

First-Person: Same-Sex 'Marriage' -- Have the Best Interests of Children Been Considered?

Does not wisdom call out? Does not understanding raise her voice? On the heights along the way, where the paths meet, she takes her stand; beside the gates leading into the city, at the entrances, she cries aloud: (Proverbs 8:1-3, NIV)

By Dawn Stefanowicz
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ONTARIO, CANADA (AgapePress) - My name is Dawn Stefanowicz, I grew up in a homosexual household during the 60s and 70s in Toronto, exposed to many different people, the GLBT subcultures, and explicit sexual practices. I am currently writing a book, soon to be published, on this experience. As well, I was a witness at the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs on Bill C-250 (hate crimes), and I have presented at the local school board.

My biggest concern is that children are not being discussed in this same-sex marriage debate. Yet, won't the next step for some gay activists be to ask for legal adoption of children if same-sex marriage is legalized? I have considered some of the potential physical and psychological health risks for children raised in this situation. I was at high risk of exposure to contagious STDs due to sexual molestation, my father's high-risk sexual behaviors, and multiple partners. Even when my father was in what looked like monogamous relationships, he continued cruising for anonymous sex.

I came to deeply care for, love and compassionately understand my dad. He shared his life regrets with me. Unfortunately, my father, as a child, was sexually and physically abused by older males. Due to this, he lived with depression, control issues, anger outbursts, suicidal tendencies, and sexual compulsions. He tried to fulfill his legitimate needs for his father's affirmation, affection and attention with transient and promiscuous relationships. He and his partners were exposed to various contagious STD's as they traveled across North America. My father's (ex)partners, whom I had deep caring feelings for and associated with, had drastically shortened lives due to suicide, contracting HIV or Aids. Sadly, my father died of AIDS in 1991.

Are my childhood experiences unique? According to a growing number of personal testimonies, experts, and organizations, there is mounting evidence of strong commonalities to my personal experiences [2-13]. Not only do children do best with both a mother and a father in a lifelong marriage bond [14,15], children need responsible monogamous parents who have no extramarital sexual partners. Parental promiscuity, abuse and divorce are not good for children.

If same-sex marriage is legalized, a person, couple or group who practice any form of sexual behavior would eventually be able to obtain children through previous heterosexual relationships, new reproductive technologies, and adoption due to the undefined term sexual orientation. This would force all public and private adoption agencies to hand over children into experimental relationships or risk charges of discrimination.

What is the most suitable environment for children to be born or adopted into? [16] The many personal, professional and social experiences with my father did not teach me respect for morality, authority, marriage, and paternal love. I felt fearfully silenced as I was not allowed to talk about my dad, his male housemates, his lifestyle and encounters within the subcultures without being browbeaten and threatened by my father. While I lived at home, I had to live by his rules. Yes, I loved my dad. However, I felt abandoned and neglected as my needs were not met since my father would often leave suddenly to be with his partners for days. His partners were not really interested in me. I was outraged at the incidences of same-sex domestic abuse, sexual advances

toward minors, and loss of sexual partners as if people were only commodities. I sought comfort looking for my father's love from boyfriends starting at 12 years old.

From a young age, I was exposed to explicit sexual speech, self-indulgent lifestyles, varied GLBT subcultures and gay vacation spots. Sex looked gratuitous to me as a child. I was exposed to all-inclusive manifestations of sexuality including bathhouse sex, cross-dressing, sodomy, pornography, gay nudity, lesbianism, bisexuality, minor recruitment, voyeurism and exhibitionism. Sado-masochism was alluded to and aspects demonstrated. Alcohol and drugs were often contributing factors to lower inhibitions in my father's relationships.

My father prized unisex dressing, gender-neutral aspects and a famous cross-dressing icon when I was eight years old. I did not see the value of biological complementing differences of male and female or think about marriage. I made vows to never have children since I had not grown up in a safe, sacrificial, child-centered home environment. Due to my life experience, I ask, "Can children really perform their best academically, financially, psychologically, socially and behaviorally in experimental situations?" I can tell you that I suffered long term in this situation, and this has been professionally documented.

Over two decades of direct exposure to these stressful experiences caused me insecurity, depression, suicidal thoughts, dread, anxiousness, low self-esteem, sleeplessness and sexuality confusion. My conscience and innocence were seriously damaged. I witnessed that every other family member suffered severely as well.

It took me until I was into my 20s and 30s, after making major life choices, to **begin** to realize how being raised in this environment affected me. My healing encompassed facing reality, accepting long-term consequences, and offering forgiveness. Can you imagine being forced to tolerate unstable relationships and diverse sexual practices from a young age and how this affected my development? My gender identity, psychological well-being, and peer relationships were affected. Unfortunately, it was not until my father, his sexual partners and my mother had died, was I free to speak publicly about my experiences.

