

I Still Think Marriage is the Wrong Goal

by Dean Spade and Craig Willse

A lot of stories are circulating right now claiming that Black and Latino voters are to blame for Prop 8 passing. Beneath this claim is an uninterrogated idea that people of color are “more homophobic” than white people. Such an idea equates gayness with whiteness and erases the lives of LGBT people of color. It also erases and marginalizes the enduring radical work of LGBT people of color organizing that has prioritized the most vulnerable members of our communities.

Current conversations about Prop 8 hide how the same-sex marriage battle has been part of a conservative gay politics that de-prioritizes people of color, poor people, trans people, women, immigrants, prisoners and people with disabilities. Why isn't Prop 8's passage framed as evidence of the mainstream gay agenda's failure to ally with people of color on issues that are central to racial and economic justice in the US?

Let's remember the politics of marriage itself. The simplistic formula that claims “you're either pro-marriage or against equality” makes us forget that all forms of marriage perpetuate gender, racial and economic inequality. It mistakenly assumes that support for marriage is the only good measure of support for LGBT communities. This political moment calls for anti-homophobic politics that centralize anti-racism and anti-poverty. Marriage is a coercive state structure that perpetuates racism and sexism through forced gender and family norms. Right wing pro-marriage rhetoric has targeted families of color and poor families,

supported a violent welfare and child protection system, vilified single parents and women, and marginalized queer families of all kinds. Expanding marriage to include a narrow band of same-sex couples only strengthens that system of marginalization and supports the idea that the state should pick which types of families to reward and recognize and which to punish and endanger.

We still demand a queer political agenda that centralizes the experiences of prisoners, poor people, immigrants, trans people, and people with disabilities. We reject a gay agenda that pours millions of dollars into campaigns for access to oppressive institutions for a few that stand to benefit.

We're being told marriage is the way to solve gay people's problems with health care access, immigration, child custody, and symbolic equality. It doesn't solve these problems, and there are real campaigns and struggles that would and could approach these

problems for everyone, not just for a privileged few. Let's take the energy and money being put into gay marriage and put it toward real change: opposing the War on Terror and all forms of endless war; supporting queer prisoners and building a movement to end imprisonment; organizing against police profiling and brutality in our communities; fighting attacks on welfare, public housing and Medicaid; fighting for universal health care that is trans and reproductive healthcare inclusive; fighting to tax wealth not workers; fighting for a world in which no one is “illegal.”

For further reading, see: <http://makezine.enoughenough.org/prop8.html>

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you understand. Don't you?

Now Crock, I know you didn't call for a removal. It's just I've heard it all before and my ancestors heard it too. All about how “those people” should just leave in the interests of keeping the peace. We've heard it before the Cherokees were dragged off to clear the way for the white farmer who in his turn was dragged off to clear the way to dam the Little Tennessee to create a resort community for the white Yankees and so forth and so on. Calls for “just leave” always come before “making them leave.”



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Makes me wonder when the old Crock himself will be removed and what excuse the feds will give for your removal.

So here's your helpful hint, brother and sister liberals, may I call you brothers and sisters, even though I've been called a gun-toting hillbilly survivalist? Even though I'm making plans to imitate my husband's ancestors, hide out in the hills for the next removal from East Tennessee? Here's how to tell when the pro-torture people are “just funnin'.”

When they talk about rape, murder, assault, theft, torture, and general all around mischief and mayhem committed against good pro-torture people like themselves, then that's an outrage. In fact,

if anyone criticizes them over anything whatsoever, if anyone calls them on their sense of entitlement to other people's oil, just for instance, then that's an outrage. Then it's hate speech.

But when they talk about rape, murder, assault, theft, torture, and general all around mischief and mayhem committed against Muslims, liberals, poor people, brown people, black people, gay people, and women in general, then that's a joke, just a joke. Don't take them any more seriously than you do slasher movies and video games, death metal, or gangster rap. Feel free to laugh at it. Remove their books from political commentary and put them next to Dave Barry on the humor shelves and laugh, laugh, laugh. Remove their TV shows from the news networks and put them on Comedy Central where even the humorless will understand that they're just joking. If that can't be done, then just start grinning and calling Fox News “Comedy Central II.” Conservative radio stations can change their format from “news/talk radio” to “all comedy all the time radio.” No more worry over the Fairness Doctrine. Just laugh. And if station management won't change its advertising, YOU always CAN. Call it a joke and laugh because *everything* the pro-torture people say is just a joke. Get it? Go on, LAUGH, and keeping in the spirit of this great comedic tradition, keep on laughing. Giggle, chuckle, titter, guffaw, and LAUGH like hell, like the evil genius in a really, really bad movie.

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