

**Changing Public Opinion: The Redefinition of Marriage; The Carrie Effect: Prejean's Stand for Marriage; National Decline Evidenced by Successful Attacks on Divine Institutions; Internationalism at Babel, Gen 11:1-4; God Moved People West, but Human Viewpoint Went East**

**The Carrie Effect**

by Maggie Gallagher, president of the National Organization for Marriage

The headline on the story about a new CBS News/*New York Times* survey was interesting: "Poll: Support for Gay Marriage Dips." How fast and how far had support for gay marriage had to drop before a mainstream-media headline acknowledged it, even as a "dip"? Here's the answer: 9 percentage points ... from its all-time high of 42 percent to 33 percent.

A reporter for *New York* magazine recently called me to ask about the cause of a similar abrupt drop in support for gay marriage in a poll of voters in New York State. "Did the National Organization for Marriage cause that decline?" he asked. I suspect he wanted me to claim credit ... but I (said), "No, I really think that it was Carrie Prejean."

The Carrie Effect? How can one beauty queen cause a swing of almost ten points in national polls on a hotly debated issue?

Culture consists of ideas. Ideas, like civilizations, can die out. They die when no one is willing to defend them out loud. Gay-marriage advocates repeatedly say: Resistance is futile. This is an ambitious and psychologically sophisticated strategy: If they say it often enough, maybe Americans will believe it. If Americans start to believe it, then it will be true. (p. 28)

In the marketplace of ideas, not all Americans are equal. Culture is created by elites. And gay-marriage advocates have decided that victory requires winning over not only liberal and Democratic elites, as powerful as they are, but conservative and Republican elites as well. (pp. 28-29)

When does a war end? When one side's will to fight is broken. This is true in culture wars, too. A culture shift is complete only when an idea becomes uncontested (and uncontestable) by good, decent, law-abiding, "normal" citizens.

Gay-marriage advocates tried very hard to engineer such a moment in the past few months. I've had a front-row seat, fighting marriage battles deep in blue states, battles that gay-marriage advocates decided to fight right now in the middle of a looming recession, with budget craters opening up and service cuts or tax increases looming. Does this make sense? *Why now?*

Understanding the answer to that question is crucial, for the future of the country and of the conservative movement. Gay-marriage advocates have their story line for “Why now?”: The culture has shifted. Now is the time. If by “culture” is meant “what ordinary voters think,” there is remarkably little evidence of this. And culture does consist largely in “what people think”—but the ideas that govern a culture are made by elites: writers, thinkers, professors, artists, musicians, ad executives, prophets, bishops, ministers, religious leaders. These “symbolic analysts” are the most important players in culture war. Symbols are not distractions—they are the stuff of culture. When people dismiss the fight for marriage as only a fight about a word—they are revealing that they do not understand what a culture war is about. It is largely about fixing the meanings of words. What does “patriotism” mean? What does “freedom” mean? What does “equality” require? What is “marriage”?

The best way to understand the power of the gay-marriage movement is to focus on the fact that its leaders are artists. They are painting truths in broad strokes, hoping to make reality conform to their pictures. They are good at this, and that’s a powerful advantage. But here is *our* edge: Truth is easier to represent when reality is already on your side. That, along with the support of a majority of the American people, is our latent, mostly unexploited advantage. Same-sex unions are really not just like opposite-sex unions when marriage is in question. Celebrating all forms of adult romantic love equally is not a very good justification for redefining a fundamental institution whose public purposes reach far beyond the affirmation of romance.

Cultures that can no longer perceive anything special about unions of husband and wife will succumb to those that do. The future belongs to civilizations that commit substantial energy to generativity. Gay marriage is a bright red decision line: Once our government is committed to the idea that two men in a loving union are a marriage, there will be no retreat from that idea in the public square. Marriage will mean adults in love, not children in need. (p. 29)

On April 3, the Iowa supreme court discovered a constitutional right to gay marriage. *Iowa*? How did gay marriage happen *there*?

From a culture-war perspective, what is most interesting about Iowa is the way gay-marriage advocates used the decision. “Gay marriage comes to the heartland,” was the top-line message, implying that somehow the good people of Iowa now support gay marriage. I know how false the message is. The outrage in the heartland about gay marriage is palpable, if so far undirected. A University of Iowa Hawkeye Poll of Iowa residents released just days before the court’s same-sex-marriage ruling showed that just 26 percent of Iowans supported same-sex marriage.

A few weeks later, while I was being interviewed on a Christian radio station in Texas, the host told me, “Maybe they want gay marriage in Iowa or something but not here.” Huh? They want gay marriage in Iowa? How had he come to believe that? This very conservative Christian talk-show host had picked up the message of gay-marriage advocates. A small point, perhaps, but a telling one: “Our” people pick up and pass on the other side’s messages. It doesn’t happen in reverse. (p. 29)

I was recently invited (by a substitute host) to appear on a major conservative talk program. The producer came into the room just before we went on the air to offer (nervously) some instructions: “We don’t talk about gay marriage directly on this show. We talk about the religious-liberty side, but not gay marriage.” Deep in the red heart of America, in the control room of a major conservative talk-radio show, people are afraid to speak against gay marriage. (pp. 33-34)

As a few legislatures began to pass gay marriage and a handful of Republicans ostentatiously began to endorse it, as gay-marriage advocates tried to break the back of the opposition by demonstrating that the debate was over, along came Carrie Prejean.

