

On the Necessity of Traditional Marriage and the Natural Family to Social Peace and Order.

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For the first time in human history traditional marriage, being understood as marriage between one man and one woman has been redefined to include couples of the same gender in other parts of what is commonly known as “Western civilization.” Subsequently these same matrimonial arrangements are being pressed for in various parts of the United States; the most notable being Massachusetts which codified same-sex marriages in May 2005.

In light of such radical revisions to an institution as old as humanity itself it is imperative that we analyze, evaluate, and understand what, if any, adverse societal effects such revisions may produce.

Foundational to the current social debate related to marriage and the natural family is our understanding of the institution itself, as it is only due to the fact that marriage, as traditionally understood, has already suffered from a shift in what we think marriage is. Arguably it is this shift in how we as a society have come to perceive marriage that has made same-sex marriage conceivable.

The Sexual Revolution of the 1960s succeeded in lowering and ultimately abolishing all prior societal prohibitions against sex outside of marriage. This in turn disassociated sex from marriage as the only acceptable relationship for sexual relations. The result was that marriage was no longer necessary for sexual relations. This began the downward perception of marriage as a necessary and essential social institution. The result: Americans have become less likely to marry. This is reflected in a decline of nearly 50 percent, from 1970 to 2004, in the annual number of marriages per 1000 unmarried adult women.¹

Dr. David Popenoe, the leading researcher with the National Marriage Project at Rutgers University comments that, “It is important to note that the decline in marriage does not mean that people are giving up on living together with a sexual partner. On the contrary, with the incidence of unmarried cohabitation increasing rapidly, marriage is giving ground to unwed unions.”² Indeed, “between 1960 and 2004 the number of unmarried couples in America increased by nearly 1200 percent.”³ In fact, “over half of all first marriages are now preceded by living together, compared to virtually none 50 years ago.”⁴

With the increase in cohabitation there has naturally followed an increase in the number of children born to unwed parents. Over 40 percent of unwed households now contain children and the numbers are growing.⁵ The problem occurs in the fact that all of the available data confirms that these couples experience dissolution rates two to three times that of their married counterparts. This is logical when you consider that the social

support to marry, procreate and remain married is all but gone. This is the natural consequence of a diminished view of marriage and by further redefining the institution to include couples of the same-sex the social perception of and commitment to marriage will only further diminish and the societal consequences increase.

Scandinavia offers compelling proof of this statement.

Stanley Kurtz, research fellow at the Hoover Institute reported that, “In Sweden, the out-of-wedlock birthrate is 55%, Norway is 50%, and in Denmark 60% of firstborn children are born out-of-wedlock.

Again studies in these countries demonstrate that unmarried families break up at a rate two to three times that of married couples. This has only exacerbated the welfare state that is unparalleled in Scandinavia. No western nation has a higher percentage of public employees, public expenditures or higher tax rates than Sweden for example.

All of the Scandinavian countries mentioned have embraced de-facto same-sex marriage beginning with Denmark in 1989. The out-of-wedlock birth rates I mentioned earlier experienced their most dramatic increases in the decade following the acceptance of same-sex marriage in these countries.”⁶

Kurtz concludes, “This suggests that gay marriage is both an effect and a cause of the increasing separation between marriage and parenthood. As rising out-of-wedlock birthrates disassociate heterosexual marriage from parenting, gay marriage becomes conceivable. If marriage is only about a relationship between two people, and is not intrinsically connected to parenthood, why shouldn't same-sex couples be allowed to marry? It follows that once marriage is redefined to accommodate same-sex couples, that change cannot help but lock in and reinforce the very cultural separation between marriage and parenthood that makes gay marriage conceivable to begin with.”⁷

The real impact is upon children. Marriage represents society's profound interest in the manner and place in which children come into being and the subsequent stability of the environment in which they are raised. Thus marriage serves as the very cornerstone of civilization by providing the best possible conditions for the rearing of its future citizens.

Every study demonstrates that children from two biological parents overwhelmingly fare better in every category of social and psychological measurement. Conversely, those children raised in broken and fractured families suffer emotionally, psychologically, economically, and are more likely to commit crime, do drugs, and become pregnant out-of-wedlock than any others. According to Dr. David Popenoe, the acclaimed Rutgers University sociologist, “children are highly dependent for their development and success in life on the family in which they are born and raised, and a convincing mass of scientific evidence now exists pointing to the fact that not growing up in an intact nuclear family is one of the most deleterious events that can befall a child.”⁸

Contrary to the idea that same-sex couples are committed to monogamy within a lifelong committed relationship, researchers at Indiana University found that 43 percent of white male homosexuals had sex with five hundred or more partners and 28 percent had 1000 or more sex partners!⁹

Even among those same-sex couples that live in a so-called “committed” relationship with one partner, the research again demonstrates a very modified monogamy. In their book, *Male Couple*, the authors report that in a study of 156 males in homosexual relationships lasting from one to thirty-seven years: “Only seven couples (out of 156) have a totally exclusive sexual relationship, and these men all have been together for less than five years. Stated another way, all couples with a relationship lasting more than five years have incorporated some provision for outside sexual activity in their relationships.”¹⁰

Andrew Sullivan, the [former] homosexual editor of *The New Republic*, concedes in his book *Virtually Normal* that homosexual relationships are quite different. He contends that many homosexual households reflect “greater understanding of the need for extramarital outlets between two men than between a man and a woman.”

