

What's Wrong With Polygamy

✘ For the first time ever we are about to have a Mormon nominated for president by a major political party. By a strange coincidence, we also are beginning to see a flurry of posts on liberal blogs telling us what a bizarre and deplorable religion Mormonism is. Mormons don't smoke, or drink alcoholic or caffeinated beverages, and they oppose sex before marriage and marital infidelity. What a bunch of boobs!

On one liberal blog a woman who formerly belonged to the Mormon Church complained bitterly because church officials have persisted in their attempts to bring her back into the fold. No matter how many times she tells them to buzz off (I am using a phrase suitable for use in the presence of Mormons), they keep buzzing back.

I happen to have witnessed this phenomenon first-hand. It is true that the Mormons don't like to take no for an answer when a lapsed member of their church insists on staying lapsed. They do make return visits to the lapsed person's home, unbidden. Furthermore, they are extremely intimidating in their methods. They send out pairs of decrepit, white-haired old men to make their case. These guys arrive on foot, gasping for breath, and if the lapsed Mormon chose he could blow them over even if he has weak, wasted lungs from breaking the Mormon rule against smoking.

Imagine how bitterly the female blogger would complain if she were garroted, or burned at the stake, or stretched on the rack, or buried up to her neck in sand and stoned. Lapsed Mormons really have it rather easy by comparison.

I thought that after the election of John F. Kennedy, our first Roman Catholic president, religious attacks had become passé in presidential campaigns. Despite the fears of many, JFK did not bring the Pope over to run the executive branch,

although I will concede that we don't know what his plans might have been for a second term.

By 2000, when an Orthodox Jew ran for vice president on the Democratic ticket, there was scarcely a murmur. I almost never heard people speculating that Joe Lieberman planned blood sacrifices of Russian children to help him bake matzoh for Passover. But again, I have to concede that we will never know for sure, because Joe (and running mate Al Gore) lost.

But with Romney in the field, religion is back as a political issue.

Some liberals are trying to tar Romney with the specter of polygamy, even though polygamy was outlawed by his church in 1890, and the last polygamous marriage ended nearly sixty years ago with the death of one of the wives. The Democratic governor of Montana, for example, recently made a fuss because the parents of Romney's late father, George, fled to Mexico more than a century ago in protest against U.S. anti-polygamy laws. They did this even though they themselves were in a monogamous marriage. It was strictly on principle. Those wacky Mormons!

I am here to tell you that I don't care whether Romney himself is a polygamist, although it appears that he is not. If he were, the Democrats would be ungallantly besmirching more than just the one wife, Ann.

But really, what is wrong with polygamy? Does it strike you as any stranger than gay marriage? And let me interject here that gay marriage is absolutely the most wonderful idea ever conceived by mankind, and gays are, and should be, treated as sacred cows.

Polygamy can be an excellent idea under the right circumstances. Suppose you marry a woman who is a hot babe, but she can't cook. Why shouldn't you be allowed to also marry a dull, homely woman who cooks like a master chef? I don't

see this as selfish on the man's part. Quite the contrary. How else would the second woman find a husband? If she were only entitled to a monogamous marriage, she would be pretty much limited to blind gourmets.

I do see some practical problems. In a community-property state, for example, how would one divide the assets if any of the wives decided to bow out? (I am limiting the discussion to marriages involving multiple wives, because even in the heyday of polygamy marriages involving multiple husbands were extremely rare.) In a community-property state, divorcing couples are supposed to split the legally eligible assets evenly, but in a marriage with, say, two wives, it seems unfair to let the departing wife walk off with half the assets. It's a problem, but probably not insuperable.

Legalizing polygamy would simply institutionalize relationships that already exist off the books, just as has been the case with gay marriages. Come on, tell me that you have never heard of threesomes that are living together indefinitely. Why shouldn't such relationships be sanctified by the law? So please, liberals, drop the religious bigotry. Let's see some of that famous tolerance for aberrant behavior that characterizes so many of your flock. You can learn to live with polygamy, in case a Romney presidency brings it back.