oregon who just does not like gay people, will you talk to her?" And I said, "Sure." And I go over to Frances' house and I spend a couple hours talking with this woman. Her religious beliefs are very strong and I said, "You know, I want you to do something with me, I want you to come and go to the gay church with me on Sunday." I said, "I'm not a member, I don't really go to church, but I'd like for you to come and see what that's like." And she said, "Okay." We got there and we're outside the church and I said, "You know they're going to think you're my girlfriend." And she laughed, and she said, "I don't care." I said, "Okay, let's go in." And we went in and—have you ever been to MCC [Metropolitan Community Church]?

CC: Is that the one on Broadway?

KAS: Yeah.

CC: Yeah.

KAS: I *love* their communion service, I love the way they do it.

CC: I've never been there for a service.

KAS: Well, they do a communion where, like if we wanted to go up as a family, we could go up and then we'd be given the communion.

CC: Together.

KAS: Yeah, together. Or if you wanted to up just with your partner or by yourself or, you know, and I just think it's a lovely way to do it. But I don't take communion. I'm a non-believer in that. Although I find it comforting, I know what is comforting is for me is memory of my childhood. So I don't take communion. Afterwards I asked her what she thought she said, "Wow, it's a great service." I said, "What did you think of the communion?" She said, "I really wanted to go up." I said, "Why didn't you?" She said, "I was waiting for you." And I said, "I'm so sorry, I just don't take communion." I'm not about taking people's religion away from them, I am about hoping they will look at it and see what the symbols say, and what the message is in the symbols. Especially messages about suffering and messages about self-righteousness, you know, don't like it. Anyway.

CC: But she... what was her experience?

KAS: She said to me, she said, "I don't know if I can ever say it's okay to be homosexual, but I do know that when people say things that aren't true now, when I go back home, south of Salem, I can say that's not true." I said, "Good." That's all you can get right now. That's wonderful! That's a big—if you don't talk to people, you can't get even that little bit of movement. When we were fighting Lon Mabon [founder of Oregon Citizens Alliance, the sponsor organization of Ballot Measure 9 which sought to amend the state's Constitution to prohibit it from recognizing sexual orientation in its operations and for public schools to teach homosexuality was abnormal and perverse] in '92 I went down to… what's the place with the caveman outside of it? It's either Monmouth or one of those cities down there. We're in a room and it's people of color and we're going to talk about Lon Mabon and fighting him, and I introduced myself, we go around the room, the last guy in the room says, "I think I don't belong here." I said, "Why not?" He said, "Because I support Lon Mabon." I said, "Please stay." He said, "Why?" I said, "Because we get to live on this planet together." And we talked about children and schools and roads and jobs and trees, in *addition*. So when it was over, he said, "Thank you for asking me to stay." I said, "Why?" He said, "Because I know now that you're not just about one thing." That's what you see when you're on the margins, nobody is about one thing. Nobody's about—ultimately, you can't be *just Black*, you gotta be a Black woman or a man, you gotta be a certain age, you gotta have a certain sexual orientation, you gotta have a certain background, level of education; you can't be *just Black*. And *just Black* won't take you anywhere, if you're talking about living in a peaceful world, which is what I'm talking about. It won't take you anywhere until you can connect with other people on the level of

your willingness, number one, to have compassion, to extend yourself, to accept from others things that they're willing to give to you. And that's just getting to that multi-faceted analysis of the world, which again, is a part of what I think happens when people who are marginalized—if they're not made sick by it, ‘cause I think a lot of people are—then you get to look at the world and say, "Hmm, yeah, okay, looks like this. Hmm, yeah, looks like that. Let's bring this together, let's see what we can do here." And I watched Avel [Gordly] do it with me, bring me in to places I would not have otherwise been, you know. *I'm sitting here,* [looks around] *Whoa, I'm sittin' here with some preachers.* I know how I got here, I know how I got here.