

Hang Together

"We must indeed all hang together, or most assuredly we shall all hang separately." Benjamin Franklin

Problem-Recognition And Football-Yanking

Posted on September 29, 2012 by Daniel Kelly



Alas for Charlie Brown.

(*This post responds to Greg's comments here, and it won't make much sense unless you read him first.)

I don't want to be Charlie Brown, so let's look at Greg's proposed standard to see if it puts us at risk of analytical somersaults. His three-part standard essentially inquires into whether cultural institutions recognize the problem created by the death of marriage. He described the logic as this:

These institutions can't say the breakdown of marriage is damaging the poor, women, and children (especially among minorities!) and generating a rigid bifurcation of social classes, and then say "but we don't necessarily have to do anything about it." . . . If the dinosaur media say the breakdown of marriage is damaging the poor, women, and children, etc. they aren't going to be able to walk away from that.

Actually, they can – and they *will* if those observations conflict with a higher priority. And that is because they do not see the well-being of women, children, the poor, and minorities as ends in themselves. In fact, most often they seem to be little more than sacramental obeisances.

If those obeisances interfere with the object of worship itself, guess what happens? Let's try out a sample conflict: Radical Islam. Everyone, and I mean *everyone*, knows that the radical thread of Islam oppresses women in unspeakable ways. That includes these institutions. But instead of chasing this misogynist theology to ground, they have been in full-throated defense ever since 2001. Why? Because finding fault with America rates so much higher on their priority list. They not only walked away from women, they left tire tracks on their backs as they sped off to their Wahhabist coffee klatches.

The poor? Compare and contrast the wealth-creating track record of socialism and capitalism, then compare America's poor to those of the rest of the world. Which system do these institutions champion? The one trapping more people in poverty, of course. Children? We all know that abortion kills them; even those conducting the procedures and their defenders know. But, to these institutions, sexual libertinism is more important than a child's life. Or even millions of them.

There is a huge difference between recognizing a problem and (a) choosing to do something about it, and even more importantly (b) selecting the right medicine for the ailment. Even if these institutions uniformly agree that the destruction of marriage is harmful to women, the poor, children, and minorities, we still have to figure out whether they think the harm is great enough to address. And if it is, we need to discern whether they are likely to look to marriage as the solution, or instead to more federal financial support for the poor, husband-substitute programs for women, and sociologists for maladjusted children.

I note all this not because problem-recognition is not an important achievement for these institutions – it is. Indeed, if there is to be movement towards restoring marriage, its early signs will probably show up here first. But if we rely on problem-recognition as evidence of a budding alliance, we are more likely to find ourselves hurtling end-over-end when they yank the football away.

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2 THOUGHTS ON "PROBLEM-RECOGNITION AND FOOTBALL-YANKING"

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