

Gay marriage or 'Gay Shame'?

Written by Eric Walberg Эрик Вальберг/ Уолберг □□□□□ □□□□
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It's official: gay marriage is as legit as marriage between a man and woman. Dissenters to this new self-proclaimed truth are pilloried as dinosaurs or bigots. The Pope is an object of ridicule, as is, of course, Islam. Bakers who refuse to take an order for a gay couple's wedding cake are convicted of discrimination and given a [hefty fine](#) .

The 'yeas' have triumphed among straights (heterosexuals) in the secular, rich West, where gaylib established itself 50 years ago as the latest trendy social movement. Large and popular Gay Pride Day marches in June have more straights than gays in attendance, and floats by (straight) Google employees, Starbucks, what-have-you, are the centrepieces. June has been declared 'gay pride month' in Canada, the US and much of western Europe, commemorating the 1969 Stonewall riots, a series of spontaneous, violent (yes!) demonstrations against a police raid that took place June 28, 1969, at the Stonewall Inn in the Greenwich Village.

Legalization of homosexual activity came both before (UK and Canada) and after 'Stonewall', and "buggery", the last frontier of sexuality (for both gay and straight), was grudgingly removed

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from the legal code, with only a few US states still holdouts. Of course, this is all part of the western secular world bubble, though Russia legalized homosexuality in 1993 and China decriminalized it in 1997.

Gay marriage and the state: win-win

Gay marriage became the focus of the 'struggle' in the 21st century, the final frontier. Why is gay marriage so important to activists? Civil unions are perfectly adequate to cover the secular legal issues of divorce. Those who opt for marriage should presumably be religious, but there's not much left of religion these days, so what's the big deal?

The gay Christian Metropolitan Community Church (222 member congregations in 37 countries) led the campaign for government approval and it paid off. Today, MCC congregations around the world perform more than 6,000 same-sex marriage ceremonies annually. Some gays are sincere Christians and reform Jews, but marriage is being embraced by secular, non-religious gays, who rarely frequent a church, even the MCC. Why? Is it just the latest fashion? Or is it a recognition that marriage is as a kind of commitment beyond just sex and material needs? Or is it more a sign of acceptance by straight society? 'We are just as good as you.'

Why would the state and media embrace it, coolly throwing aside millennia-old legal and public traditions? The legislative drive to legalize marriage is a sign of how insignificant these traditions are in our secular world. Most Protestant Christian churches gave in to state and media pressure with little resistance. Only the Catholic Church, Islam and Orthodox Judaism are holdouts.

Gay marriage is suddenly as kosher as 'motherhood', or rather 'parenthood' -- as 'mother' and 'father' too are being relegated to the dustbin of history. Ontario Premier Kathleen Gwynne tried (so far, unsuccessfully) to [change all government documents](#) and laws to erase those supposed anachronisms from our minds. Parents can now be 'two mommies' or 'two daddies'.

Marriage bandwagon?

The loud voices touting marriage are not necessarily representative of gays. According to Gallup, 11.4% of LGBT men are married to a same sex partner. 13.2% of LGBT men are married to an opposite sex spouse, which would mean more gay men are married to women than other men. Roughly half of straight Americans are married. This suggested gays are actually far less interested in marriage--gay or straight--than the broader population is.

Many homosexuals reject marriage, calling themselves "queer" in defiance to what they see as a trivialization of their uniqueness. There is even a [Gay Shame movement](#), rejecting the commercialization and mainstreaming of sexual nonconformists. Some, for religious reasoning, who hesitate to tamper with millennia-old traditions, some, for the misuse of language -- What can 'two husbands' possibly mean? What do the two pictures above -- 2 straight-looking middle class guys vs a flaming queen -- have in common?

Many take pride in their radical, slightly subversive nature and history. Where would western

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civilization be without the culture that sexual nonconformers have produced over thousands of years? Culture means a critical analysis of society, best done by outsiders, a love of beauty for its sake alone, without the distractions of sex, or a starving family to support.

Gay marriage - a western stopgap

That said, given the decadence of western society since WWII, where 'anything goes', where AIDS and STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) are of epidemic proportions, and where gay male-fueled promiscuity is now the norm for both gays and straights, the less cynical supporters of this new 'morality' see there's a problem, and implicitly realize it is not a stable state of affairs.

The sexual instinct is a very uncontrollable, dangerous impulse. In Plato's *Republic*, a friend asks Sophocles: "How are you in regard to sex, Sophocles? Can you still make love to a woman?" "Hush man," the poet replied, "I am very glad to have escaped from this, like a slave who has escaped from a mad and cruel master."

That is why historically marriage became the foundation of civilization everywhere, why the violation of marriage bonds is (or was) considered the worst sin in Christianity, Judaism and Islam. With the rise of secularism and the waning of Christianity and Judaism, only Islam maintains this. The eagerness of gays to join in the marriage ritual ironically reflects the realization by gays themselves that maybe the old ritual is not such a bad thing, and is a good way to tame the beast.

Get married, live longer

Monogamy appears to be gaining the ascendancy again, replacing promiscuity as the long-term goal in social life. In the first place for physical health reasons, including mental well-being. Studies confirm for both straight and gay that having a committed monogamous relationship extends life, [improves the quality of life](#) . Marriage is the most sophisticated version of monogamy, as a sacred commitment, not just a casual agreement, reflecting both the power of the sex drive in our lives, the need to control it in the service of our own selves, and of society at large.

Now, when population growth is a world problem, 'barren' marriages are not so unusual, where foster children are many, and there is a huge and growing population of refugees, 'two daddies' can be an acceptable alternative to no parents at all. The issue of surrogate mothers and sperm donation is perhaps, then, the last of the last frontier, something for rich, designer parent wannabes. The moral issue there is to say the least, cloudy.

The international branch of western gaylib would have this new scenario being shaped in the West's Petri dish extended to the whole world, by force if necessary (as the proverbial missionary handmaidens of imperialism). This is most unlikely to succeed. Far better to deal with our precarious western cultural bubble and make it less self-destructive all round.

What's to be proud of?

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Perhaps gay marriage is a hint of a return to morality and spirituality in our relationships. So I would not spurn attending a gay marriage in principle, though you won't catch me at a Gay Pride march. Gays are humans and deserve civil rights. They long ago won them Canada, and marches on Yonge St today will not do gays in Russia or Egypt any good.

What's there to be proud of? No one wants to be gay, and no parent wants their child to be gay. It's something to be accepted and dealt with by you and your relatives. A Gay Pride march is really the latter day equivalent of a St Patrick's Day Parade, a quaint reminder of a minority, once repressed, now celebrated or pitied (or to be gawked at, like visiting a zoo).

Andrew Holleran, in *Dancer from the Dance* (1978) captures the bittersweet tragedy of being born gay:

I don't think two men can love each other ... in that way. It will always be a sterile union, it will always be associated with guilt. Sometimes I think that God was sitting up above the world one day, after He had created it and someone said 'Now what could we throw in to spoil it? You've created such a perfect existence, how could it go amok?' Someone said, 'Confuse the sexes. Have the men desire men instead of women, and the women desire women.' Life would be marvelous if we weren't homosexual. To grow up, to fall in love, to have children, grow old and die. But then God threw in that monkey wrench. As if out of sheer mischief!

When those affected realize their dilemma, they have to work hard to make their antisocial lifestyle work – for themselves and society. It will always mean higher suicide rates and social isolation. The 'gay ghetto' is here to stay. So good luck with your marriage vows. The odds of 'till death do us part' are probably less than one in two, given the stats for straight marriages. But it may make your hard life a little less hard, and disrupt society a little less.