
Why Children Need Natural Marriage

Children have a right to a mother and a father. This right is more than a sentimental tie to social custom; it is based on an iron law of biology. We are all created male and female. Although we have devised mechanisms in the last twenty years that allow us to circumvent traditional fatherhood and motherhood, a new life can still not be created without male and female genetic material. Significantly, these artificial means display a grave lack of respect for human dignity.

Biological families are the healthiest units of society. It has been said that the family is the best department of health, education, and welfare. Author Caitlin Flanagan said in a 2009 TIME magazine cover story, “There is no other single force causing as much measurable hardship and human misery in this country as the collapse of marriage. It hurts children, it reduces mothers’ financial security, and it has landed with particular devastation on those who can bear it least: the nation’s underclass.”[1]

In a recent Washington Times op-ed, Janice Shaw Crouse noted that in spite of “40 years of distorted data and misrepresentation about the questions related to family structure, there are literally thousands of studies agreeing that the best family structure for children’s well-being is the married-couple family with a mom and dad. The studies also agree on the social costs of family disintegration. American taxpayers pay an enormous price for family fragmentation: divorce, unwed childbearing, crime, drug abuse, education dropouts, domestic violence, chronic illness, poverty and foster care. This tremendous body of research, however, does not deter those who have a vested interest in seeing the current negative trends continue and seeing the institutions of marriage and family—as they traditionally have been composed—disintegrate beyond functionality.”[2]

A coalition of nontraditional-marriage advocates argue that it is better for children to be raised by loving, committed, “intentional” parents, regardless of sexual complementarity or even number, than to be raised by biological parents in dysfunctional or broken homes. The Commission on Parenthood’s Future examined this assertion in depth in a report released in October 2011. It noted that children conceived artificially often struggle with confusion and longing to know their biological parents. It also emphasized that children raised by same-sex guardians are only just coming of age: no comprehensive study has been done on their personal health and the health of their families, but their sense of the merits of their family structure is likely to be extremely complicated.[3]

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that the well-being of children, as the weakest and most vulnerable members of society, should be of paramount importance in considering public policy. Notwithstanding the known harms to children of undermining marriage and the probable risks of condoning divergent family structures, some fence-sitters might not mind letting marriage be redefined anyway. But this revision would immediately create conscience problems in the social sphere as same-sex advocates took their agenda to the schools.

Parents have a right to raise their children according to moral codes, including those of the Western religious traditions, and our Western educational tradition indicates that children have a right to learn in environments where freedom of thought is respected. These principles have generally not been honored in the practices of homosexual advocacy groups. Public policy is for the common good first and foremost. This concern weighs heavily against the legal adoption of same-sex “marriages.” ■

[1] Flanagan, Caitlin. “Is There Hope for the American Marriage?” TIME. 2 July 2009. <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1908434,00.html>

[2] Crouse, Janice Shaw. “I do’ does matter.” The Washington Times. 7 February 2012. www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/feb/7/i-do-does-matter/

[3] Marquardt, Elizabeth. One Parent or Five: A Global Look at Today’s New Intentional Families. 2011. <http://www.familyscholars.org/assets/One-Parent-or-Five.pdf>

