

Below is a letter from Laura Jane, received in October of 2003, complaining about the position of the Defenders of Marriage group. It is followed by my reply to her letter.

To the Defenders of Marriage:

What a crock of NONSENSE!!! I'm appalled that anyone would deny any people who are in love the opportunity to publicly declare their love for each other in the form of a marriage.

And may I remind all you well educated people that marriage was started simply as a way of combining two families' assets. There will always be heterosexual couples, having babies and furthering our species. It takes all kinds of people to make up this world, and our communities and it always has. Same sex couples aren't going anywhere, you can no longer ignore them or keep them in their proverbial closets. There is no harm in allowing them the same rights and freedoms that we all enjoy, the same rights and freedoms that blacks, women, immigrants and other minorities have fought so hard to have, to be part of this society, civilly and equally.

Wow, receiving and seeing HATE propaganda like this makes me think, you guys should go get your white hoods and fiery cross out, but I guess we are all entitled to our opinions, even if it is hate shrouded in polite conversation.

God bless free speech!

Laura Jane

October, 2003

Dear Laura Jane

This is an unsolicited response to your letter to the defenders of marriage. While I applaud the passion of your letter, I find it misses the mark on a number of important distinctions, so I am commenting on those.

* It is not true "that marriage was started simply as a way of combining assets." Combining assets is a good practical reason to get married, especially because of the way most countries treat married couples from a tax point of view (though this is far less attractive than it used to be). But the institution of marriage has always been primarily a social means of ensuring procreation and the subsequent protection of dependent children. Accordingly, every society in history has made special rules and granted special legal and tax privileges and protections for opposite sex couples only, to ensure this protection and to lure single men and women into marriage.

* These special privileges and benefits have been offered only to opposite sex couples because it is only their union (union that carries the possibility of procreation) that society has, and ought to have any interest in promoting. To those who say this is discrimination, I answer. Of course! All public policy is by its very nature discrimination. It is positive discrimination, with a very beneficial social result as its goal. If public policies did not discriminate in this way (if they did not have any purpose) they would not be policies; they would just be general government handouts to everyone. That is why it is impossible to find a true public policy that does not discriminate. For example, single moms, veterans, senior citizens, and so on, get payments from government that others who do not fit those categories do not. These policies discriminate for a reason. So do the marriage laws.

* The state has no business getting involved in marriage so that “people who are in love” would have “the opportunity to publicly declare their love for each other in the form of marriage.” In fact the state, government, has no particular interest in love for its own sake. Nor should it have.

* “Love” in the romantic sense that I am sure you and most other moderns mean, has not traditionally been an important factor in marriage, even in the West, until the last couple of centuries or so. Today it is overemphasized in the Hollywood sense almost to the exclusion of marital loyalty, fidelity, chastity, honour, financial support, friendship, endurance, kindness, temperamental fit, and so on...

* Until almost yesterday, the Western world has tried very hard to teach us that feelings of romantic love in themselves are not a warrant for very much. In fact, they often deceive us and obscure our own true natures and those of our loved ones. Love is blind. For we may love the wrong people, or the wrong things, or the wrong behaviours. In other words, in our tradition we have until very recently always distinguished good love from bad love. For example, selfishness is bad love. So is love of stealing, or narcissism, or pedophilia, or necrophilia, or bestiality, and so on. There are hundreds of kinds of bad love. For a very long time, homosexual love (no one has ever denied it is a form of love) was considered bad love. I still consider it so. For two simple reasons: first, it is profoundly unnatural; and second, it simply cannot not fulfill the primary purposes of sex or society, which is to encourage marriage, procreation, and the protection of offspring of the marriage.

* You argue that “it takes all kinds of people to make up this world and our communities, and it always has.” True. But communities become communities only because they share certain values and understandings. Without these, they are not communities. They are just a collection of people. There has never been a viable “community” or culture in which “anything goes.” If I told you that NAMBLA, the North American Man-Boy Love Association based in New York (with 10,000 members) wants to remove the age of consent for sexual relations so that older men can

“have sex” as the expression goes, with little boys as young as four, would you say we ought to allow that, so we can include everyone and have a better “community”? I doubt it. So then you would be agreeing to a limitation that you think helps constitute a viable and healthy community. This is what most of us are doing with respect to homosexual marriage.

* Keeping them in the closet? In fact, the modern conservative deal with homosexuals has always been - we’ll leave you alone if you leave us alone. The reaction, if any, from traditionalist such as myself, has come because the radical homosexual movement started breaking the deal about 50 years ago. They began by attacking normal society. They wanted teachers to teach and promote homosexuality as a viable choice for our children; they wanted gay marriage; they wanted to adopt, etc. So they got a reaction (but are winning what they want nevertheless).

