**Court Decision Will Renew Campaign for Marriage**

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**The long-awaited US Supreme Court ruling** on the definition of marriage is as bad as we had feared. The *Obergefell* ruling will have harmful long-term effects on the family, the church, self-government and society. Each one of the four dissenters wrote his own opinion, to distance himself from a decision that will surely rank as disgraceful in the history of American jurisprudence.

I have only one point of disagreement with the general consensus: I do not think this needs to be a disaster for the Church. In fact, I believe this could be our finest hour.

Just how harmful is this ruling? How did we end up in this predicament? And is there any way forward to healing this culture in a lasting and Christ-like way?

**How the Ruling is Harmful**The Court’s cavalier disrespect for the rights of children is its most striking feature. Redefining marriage redefines parenthood. Up until now, marriage has been the primary institutional structure that attaches mothers and fathers to each other, and to their children.

With *Obergefell*, this historic social purpose of marriage has come to an end. Nothing remains of marriage in Justice Kennedy’s telling but a government registry of friendships. Of course, no one truly needs a government registry of friendships. We will soon hear calls to abolish even this vestigial form of marriage.

So how **will society attach children to adults**, in the post-*Obergefell* world?

* Parenthood will no longer be considered a natural reality to be recorded by the government, but a creation of the State for the benefit of adults
* Some children will have a legally recognized right to know both of their parents. Other children will be blocked by the State from knowing both parents.
* Some children will have three or more people named as parents on their birth certificates.
* People related to the child neither through birth nor adoption will demand parental rights. Family courts will adjudicate these disputes on a case-by-case basis, using subjective criteria.
* Parenthood by contract among Intended Parents will become legally enforceable by the states
* Third Party Reproduction will continue unregulated and unabated. By the time the general public figures out that this is a form of human trafficking, baby-selling and a human rights abuse, it will be so entrenched that it will be difficult to root out.

We can extrapolate from 45 years of experience with divorce and unlimited remarriage to see that these “alternative family forms” will be harmful to children. As my colleague Jennifer Johnson memorably put it, [“I had five parents and it sucked.”](http://www.ruthblog.org/2014/06/25/masha-gessen-five-parents/)

I was especially disturbed to see that even the dissenters do not give children’s rights the attention they deserve. Justice Thomas came close to the mark by saying that the government does not bestow dignity on anyone: the government recognizes the dignity that is inherent in each and every human being. Justice Alito comes close by saying that marriage does have a legitimate procreative purpose, while criticizing the majority for saying “the fundamental purpose of marriage is to promote the well-being of those who choose to marry.” But even this is a far cry from a robust analysis of the rights and needs of children.

The Justices could have known about this issue. I told them about it in my [amicus brief.](http://www.supremecourt.gov/ObergefellHodges/AmicusBriefs/14-556_The_Ruth_Institute.pdf) So did [Robert Oscar Lopez](http://www.supremecourt.gov/ObergefellHodges/AmicusBriefs/14-556_Robert_Oscar_Lopez_and_BN_Klein.pdf) and his colleagues [here](http://www.supremecourt.gov/ObergefellHodges/AmicusBriefs/14-556_Heather_Barwick_and_Katy_Faust.pdf) and [here](http://www.supremecourt.gov/ObergefellHodges/AmicusBriefs/14-556_Dawn_Stefanowicz_and_Denise_Shick.pdf). So did [David Upham](http://www.supremecourt.gov/ObergefellHodges/AmicusBriefs/14-556_Liberty_Scholars_and_the_Thomas_More_Society_of_Dallas.pdf) and the Thomas More Society.

**How Did We Get Into this Situation?**We have ended up in this situation because **we accepted the idea that the needs of children can be set aside for the benefit of adults.** The no-fault divorce revolution taught us that marriage need not be either permanent or sexually exclusive. The contraceptive ideology taught us to believe that we are entitled to act as if we have perfectly functioning contraception, and hence treat sex as a recreational activity with no moral or social significance. We are free to dispose of babies we don’t want. We have no obligation to form a lasting partnership with our child’s other parent.

Justice Kennedy gave a perfunctory nod to the children of same-sex parents. I think these children have something significant in common with the children of earlier rounds of the Sexual Revolution: **their parents have decided that their relationship with their sex partner is more important than their relationship with their child’s other parent.** The same-sex couple decides this before the child is born. The divorced and remarried parent decides this when they find a new love-interest. The Sexual Revolution has set aside the interests of children for the benefit of adults, from the beginning,

We have ended up in this situation because too many of us coasted along with the earlier phases of the Sexual Revolution. The Sexual Revolution has three main claims:

* A good society should separate sex from childbearing.
* A good society should separate both sex and childbearing from marriage.
* Men and women are completely interchangeable. Any differences we observe between men and women are evidence of some socially constructed injustice.

