

Same-Sex Marriage: We're Playing Chess, Not Checkers

by Doug Mainwaring, March 20th, 2013

Just as chess requires players to seriously consider every possible consequence of their moves, we need to seriously consider every possible consequence of the push for same-sex marriage, especially for children.

In our sometimes misguided efforts to expand our freedom, selfish adults have systematically dismantled that which is most precious to children as they grow and develop. That's why I am now [speaking out against same-sex marriage](#).

By the way, [I am gay](#).

A few days ago I testified against pending same-sex marriage legislation in Minnesota's Senate Judiciary and House Civil Law Committees.

The atmosphere at these events (I've also testified elsewhere) seems tinged with unreality—almost a carnival-like surrealism. Natural law, tradition, religion, intellectual curiosity, and free inquiry no longer play a role in deliberations. Same-sex marriage legislation is defended solely on grounds of moral relativism and emotions.

Pure sophistry is pitted against reason. Reason is losing.

Here's the problem: The national discussion of same-sex marriage treats the issue like a game of checkers, where opponents can quickly gain each other's pieces without much forethought about the consequences. This unreflective view of the discussion has prevented any real debate.

In years past, defenders of marriage found it easy to win the battle on the checker board. Appeals to religion and tradition won hands down almost effortlessly. While same-sex marriage advocates argued for a more thoughtful consideration of the topic, they were mostly just bulldozed over.

The tide has turned. Same-sex marriage proponents now have all the "kings" on the board, and rule it. One only needs to consider media headlines from the last few weeks. We are bombarded with approvals of same-sex marriage. To the casual onlooker, not steeped in this issue, it would seem that conservatism has embraced same-sex marriage. Each day brings fresh news of Republican political elites, Fortune 500 companies, NFL members, and even Dirty Harry himself, Clint Eastwood, throwing their support behind genderless marriage.

The game we are actually playing is chess, not checkers. This sounds confusing, because chess and checkers are played on the exact same sixty-four square game board. Checkers is easy and it's fast. It's one of the first games children learn how to play. Chess is hard, requiring thought about the intended and unintentional consequences of every single move that may or may not be made.

In developing their goals for policy and law, politicians often look no further than the next election cycle. They're concerned about votes. Supporting same-sex marriage now looks like a winner for them.

It also looks like a winner for media outlets, concerned about revenues and readership, and for large corporations, eager to polish their images and create goodwill. Few of these outlets are interested in playing chess because a quick win at checkers is more important to them.

The sense of urgency regarding same-sex marriage, now palpably frenetic, is in itself a sign of our national discussion's devolution into nothing more than slogans and emotions.

Our nation's individual state legislatures and courts—including the Supreme Court—need to apply the brakes. Now.

As in chess, the unintended consequences deserve sound consideration.

Genderless marriage now enjoys an aura of equality and fairness, which suggests that the framers of the Fourteenth Amendment had same-sex marriages in mind as they penned their magnificent giant leap forward for humanity. While this situation is highly unlikely, those who selfishly seek additional "rights" for themselves have found their justification in the penumbra they now sense surrounding legitimate civil rights.

Same-sex marriage will not expand rights and freedoms in our nation. It will not *redefine* marriage. It will *undefine* it.

This isn't the first time our society has *undefined* marriage. No-fault divorce, instituted all across our country, sounded like a good idea at the time. Its unintended consequence was that it changed forever the definition of marriage from a permanent relationship between spouses to a temporary one. Sadly, children became collateral damage in the selfish pursuits of adults.

Same-sex marriage will do the same, depriving children of their right to either a mom or a dad. This is not a small deal. Children are being reduced to chattel-like sources of fulfillment. On one side, their family tree consists not of ancestors, but of a small army of anonymous surrogates, donors, and attorneys who pinch-hit for the absent gender in genderless marriages. Gays and lesbians demand that they have a "right" to have children to complete their sense of personal fulfillment, and in so doing, are trumping the right that children have to both a mother and a father—a right that same-sex marriage tramples over.

Same-sex marriage will *undefine* marriage and *unravel* it, and in so doing, it will *undefine* children. It will ultimately lead to *undefining* humanity. This is neither "progressive" nor "conservative" legislation. It is "regressive" legislation.

Nowhere on any marriage license application in any state are the applicants asked, "Do you love each other?" Yet this is the basis on which same-sex marriage proponents seek to change our laws. Is the state really in the business of celebrating our romantic lives?

The mantra I heard repeatedly in Minnesota was that "marriage is about love, commitment, and responsibility." But these three things are not the state's interests in marriage. Marriage, from the state's perspective, is about kids. Period. That's the reason the institution exists. We should tremble at and fear the notion of undoing it.

For a nation that has no trouble selfishly creating a seventeen-trillion-dollar (and growing) deficit it will soon hand off to its children and grandchildren, perhaps this is asking too much. But for the sake of all children and those yet to be born, we need to slow down and seriously consider the unintended consequences of undefining marriage. Otherwise, we risk treating our progeny as expendable pawns, sacrificed in the name of self-fulfillment. We can do better than that.

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