I believe same-sex marriage will dispose of unique values esteemed within marriage as recognized throughout history. Marriage needs to remain a societal foundation that constitutes, represents, and defends the inherently procreative relationship between the husband and the wife for the welfare of their biological children. [17] Children need consistent appropriate boundaries and secure expressions of emotional intimacy that are **not** sexualized in the home and community.

The term "sexual orientation" does not distinguish between the individual, feelings of sexual attraction to a particular person or object, or the individual's sexual behavior or preferences. Thence, a person practicing pansexuality, which is diverse sexual expression, could not be discriminated against **even with children present**.

Are the government and judicial systems playing games with children, forcing upstanding citizens to tolerate all forms of diverse sexual expression against their will, conscience and or religious freedom?

Why is such a small, unrepresentative clique within the GLBT subcultures wanting same-sex marriage? Mr. John McKellar, Executive Director of H.O.P.E. (Homosexuals Opposed to Pride Extremism) has stated, and I quote:

"It is selfish and rude for the gay community to push same-sex marriage legislation and redefine society's traditions and conventions for our own self-indulgence Federal and provincial laws

are being changed and the traditional values are being compromised just to appease a tiny, self-anointed clique." [18]

In my opinion, same-sex marriage will put the human rights of the individual in a higher place than what is best for society, families and especially children. Canadians should decide and not judges. [19] Human rights were meant to protect the individual and not groups. [20] In this crucial debate, children's human rights have become secondary, ignored and denied.

Moreover, if Canadians do not stop same-sex marriage, we will lose all of our freedom to address issues around sexuality with moral and religious vigor. By the way, the gay agenda in schools may owe its origin to Marshall Kirk and Erastes Pill who published the article "The Overhauling of Straight America" [21]. If we do not stop Bill C-38, the gay agenda will prevail in every Canadian public and private academic environment [22], inundating school environments with advocacy and sexually explicit resources and curriculum that mock parents' authority, moral rectitude, and religious traditions.

Already this is happening under the banner of anti-bullying, safe schools' policies and through Gay-Straight Alliances. In reality, these policies provide a direct legal entranceway of indoctrination, desensitization, personal and political recruitment of our vulnerable children by some gay activists within our schools while silencing all students who oppose the gay agenda. [23]

Similarly, all those who oppose the Canadian laws recognizing same-sex marriage would not be allowed to speak, express or gesture opposition, even on religious grounds. Look how the hate crime legislation Bill C-250 has instilled fear and is silencing the church. Did you know that the separation of church and state was enacted to protect religious freedom and conscience? Will religious freedom be trumped by sexual freedom? [24] Will religious faith expressions and practices by individuals and organizations be prohibited by such bills as C-38 and others? We have an obligation, for the sake of our children, to speak freely and to direct the laws of our land.

Will the Canadian government and judges legally promote unhealthy and unsound environments that encourage motherless and fatherless units through same-sex marriage? [25] Ultimately, children will be the real victims and losers if same-sex marriage is legally enacted. What hope can I offer innocent children who have no voice? What price is Canada willing to pay for sexual freedom, tolerance and diversity? Is that price children's lives? [26] Government and judges need to advance and defend marriage as between a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others for the sake of our children.

[1] Proverbs 8:1-3. New International Version

[2] Jakii Edwards, [Like Mother, Like Daughter? The effects of growing up in a homosexual home](#), (Vienna, VA: Xulon Press, 2001). Also, see testimonial "Just Like My Mother?", Exodus International, North America. See http://exodus.to/testimonials_Family_11.shtml extracted 26/03/2005.

[3] Suzanne Cook, [My Parent is Gay](#), (Seattle, WA: Exodus International-North America, 2000). Also, see testimonial "Looking For My Father's Love," Exodus International, North America. See http://exodus.to/testimonials_Family_12.shtml extracted 26/03/2005.

[4] "A Son's Journey," 1997 Nathan Bell, Distributed by Love In Action. See <http://www.loveinaction.org/media/documents/NathanBellTestimony.pdf> extracted 24/03/2005.

[5] "Mitchell," "The Tragedy of "Gay" Parenting," Stephen Bennett Ministries, see <https://sbminist.christianshost.com/appieshop/index.cgi> extracted 25/03/2005.