The problem is that all three of these claims are false. Sex actually does make babies. Children actually do need, and deserve, a relationship with both of their parents. Gendered marriage is the institution that delivers these entitlements to children. Men and women are different, in countless ways, large and small, that cannot all be overridden with cultural software or technological hardware.

Implementing this fantasy ideology throughout society requires an **enormous amount of force and propaganda.** Thus, the further cultural fall-out from the *Obergefell* ruling will include:

* Greater public promotion of transgenderism and other forms of gender fluidity
* Relentless streams of advertising and entertainment media depicting same-sex couples in idealized terms
* Continual suppression of any negative information about same-sex “marriage,” same-sex parenting or homosexual practice
* More assaults on the freedom of speech and dissent, as well as assaults on religious liberty

We are in this situation because so few people saw the Sexual Revolution for **the totalitarian movemen**t that it was and continues to be. The Elites are implementing what Alpha Males have wanted from time immemorial: unlimited sexual activity on their own terms. And they have convinced people that this is freedom.

More importantly, we are in this situation because our society misunderstands the needs of children for stability and identity. *Obergefell* commits the whole society to the position that children have no rights to a relationship with their own parents, no right to know their identities. The State will side with the adults and their desires, rather than with children and their rights.

**On the Plus Side**You may wonder how I could possibly see anything positive in our current situation. I have been writing and speaking about these issues since 2008. I’ve written articles, given lectures, been on countless radio programs and created books, pamphlets, CD’s and DVD’s. I have to ask myself: why aren’t people listening?

The natural constituency for sexual common sense has been decimated by the political brawls of the past decade. Good and decent people have done their best to hang on, but feel embattled. We need to rebuild that constituency. We have allowed many features of the Sexual Revolution to go by without sufficient challenge. It is almost as if we have said, “**We like the Sexual Revolution fine, just not the gay parts.” This is no longer acceptable. It never was acceptable**.

The truth is that every family in America has been harmed by the Sexual Revolution. People have been victimized by family members: children of divorce and reluctantly divorced persons are truly victims. Many people have done foolish and hurtful things, because they believed the lies our culture routinely tells. How many people would have gotten divorced, for instance, if they had known how difficult it would be for their children? How many educated and accomplished women would have made different choices, if they had realized how painful childlessness would prove to be?

All this means that many people have broken hearts or guilty consciences. When we try to talk about traditional sexual ethics, we are unwittingly poking their wounds. And when we try to talk about separation of powers or judicial tyranny or religious liberty or children’s rights, we completely lose them.

The public policy arena is perhaps not the best ground on which to try to fight the battle for marriage. And in any case, our prospects for success in this arena are now quite limited, at least for the foreseeable future.

**Healing the Culture in a Lasting and Christ-like Way**The millions of people have been harmed by the Sexual Revolution are NOT our enemies. These people’s voices have been systematically suppressed to protect the toxic ideology of the Sexual Revolution. We should not view ourselves as fighting *with* these people, but *for* these people. Give them an opportunity to speak their truth, which they often cannot speak, even inside their own families.

We must address broken hearts and guilty consciences. Unlike many of our legal and political struggles, everyone can participate by becoming an agent for healing. You don’t need a degree from an Ivy League university or your own TV show. You don’t need the permission of the Supreme Court or Congress. You can begin, right now, today, reaching out in friendship and support to those who have been harmed, including people who don’t vote the way you vote or worship the way you worship.

I strongly suggest that you begin by examining your own conscience. Clear out whatever buried sins or wounds or un-forgiveness you may be carrying around. Your own cleansing will prepare you to be available for those around you who need your help. Pointing fingers of blame at people who already have a guilty conscience will be worse than useless. But we can go first, with genuine repentance for our own wrong-doing and forgiveness for others.

Let me be as clear as possible. If you need to make amends to your children, your spouse, an ex-spouse or your parents, now would be a good time to do it. **If enough of us do this, we will have a real chance of healing this culture in a lasting and Christ-like way**, which is the only way worth doing.

Political and legal struggles have winners and losers. Cultural engagement need not. True spiritual combat recognizes that when Jesus wins, everyone wins. When the devil wins, everyone loses.

After the Evacuation at Dunkirk, Winston Churchill [addressed](http://www.winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1940-the-finest-hour/their-finest-hour) the House of Commons on June 18, 1940.

But if we fail, then the whole world, including the United States, including all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of perverted science. Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves that, if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, “This was their finest hour.”

Four years later, the Allies returned to France on D-Day, refreshed and replenished, and won a lasting victory. Churchill’s immortal words have a new meaning for us today, as we are dealing with new forms of “perverted science.”

**We will reveal our true character by the way we conduct ourselves in a time of crisis. Let this be Our Finest Hour.**

**(Emphases added)**

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