This family instability produces not only a social burden but also an increasing economic burden in the form of welfare and the ever-expanding cost of criminal prosecution and incarceration.

By further redefining marriage to mean anything it means nothing and the social support for marriage will only continue to decline. The U.S., despite a two-decade drop, (due mostly to fewer people marrying) already has one of the highest divorce rates in the world and among Western nations the U.S. has the lowest percentage of children being raised by biological parents.¹¹

Marriage reflects the natural moral and social law evidenced the world over. As the late British social anthropologist Joseph Daniel Unwin noted in his study of world civilizations, any society that failed to channel sex into marriage soon lost what he called “expansive energy” resulting in the loss of their creative and productive leadership which ultimately and in every instance led to their demise.¹²

In fact, no society in history has loosened sexual morality outside of man-woman marriage and survived. This is an indisputable historical fact. Analyzing studies of cultures spanning several thousand years on several continents, Harvard sociologist Pitirim Sorokin found that virtually all political revolutions that brought about societal collapse were preceded by a sexual revolution in which marriage and family were devalued.¹³

Giving same-sex relationships or out-of-wedlock heterosexual couples the same special status and benefits of traditional marriage would not be the expansion of a right but the destruction of a principle essential to the health and future of our civilization.

Lastly, society must resist the appeal of those who, in the name of “civil rights,” seek to redefine a fundamental and essential institution merely for the sake of legitimizing a particular lifestyle. It is this and not participation in marriage that is the objective of those who seek to codify same-sex marriage. Tom Stoddard, in his book, *Why Gay People Should Seek the Right to Marry*, admitted, “I am no fan of marriage.” He wrote that “gay marriage” was merely a way of forcing society to accept homosexuality because marriage “is the centerpiece of our entire social structure, the core of the traditional notion of ‘family.’”¹⁴

Homosexual activist Michaelangelo Signorile put it much more candidly when he wrote that activists should “fight for same-sex marriage and its benefits and then, once granted, redefine the institution of marriage completely, to demand the right to marry not as a way of adhering to society’s moral codes but rather to debunk a myth and radically alter an archaic institution. ...”¹⁵

It is only because traditional marriage has already been stripped of its significance and social status that marriage has become an “archaic institution.” Continuation down this present path will only further weaken our already fragile social commitment to the institution of marriage. I hasten to point out that our epidemic divorce rate, record number of fractured families, and all of the related societal effects have occurred within just one generation – imagine the state of the family in one or two more generations in the wake of legalizing same-sex marriage.

Lawmakers have a profound responsibility to enact public policies that preserve, strengthen and encourage marriage and the natural family as an essential social institution. History is replete with examples of failed civilizations; every single one of which began their march toward social suicide by undermining marriage in its strictly defined role of regulating sexual behavior.

It is the height of ignorance or supreme arrogance that leads us to believe we will somehow avoid the inevitable consequences that have befallen every prior civilization that has abandoned its commitment to marriage and the natural family.

Same-sex marriage will not strengthen our society’s perception of and commitment to marriage, quite the contrary, same-sex marriage will only reinforce the message that traditional marriage is indeed “archaic” and therefore *should* be discarded.

Endnotes:

¹ Barbara Dafoe Whitehead & David Popenoe, *The State of Our Unions: The Social Health of Marriage in America 2005*, The National Marriage Project, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

² Ibid., p. 16

³ Ibid., p. 29

⁴ Larry Bumpass and Hsien-Hen Lu, *Trends in Cohabitation and Implications for Children's Family Contexts in the U. S.*, *Population Studies* 54 (2000) 29-41

⁵ Whitehead & Popenoe, p. 29

⁶ Kurtz, Stanley, *The End of Marriage in Scandinavia The "conservative case" for same-sex marriage collapses*, *Weekly Standard*, 02/02/2004, Volume 009, Issue 20

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Whitehead & Popenoe, p. 11

⁹ A.P. Bell, M.S. Weinberg and S.K. Hammersmith, *Sexual Preference*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1981

¹⁰ David McWhirter and Andrew Mattison, *The Male Couple: How Relationships Develop* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1984), pp. 252, 253.

¹¹ Whitehead & Popenoe, p. 4

¹² Unwin, Joseph Daniel, Ph.D., *Sexual Regulations and Cultural Behavior*, address given March 27, 1935, to Medical Section of the British Psychological Society and published originally by Oxford University Press. Reprint: (Trona, California: Frank M. Darrow, 1969).

¹³ Sorokin, Pitirim. *The American Sex Revolution*. (Boston: Porter Sargent Publishers, 1956.)

¹⁴ Stoddard, Thomas, *Why Gay People Should Seek the Right to Marry*, *Lesbians, Gay Men and the Law*. William B. Rubenstein, ed. (New York: New York Press, 1993) pp. 398, 400.

¹⁵ Michaelangelo Signorile, "Bridal Wave," *Out*, December/January Double Issue, 1994, p. 161.