A stunning young Christian beauty-pageant contestant was asked on national television by a gay celebrity blogger (whatever that is) what she thought about gay marriage. Watch the video clip on YouTube. You can see in her eyes that she knows: If she says what she thinks, she is not going to be Miss USA. She’s 21 years old. She’s worked very, very hard for that tiara. She comes from a modest family background. Money is tight, especially since she had to quit her job to prepare for the pageant.

The tiara means a luxury apartment. It means the possibility of a lucrative modeling career. You can see in her eyes that she realizes all she has to do is ... fudge. “I don’t like to watch that video,” Carrie told me. She doesn’t like it for the very reason I found it so powerfully moving: In the space of 30 seconds, you see a young woman first be tempted and then decide that no, she cannot fudge, she has to tell the truth. “I believe that a marriage should be between a man and a woman. No offense to anybody out there.” You see her choose between truth and a tiara. She never asked for this ordeal, but she was tested and she triumphed.<sup>1</sup> (p. 34)

Those who favor same-sex marriage have control of mainline media outlets. Their message is presented as the prevailing popular opinion although polls reveal otherwise – by a 4 to 1 margin.

When this debate is viewed through the prism of a biblical worldview it becomes obvious that the power behind the propaganda is of satanic origin. Why? Because it is an assault on all four divine institutions.

Same-sex marriage is an assault on volition because on the one hand opposition is suppressed by legal threats including laws against “hate speech,” politicians are intimidated into supporting the gay-rights movement or discover they are voted out of office by the financial power of such gay-rights organizations as the Gill Foundation. On the other hand, children and adolescents are propagandized by the lie that their sexual behavior is determined by genetics rather than volition. So indoctrinated, many involve themselves in a lifestyle that is in opposition to biblical truth and that destroys the soul.

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<sup>1</sup> Maggie Gallagher, “The Carrie Effect: Notes from the frontlines of the Marriage War,” *National Review*, April 10, 2009, 28–34.

Same-sex marriage is an assault on the institution which is defined by Scripture as being a union of one man and one woman. Marriage is not about sex. It is about the union of two souls in a life-long compact maintained by unconditional love and unfailing support regardless of circumstances. Sex is an exclusive by-product of the union designed for recreation and procreation.

Same-sex marriage is an assault on the family in two ways: on the one hand the arrangement makes it impossible to produce children while on the other hand, if broadly practiced, would cause that society to fade out of history. In addition, it contributes to the removal of restraint through grieving and quenching the Holy Spirit.

Finally, it is an attack on the nation that allows it to gain momentum and approval. Divine justice will intervene at some point in ways that will bring an end to the practice for the time being. It would, however, remain in Lucifer's bag of tricks.

From this example we can see how an evil idea, broadly communicated to a unilingual population, can gain power and, unaddressed, win approval.

This is what happened at Babel. The idea of a United Nations building was desired by the masses. The intent was to construct a tower that would reach into heaven. Motivated by arrogance, they wanted to "make a name for themselves" (v. 4).

**Genesis 11:1** - The whole earth had a common language and a common vocabulary.

**v. 2** - When the people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.

**v. 3** - Then they said to one another, "Come let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly." (They had brick instead of stone and tar instead of mortar.)

**v. 4** - Then they said, "Come, let's build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens so that we may make a name for ourselves." (NET)

Note that the three families were settled by God in the west, yet they moved eastward. Biblically, going east was often the result of a bad decision.

After being banished from Eden our original parents went east:

**Genesis 3:24** - So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.

Following Cain's murder of Abel, Cain is sent away as a perpetual wanderer, a man without a home:

**Genesis 4:16** - So Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and lived in the land of Nod [ נֹדַד *nod*: to wander; to travel about with no home to return to and no goal in mind<sup>2</sup> ], east of Eden.

In Genesis 13, Abram and his nephew Lot ran a cattle and sheep ranch that was so large that the land could not sustain the herds and flocks. The decision was made to split up even though the land they were working was promised to Abram by God. Abram was so confident that the Lord would keep his promise that he gave Lot first choice: stay here or move elsewhere. Lot chose the Jordan River valley and settled at the southern end of the Salt Sea (Dead Sea) in the Valley of Siddim and set his tents near Sodom:

**Genesis 13:11** - So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other.

The Lord sent Noah's sons westward following the flood:

**Genesis 9:1** - God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.

**v. 18** - Now the sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem and Ham and Japheth; and Ham was the father of Canaan.

**v. 19** - These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated.

When the lines of Noah's sons decided to abandon the Lord's admonition to spread out over the land in favor of collectivism they chose to move eastward and congregated at Babel.

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<sup>2</sup> Warren Baker and Eugene Carpenter, "נֹדַד," in *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 2003), 715.