

'Keep Your Religion in the Closet' Says NYT Editorialist

"I support the right of people to believe what they do and say what they wish—in their pews, homes and hearts."

So says an influential *New York Times* journalist.

In other words, "Keep your religion in the closet."

In his Jan. 10 *Times* editorial, "Your God and My Dignity: Religious Liberty, Bigotry, and Gays," Frank Bruni writes, "I've been called many unpleasant things in my life, and I've deserved no small number of them. But I chafe at this latest label: A threat to your religious liberty."

He finds it "absurd" that the simple act of two men or two women joining together in "marriage" not only runs counter to our creed but actually runs roughshod over it. Yes, "the deference that many politicians show to such thinking is an example not of religion getting the protection it must but of religious people getting a pass that isn't warranted."

In what sense is this an unwarranted pass?

According to Bruni, who has a big problem with what he calls "religion's favored status" in America, when we refuse to participate in any aspect of same-sex unions, we are using our "religious beliefs ... as a fig leaf for intolerance." This would apply to a justice of the peace who refused to perform the ceremony to a photographer who refused to shoot the event.

Does he really think that the only reason we oppose redefining marriage is because of an unjustified, bigoted intolerance?

Is it only "intolerance" that believes that men were designed for women and women for men? Doesn't the mirror, not to mention the human reproductive system, confirm this?

Is it only “intolerance” that believes that it’s best not to deprive a child of either a mother or father?

Is it only “intolerance” that refuses to believe that all of human civilization, until the last 15 years, has been wrong about the meaning of marriage? The many variations of marriage that have existed through the ages have all been based on male-female union, and for good reason.

And could it be that there is good reason that our sacred texts tell us that God forbids homosexual unions?

Why must it be “intolerance” that shapes our thinking?

The real intolerance is on the side of Bruni, who opposes religious liberty for individuals in the workplace, reminding us that Christians who refuse to participate in any aspect of same-sex “marriages” are following in the footsteps of “racists [who] used the same argument to try to perpetuate segregation.”

Indeed, for Bruni we are “religious extremists.” (Who would have imagined just a few short years ago that Christians who believed that marriage was the union of a man and woman would be branded “religious extremists” in a major publication?)

Referencing a florist, a baker and a photographer who were found guilty of discrimination for “refusing to serve customers having same-sex weddings,” Bruni argues that “baking a cake, arranging roses, running an inn ... aren’t religious acts, certainly not if the establishments aren’t religious enclaves and are doing business with (and even dependent on) the general public.”

Apparently he fails to understand that, as followers of Jesus, we are called to do everything—not just sacramental things—for the glory of God and therefore our faith colors every aspect of our lives (see 1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:23).

Bruni asks, "Would we be content to let a Muslim store owner who believes that a woman should always cover her hair refuse service to women who do not? Or a Mormon hairdresser who spurns coffee to turn away clients who saunter in with frappuccinos?"

He answers: "I doubt it. So why should a merchant whose version of Christianity condemns homosexuality get to exile gays and lesbians?"

First, we're not "exiling" gays and lesbians. We're simply asking for the right not to be forced into violating our deeply-held beliefs—and they are not some murderous, fanatical tenets. Instead, we're simply saying that a Christian photographer should not be forced by the government to take pictures of two men kissing in a romantic wedding pose. (Can you imagine what our Founding Fathers would have thought about this discussion?)

Second, a better analogy would be to point out the absurdity of the government compelling a Muslim caterer to serve pork at a wedding or an Orthodox Jewish photographer to shoot a wedding on the Sabbath. (For more on this, see Ramesh Ponnuru's response to Bruni.)

While Bruni has kind words for "people of faith," he wants that faith kept in the closet, or in his words, in "our pews, homes, and hearts"—but not outside our pews, homes and hearts.

It appears that he doesn't even want us to talk about these things publicly, especially when our views conflict with the goals of gay activism. (Note again that he said, "I support the right of people to believe what they do and say *what they wish*," but only inside the church building or in the privacy of our homes.)

Well, here's a message from millions of these same people of faith to Mr. Bruni, with all respect for his unique personhood and the importance of his life as a human being created in

God's image: We will not stop speaking and we will not stop standing.

We will not go into the closet.

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