* “Same rights and freedoms”: Homosexual Canadians are citizens under our Charter, and as such have always had the exact same rights and freedoms as you and I. But this does not mean that you or I should have the same protections and benefits as everyone else. For example, neither you nor I are single moms, or veterans, or senior citizens. So why should we get their benefits? Is that discrimination? And if not, why not? And if homosexuals refuse to marry someone of the opposite sex, why should they get the benefits and protections of marriage that go with that? At any rate, you should be aware that homosexuality is not mentioned anywhere in the Charter as a “right.” That idea is a fiction that was read into the charter by liberal judges. It does not exist in itself.

* Which leads me to the word “rite.” A rite is by definition a socio-cultural ceremony that signifies something important to society (marriage, baptism, confirmation, bar mitzvah, etc.). In the rite of marriage a man and a woman do not merely declare their love for each other. They declare it to society. Society is the third marriage partner, and should not be forgotten. But as I said, society has an interest in marriage only for the purposes of procreation, and not for love. After all, if two people want to live together for any reason, including simply because they love each other, they have always been able to do so. No one has ever stopped them. And nothing more needs to be done by them than to pay the rent. But if they want the special legal and economic/tax protections and privileges of a married couple (that is, of a couple that has a very high likelihood of procreating) then they have to be two people of the opposite sex. That has always been society’s deal. And it is a reasonable and effective one. Without the opposite sex stipulation, I do not see why marriage should exist at all as a rite, since two adults do not need protection for any particular reason. The children of the union do, but the adults do not.

* More on legal rights: For millennia, the rights of society have been prior to (more important than) the rights of individuals. Only recently, under the influence of egalitarian democracy (our original form of democracy was not at all egalitarian) have we seen a widespread switch. So now people like you are arguing that the rights of individuals ought to be prior to society’s rights. I disagree. I think that is a dangerous mistake that has mortally endangered the health of society and at the same time, and for this reason, feeds us into the hands of big government. That is

because society, when its rights were considered prior to those of individuals, was very strong and acted as a buffer between the free individual and the grasping state. Society always used to say “hands off” to overbearing governments. But no more. Individual Rights talk has put an end to this power of society. The result is that now we are all far more vulnerable to government policies and therefore far more subjected to politically-correct and the flawed logic of statements like the ones you are using.

* It is an error to equate homosexuality with “blacks.” A homosexual person is only distinguished from someone else by his or her behaviour, and not by any known innate and unchangeable characteristic such as colour. Whenever society sets out to label any behaviour as a “right,” it is headed for trouble. For example, there is already an international movement attempting to get pedophilia (also a behaviour) accepted as a right. See the journal “Paedika” on the web, for these arguments.

* Western marriage has always rested on four legs, like a chair: you must marry someone of the opposite sex; only one person at a time; not someone beneath a certain age; and not a close blood relation. But once you knock one of these legs out, there is no logical argument to preserve the others. There is a moral argument. But not a logical one. And this mode of attack (the logic of individual rights, etc.) has been trying (successfully) to eliminate morality as a ground to defend marriage. For people like me, moral reasons for public policies are more important than mere logical ones. I like the fact that public policies discriminate positively, and am not bothered that this is not logical (by which most people mean, not equal).

* Hate. Your letter actually seems more hateful than the material you argue against, which is attempting to defend the family and traditional marriage, and that I consider a noble pursuit. At any rate, I think we should all be independent thinkers and debate on the merits of the case, and not stoop to name-calling.

* I would be interested to know if you actually have a reasoned defense of homosexuality. For I have tried, but have never been able to find one that stands up. In fact I don’t think there is a good social, biological, psychological, theological, medical, or moral argument in its defense.

* To wit: homosexuality is arguably bad for society because it repudiates procreation, and the hard work of marriage and the raising of the children of the marriage. It is manifestly unnatural biologically (this is a no-brainer); there is significant professional psychological opinion that it is an emotional disorder (and by the way, the last psychologist I met who had treated over 400 homosexual patients, Dr. Daniel Cappon of York University, said they were “just as treatable as anyone else.” Like him, most therapists report a 60-70% recovery rate); every religion in the world rejects it as unnatural, and against God’s will, and objectively wrong; I don’t know if God exists or not. But I don’t know that He doesn’t, either. So I listen carefully to that advice. Medically, homosexual behaviour is by far the most dangerous behaviour we can imagine,

except perhaps for poisoning ourselves slowly. Ottawa tells us that about 80% of the 20,000 AIDS deaths in Canada over the past 20 years are homosexual males. It is the most dangerous possible lifestyle to promote to our children and to society at large. Finally, there is simply no moral defense I can find. Except that homosexuals should be left alone. Which I support. From a compassion point of view, I also think they should be offered help, so they at least have some social support and a chance to escape their condition.

* But if as adamant defenders and practitioners of unnatural and anti-social behaviour they want to brainwash my kids in schools, alter textbooks, change reasonable laws governing sex, marriage, and adoption, and so on, then they have declared war on normal society, and ought to be resisted.

So I resist.

William Gairdner