

To Gay Journalist Michelangelo Signorile: Let's Have a Civil Debate

Dear Mike,

In your recent *Huffington Post* column, you referred to Americans who refuse to redefine marriage as “religious extremists,” stating that, “We,” meaning the LGBT community, “cannot be held hostage to the theatrics of religious extremists, nor should we allow them to think that supposedly bad ‘optics’ will deter us in demanding our rights.”

You were speaking in particular about the national controversy surrounding the decision of Kim Davis, the Rowan County, Kentucky clerk, to refuse to issue marriage certificates to gay couples.

For you, this is a matter of religious extremism, and you are urging gays and their allies to stand against her decision and to refuse to back down, even if, for the moment, it may make your side look bad.

I see it in the exact opposite way, and I’m urging Christians to stand with her and to continue to challenge the Supreme Court decision—just as we have challenged *Roe v. Wade* since 1973—even if, for the moment, it makes our side look bad.

And I see the extremism coming from your side, including hateful rhetoric, inflammatory speech and extreme intolerance (in the name of tolerance, of course; where there are hateful words and actions from my side, I utterly denounce them).

Really now, who are the extremists? Is it those who are convinced that in order for marriage to be marriage, it must include a man and a woman, just as it has for virtually all

recorded history across every culture and nation and in harmony with the religious beliefs of several billion people, or those who want to redefine it radically?

And who is holding whom hostage? Is it Christians who are losing their businesses and livelihoods in the courts to gay activism, or gay activists who have won victory after victory in the courts and schools and places of business in recent years?

Really now, when a Christian baker cannot in good conscience bake a cake for a gay couple's ceremony, he or she is found guilty of discrimination by the courts, but when a gay baker refuses to bake a cake with a biblically-based message on marriage, that baker is vindicated by the courts.

Again I ask, who is holding whom hostage?

You and Dan Savage have also made personal judgments against Kim Davis, accusing her of wanting to achieve fame and fortune through her "martyrdom," as if she planned this all out from the start: "That's it! I'll wait for the first gay couple to come through my doors, I'll refuse to grant them a marriage certificate based on my beliefs, I'll fight this all the way to the Supreme Court, I'll lose my job, go to jail, get death threats, be despised and mocked by millions, throw my entire family into turmoil, only to get a big fat book contract and become rich and famous."

Seriously?

I'm aware, of course, that there are genuine questions regarding the responsibilities of a government employee, sworn to uphold the law, as the openly gay philosophy professor John Corvino pointed out. And there are intellectual responses to Prof. Corvino's position, as articulated by conservative Christian leader Dr. Joel McDurmon. Davis, for her part, has issued a statement explaining her position and stating, "I want to continue to perform my duties, but I also am

requesting what our Founders envisioned—that conscience and religious freedom would be protected.” (After all, when she was sworn in to serve her county, things were very different than they are today.)

And that’s where I’d like to make this open appeal to you (contacting you via Twitter didn’t work, and one of my colleagues wasn’t able to reach you on my behalf either).

These are critically important issues facing our society, and we both agree that they are not going away any time soon. Why don’t we have a civil, public debate and discuss these issues in a moderated forum, hopefully doing so in a way that will further serious discussion and reflection in the midst of our differences, committing to conduct the debate without vitriol or histrionics?

You just wrote a new book titled *It’s Not Over: Getting Beyond Tolerance, Defeating Homophobia, and Winning True Equality*.

I just wrote a new book from the exact opposite perspective titled *Outlasting the Gay Revolution: Where Homosexual Activism Is Really Going and How to Turn the Tide*. (To be clear, when I say the exact opposite perspective, I do not mean cultivating hatred or mistreatment of gays; on the contrary, I call on my side to take the highest moral ground and merge love together with truth.)

You have a national radio show and I have a national radio show. In fact, it appears that from 3-4 p.m., EDT. We’re on the air at the same time, Monday-Friday.

You write columns for liberal websites and I write columns for conservative websites.

What is there to lose by challenging each other’s views publicly while we defend our own? What is there to lose by seeing whose positions best cohere morally and socially?

We could obviously come on each other's radio shows and we could exchange columns as well, but there's something special about a live, moderated debate where an audience can listen and respond and then even have the opportunity to question us directly.

What do you say?

I'm willing to do it without a speaker's fee, and I'd come to your turf or fly you in to come to mine.

What do we have to lose? And how could this not benefit many Americans?

If you're in the least bit concerned about my attitude or demeanor, listen to this recent interaction I had with a bisexual caller to my show or read this short article about the potential conflict between loving God and loving neighbor.

And you don't have to worry about giving me a platform since, by God's grace, I have a great platform on many fronts, just as you have a great platform too.

So what do you say? Shall we have a civil debate about these volatile, divisive and difficult issues?

Michael Brown is the host of the nationally syndicated talk radio show "The Line of Fire" and is the president of FIRE School of Ministry. His newest book is *Outlasting the Gay Revolution: Where Homosexual Activism Is Really Going and How to Turn the Tide*. Connect with him on Facebook at AskDrBrown or on Twitter @drmichaellbrown