- [6] Paul Cameron and Kirk Cameron, "Children Of Homosexual Parents Report Childhood Difficulties," Psychological Reports 2002, 90, 71-82. Also see http://www.familyresearchinst.org/FRI_homokids.html?story=831 extracted 24/03/2005.
- [7] Timothy J. Dailey, Ph. D., "Comparing the Lifestyles of Homosexual Couples to Married Couples," Family Research Council, April 17, 2004. See <http://www.frc.org/get.cfm?i=IS04C02&v=PRINT> extracted 24/03/2005.
- [8] Timothy Dailey, Ph. D., "Homosexual Parenting: Placing Children at Risk," Family Research Council, Issue No.:238. See <http://www.frc.org/get.cfm?i=IS01J3> extracted 24/03/2005.
- [9] Jon Dougherty, "Report: Pedophilia more common among 'gays' Report purports to reveal 'dark side' of homosexual culture." WorldNetDaily, Monday April 29, 2002. See http://w115.wnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=27431 extracted 24/03/2005.
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- [11] "Homosexuality and Hope," Statement of the Catholic Medical Association. See <http://www.cathmed.org/publications/homosexualityarticle.html> extracted 24/03/2005
- [12] Dale O'Leary, "Is This Diversity, Or Tragedy: Children as Victims of their Parents' Choices," NARTH. See <http://www.narth.com/docs/diversity.html> extracted 24/03/2005.
- [13] "Gay marriage' and homosexuality some medical comments," LifeSite, by authors of this report: John Shea, MD, FRCP (C), Radiologist; John K. Wilson MD, FRCP (C), Cardiologist; Paul Ranalli MD, FRCP (C), Neurologist; Christina Paulaitis MD, CCFP, Family Physician; Luigi Castagna MD, FRCP (C), Paediatric Neurologist; Hans-Christian Raabe MD, MRCP MRCGP Internist; W. André Lafrance MD, FRCP (C), Dermatologist. See http://www.lifesite.net/features/marriage_defence/SSM_MD_evidence.htm extracted 24/03/2005.
- [14] S. Sarantakos, "Children in three contexts: family, education and social development," Children Australia, 21, (1996), 23-31
- [15] "Children Need Both A Mother And A Father," NARTH. See <http://www.narth.com/docs/needboth.html> extracted 27/03/2005.
- [16] "Sidelining Stability and Security The case against abandoning the current grounds for adoption," The Christian Institute June 2002. See http://www.christian.org.uk/html-publications/adoption_briefing2.htm#c extracted 24/03/2005.
- [17] Daniel Cere & Douglas Farrow, eds., *Divorcing Marriage*, (Montreal & Kingston, Ontario: Published for the Institute for the Study of Marriage, Law and Culture by McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), p.78.
- [18] Quote taken from Patrick W. O'Brien, M.P.'s speech delivered in the House of Commons regarding Bill C-38, 38th Parliament, 1st Session, Edited Hansard, Number 061, Contents Monday, February 21, 2005. See 1345-1355 http://www.parl.gc.ca/38/1/parlbus/chambus/house/debates/061_2005-02-21/HAN061-E.htm#Int-1142182 extracted 24/03/2005.
- [19] Daniel Cere & Douglas Farrow, eds., *Divorcing Marriage*, (Montreal & Kingston, Ontario: Published for the Institute for the Study of Marriage, Law and Culture by McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), pp.151, 152.
- [20] In the Supreme Court of Canada, In the Matter of Section 53 of the Supreme Court Act, R.S.C., 1985 C. S-26 In the Matter of a Reference By the Governor in Council Concerning the Proposal For an Act Respecting Certain Aspects of Legal Capacity for Marriage for Civil Purposes, as Set out in Order in Council P.C. 2003-1055, Dated the 16th Day of July 2003, Factum of the Intervener The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, (52.), p.26. See <http://www.cccb.ca/Files/SupremeCourtMarriage.pdf> extracted 24/03/2005.
- [21] David Limbaugh, *Persecution How Liberals Are Waging War Against Christianity*, (Washington, DC, Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2003), 94-110.
- [22] Linda Harvey, "The World According to PFLAG: Why PFLAG and Children Don't Mix," NARTH. See <http://www.narth.com/docs/pflag2.html> extracted 24/03/2005.
- [23] Peter Sprigg, "The 'Recruiting' of Children Into Accepting Homosexuality: How Homosexuality in Schools Furthers an Agenda," Family Research Council. See <http://www.frc.org/get.cfm?i=WA03134#WA03134> extracted 28/03/2005.
- [24] In the Supreme Court of Canada, In the Matter of Section 53 of the Supreme Court Act, R.S.C., 1985 C. S-26 In the Matter of a Reference By the Governor in Council Concerning the Proposal For an Act Respecting Certain Aspects of Legal Capacity for Marriage for Civil Purposes, pp. 27-31. See <http://www.cccb.ca/Files/SupremeCourtMarriage.pdf> extracted 24/03/2005.

[25] Maggie Gallagher and Joshua K. Baker, "Do Mothers and Fathers Matter?", iMapp Policy Brief, Institute for Marriage and Public Policy. See <http://www.marriedebate.com/pdf/MothersFathersMatter.pdf> extracted 27/03/2005.

[26] Susan Brinkmann, "Homosexuality: The Untold Story: Gay Marriage: Who's Minding the Children?", Part 5 of 6, The Catholic Standard and Times Newspaper for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. See <http://www.cst-phl.com/seventhpartfive.html> extracted 27/03/2005.