

WILLIAM MURCHISON

The cult of non-procreation

A few days before Christmas, President Bush told Diane Sawyer he would support — “if necessary” — a constitutional amendment codifying marriage as the relationship between a man and a woman, and only a man and a woman.

Came the New York Times, a few days after that, with the news of a new poll showing majority public disapproval of gay “marriage.”

A noisy national argument, precipitated by the courts, is in the works. It is too bad. There is no need today for one more enpurpling, vein-swelling controversy in our national life. But as this particular controversy is headed our way, it behooves us to give some thought to the meaning of marriage: the unchanging meaning of marriage, if you please.

The argument in behalf of such unions is testy and disputatious. It says, flatly, to those who defend traditional marriage, “You’re wrong.”

Wrong? inquires the other side. Wrong, how? Wrong, the accusing side comes back, in terms

of denying to same-sex couples the comforts of an institution proven nourishing for heterosexuals. What’s good for one sexual persuasion is good, supposedly, for another persuasion.

Except that if it is, how come we are just now hearing about it? Is it something we didn’t know before or might have known but for our blind bigotry?

Well, no, actually. Heterosexual marriage is rigorously logical. So is it exquisitely, exuberantly defensible in theological terms (see the Book of Common Prayer), but the merest mention of theology turns off self-styled foes of “fundamentalism,” so let’s momentarily shut the church door. Why should society prefer heterosexual marriage to variant kinds?

As it happens, a man and a woman go together in a way — blush, blush — that same-sex couples find utterly impossible and always will. There must be a reason, right?

Right. No heterosexual relationship, no procreation. No procreation, no human future. That is where the state’s interest in

this thing comes in. It comes in also in consideration of the massive evidence supporting the heterosexual family as the most successful setting for training up the products of conception, namely, children. Yes, we know all about the child-beating morons who disgrace marriage. They aren’t even a patch on the loving and hard-working parents who far outnumber them. I can’t imagine anyone who grew up with such parents favoring the undermining of traditional marriage.

You can say, of course, so what? Marriage for the non-procreative, ah. Why should that be skin off the nose of the procreative? Because to contradict the underlying reason for marriage is to ask who needs this thing anyway. Its purpose becomes no purpose: Just a thing you might do if you felt like it and not do if you didn’t. Procreation becomes in that event, oh, just a sideline.

That is the irony of this thing and the reason we are having this discussion. For Western society, procreation is much less than the awe-inspiring goal and duty we once, so to

speak, conceived it as being — through theological or secular reasoning, either one. The bearing and rearing of children is today much more a choice — an option — than ever before in history. You can do it if you want. If not, there’s always abortion.

The matrix of the gay-union culture is the abortion culture, which actively promotes sterility and the refusal of procreation. As in the gay-“marriage” debate, the social premises for restricting abortion came under constitutional attack. The attack succeeded. To bear children, not to bear children — the U.S. Supreme Court couldn’t have cared less. And said so, in *Roe vs. Wade*. We shouldn’t be surprised today to see the essentially procreative nature of marriage called irrelevant to the “purposes” of marriage — whatever purposes remain once we decide runny-nosed children aren’t so important to society after all.

The imposing opposition to gay “marriage” may indicate that, nutty as our society may lately have become, we aren’t yet totally nuts.

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