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“Utterly Normal?” — No “Post-Homosexualist” Era Yet

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Our language has reached some important natural limits of meaning. A recent media report considered the increasing number of homosexual couples, both male and female, who are now “having babies.” Well, these same-sex couples are not “having” babies in the sense that language has customarily been used. When a same-sex couple “has” a baby, everyone knows that there is more to the story. A homosexual couple simply cannot “have” a baby the same way that a heterosexual couple can. This is a matter of the natural order and biology, not mere social custom.

This came to mind when I read Will Young’s article published in the July 28, 2007 edition of *The Times* [London]. In “[We Gays Haven’t Won the Battle Yet](#),” Young accepts the fact that modern society has experienced a massive shift on the subject of homosexuality.

In his words:

In the 40 years since the decriminalisation of homosexuality, the passing of gay rights on to the statute book has been a triumph. Gay couples have more security and equality thanks to civil partnerships, and gays are now treated with fairness before the eyes of the law. So as a gay man, I celebrate this and feel lucky to be alive in Britain in 2007.

But, he argues, “it is important to draw a distinction between legal change and the shift in attitudes. It is quicker to pass a law than achieve the necessary movement of public opinion – and attitudes still lag behind the law. So we can’t yet give ourselves a proverbial pat on the back.”

Young was responding to a column written by Matthew Parris published just days before. In [that article](#), Parris argued that his fellow homosexuals should realize this massive shift in favor of homosexuality and celebrate it, declaring victory in the struggle to normalize homosexuality.

As Parris argued:

I’m coming out as a post-homosexualist. Forty years (tomorrow) after the 1967 law ending the absolute prohibition of homosexuality, 13 years after the reduction of the age of consent from 21 to 18, six years after the further reduction from 18 to 16, and two years after the arrival of civil partnerships, I have finally become bored with the whole damn thing. Bored, not with being gay, but with talking about it. I blame Tony Blair.

Do cats witter endlessly on about being cats? Do redheads drive us to distraction with their thoughts on being ginger? How many serious comment columns in the editorial pages of newspapers are devoted to the musings of straight men on what it is to be a heterosexual? No, they just get on with it – with being cats, redheads or straights. Such things are for the lifestyle sections of weekend magazines, not rubbing shoulders with the debate on global warming, housing or the terrorist threat.

Fellow-queers: stop moaning. How interesting is any of this to the rest of the world any more? Other groups out there have it worse than we do in Britain. We’ve got the political changes we asked for. Social change will take longer but it’s happening, steadily. Kidding ourselves that we inhabit some sort of a gulag is making it harder, not easier, for the next

generation to relax about their sexuality. Let's remind them that in the whole history of mankind there has been no better, luckier, time or place to be gay than Britain in 2007.

So Parris called for the recognition of a new “post-homosexualist” era. He identified organized religion as the only major obstacle to full acceptance of homosexuality, but observed that “most of our fellow Britons don’t seriously subscribe to any of these superstitions, so why take it out on them?”

Young isn’t buying the argument. As he considers the status of homosexuality and homosexuals in society, he sees a very different reality — and his observation is as relevant to the situation in the United States as it is to life in Britain.

Consider his argument about the “next stage” needed for the full acceptance of homosexuality:

The next stage is trickier. It's how to make people understand that gays are utterly normal; it's how to change outlooks so that it never crosses people's minds that to be gay is to be so different or alien; or to stare if two men hold hands, or to do a double take if a man says "meet my husband"; it's how to be able to be honest about yourself without people accusing you of "ramming your homosexuality down my throat". Hop over to the Netherlands and sexuality is not such an issue; but here in Britain things are different. I am still often referred to as the "gay pop idol – Will Young" (very much in that order of importance); yet in other countries the gay word doesn't come into it – someone's sexuality is regarded rightly as a being an irrelevance or unnoteworthy.

This is a very important observation — and a crucial reminder that the natural order of things has a way of asserting itself in the end. Mr. Young wants people to “understand that gays are utterly normal.” And this would mean that the issue “never crosses people’s minds” — that no one notices anything unusual when two men hold hands or if a man says “meet my husband.”

Young, who is a well-known figure in Britain, became famous when he won the first “Pop Idol” contest on British television. In his view, a public acknowledgement of homosexuality should be a matter of no real interest. As he wrote, “Coming out should just be a statement of fact – I have red hair, I drink tea, I sleep with the same sex.”

It isn’t that simple, of course. And it isn’t that simple precisely because there is a deep moral instinct within us that continually reminds that sex between persons of the same sex is *not* natural or normal. The very fact of this difference even remains a part of the discourse among liberals who *think* they believe in the moral normalization of homosexuality.

The stubborn fact is that most people still notice when two men or two women hold hands in public. When two men tell their colleagues and neighbors that they are “having” a baby, those neighbors can’t help wondering how.

Will Young undoubtedly believes that this inability to see homosexuality as a matter of no consequence is explained by deep prejudices that are woven throughout the culture. But Christians believe that this moral instinct is explained, not by social custom and prejudice, but by the revelation of God in nature and in the human conscience –the very knowledge the Apostle Paul described in the [first chapter of Romans](#). God has given his human creatures the knowledge that homosexuality is just not “utterly normal.” This knowledge may be denied or suppressed, but it will not disappear.

Image: Rembrandt van Rijn, “Self-Portrait as the Apostle Paul”

