

Being human

Human beings aren't defined by their desires or appetites

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The July 27 edition of The Wall Street Journal contains a debate between David French (attorney and writer for National Review and columnist for Time) and Marci Hamilton (professor at the University of Pennsylvania and former clerk for Sandra Day O'Connor).



The pro and con exchange was on the issue of religious liberty. While, Mr. French does a good job in defending religious freedom, Ms. Hamilton's argument for curtailing it falls short.

The primary error Ms. Hamilton commits can be boiled down to what Chuck Colson called getting the answer to the "first question" of human identity wrong.

Ms. Hamilton's entire case rests on the assumption of homosexuality being equal to race or biological sex. Her premise is that "being" gay is an immutable characteristic that defines what it means to "be" human.

Rosaria Butterfield, a former English professor at Syracuse University, writes in her book, "Openness Unhindered," that the very concept of homosexual identity is a "19th-century category error" of Freudian psychoanalysis. Previously, there was no discussion of a person "being" a homosexual. In fact, until the late 1800s, homosexuality was not considered a personal characteristic at all, but rather a behavioral choice.

The very word "homosexual" was not even popularized until 1906 and the term "heterosexual" was coined thereafter, as a reaction to this newly crafted nomenclature.

For the millennia of human history, human beings were simply known as men and women who chose sexual fidelity or sexual sin. The nouns "homosexual" or even "heterosexual" did not exist. Gore Vidal admitted this in his debates with William F. Buckley Jr. and others.

"There is no more such thing as a homosexual person than there is a heterosexual person," he said, "These are behavioral adjectives." And Vidal was a man who proudly engaged in homosexual acts without remorse.

Conservatives and traditionalists continue to lose the cultural debate over religious freedom because we fail to expose this LGBTQ+ lie of what it means to "be" human. If sexual desire is an immutable characteristic that places us on the same ontological plane as other minority groups, frankly, Ms. Hamilton is right.

If inclinations equal human identity, she is correct to equate "being" gay with "being" black, Hispanic, Asian, or Native. If "being" human is nothing more than the sum total of one's sexual inclinations then GLAAD, HRC, the SPLC, et al, are spot on in arguing that religious groups should be legally prohibited from discriminating against sexual fluidity in the same way they are prohibited from discriminating against any other minority class.

But the fact of the matter is that Ms. Hamilton is desperately wrong. And ironically, she even stumbles into admitting this in the very first example she cites of the sins of the church that she believes should be subjected to the control of the state. What is the church's most egregious sin that justifies government intervention? The first thing on Ms. Hamilton's list is the sexual misconduct of pastors and priests with minors.

Someone needs to point out to Ms. Hamilton that moral outrage cannot be grounded in a moving target that fluxes with personal feelings and desires. There can be no justice without a judge. We can do no measuring without a measuring rod outside of those things being measured.

It is self-evident that righteous indignation assumes the compromise of something righteous. In other words, Ms. Hamilton's ability to criticize the behavior of the church comes from the exact standards of the church that she so desperately wants to control.

And here is the take-home: It is this church that has objectively defined and defended, for the past 2000 years, what it means to "be" human. Not the courts. .Not the government. Not Congress. Not the academic elites in the ivory tower. Not our politicians. Not our media pundits. The church.

Everything is lost if we get this one wrong. The innocence of children, the dignity of women, academic freedom, religious liberty, the very definition of what it means to be human — all hangs in the balance and will be lost to the overreach of arrogant oligarchs and unstoppable government largess if we don't fight to the death on this issue.

In the end, the LGBTQ issue isn't even about sex. Legally, I could not care less about what people do or don't do in their bedrooms. But morally, I care deeply about my freedom to teach my sons, my family, my students and my community what it means to be made in the image of God and, therefore, have the responsibility to choose between good and evil; right and wrong.

We are the imago Dei. We are not the imago dog. We are not animals. We are not defined by our desires or appetites. We are human beings, male and female (Not heterosexual or homosexual) who have the freedom of choice.

Capitulating to any other nomenclature in any way whatsoever cedes the high ground of human definition and human dignity and we lose the battle for human freedom before the war has even begun.

Everett Piper, former president of Oklahoma Wesleyan University, is a columnist for The Washington Times and author of "Not A Day Care: The Devastating Consequences of Abandon-ing Truth" (Regnery 2017).

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