

# Patriarchs' Journal™

*Dedicated to the restoration, support and encouragement of biblical family structure.*

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## Final Responses in the

## “Fisher Principle” Gender Ratio Essay Debate

by — Michael Anderson and Keith Martin

### Michael Anderson's Response

First, I would like to thank Keith Martin for taking the time to write a response to my essay, “Gender Ratio and the Fisher Principle.” I would also like to thank the publisher of Patriarch's Journal, Clyde Pilkington, for allowing us to discuss my paper through his publication. After reading Mr. Martin's thoughtful consideration of my paper, it seems to me that wrong impressions have been conveyed. It is also highly likely that others who have read my essay have gotten equally wrong impressions from it. For this I am to blame. I had not taken into account how truly complex and difficult communication can sometimes be. So I really appreciate this opportunity to elaborate more fully on the purpose of the aforementioned essay and the methodology behind it. Mr. Martin has raised a lot of good points and they are all worthy of consideration. I think the best way to go about this discussion is to first briefly describe the overall purpose and point of my essay and then to address Mr. Martin's points in the order that he has brought them up.

In my book *The Economics of Sex and Marriage*, I deal with the subject of human action; in particular, the category of sex and marriage. In the tradition of Austrian economics, I talk about certain types of actions and the implications which necessarily flow from them. In this methodology, there is a strict separation between what *is* and what *ought to be*. There is a logically unbridgeable gap between the subject of value-free social theory on the one hand and ethics on the other. Both my book, *The Economics of Sex and Marriage*, and the more recent paper, “Gender Ratio and the Fisher Principle,” belong to the category

of value-free social theory, not ethics. I describe this approach in the book (p. 9-14, 77). In the book, I do not argue that we *ought* to have polygamy and in the essay that followed, I do not argue that we *ought not* have polygamy. However, I can see how the book might lend itself to pro-polygamy arguments and how the essay might lend itself to anti-polygamy arguments. It is important, however, for the sake of understanding my essay, to keep this “is/ought” distinction in mind.

Let me summarize the portion of my book relevant to this discussion and how it gave rise to my paper, “Gender Ratio and the Fisher Principle.” In my book (p. 51-53), I discuss the natural tendency, in a monogamous society which suffers a shortage of marriageable men, for the number of uncommitted sexual relationships to rise. That is, the value of women will fall and immorality will go up. We cannot predict how much, since that is determined by a host of other complex cultural and historical factors. But economic theory tells us that, *all other factors being equal*, the tendency would be for immorality to rise. In the book, as in many pro-polygamy books, I describe how polygamy would alleviate this problem and actually result in a society which was less sexually “polygamous” (p. 53) than one in which open polygamy was rejected. However, what bothered me (only intuitively; I had not yet thought about it a great deal) was that I was not sure that there would be enough women to supply the demand that a widespread acceptance of polygamy might create. That's when I came up with the theory of bride prices rising to the point where couples, spurred by economic incentives, might deliberately try to have more girl

babies than boy babies, thus permanently creating a surplus of women and satisfying the demands of men who want additional wives. However, after having done more research into the census figures, and after discovering the “Fisher Principle,” I realized that my theory was wrong. The purpose of my earlier essay was to explain *why* this theory is wrong and why the fundamental one-to-one gender ratio can never be altered without resorting to killing. (Unfortunately, no one else who gave me feedback on the book ever seemed to have caught this error.) I then go on to describe some of the other difficulties that might be associated with a near universal acceptance of polygamy. My essay was not meant to be an “attack” on polygamy and polygamists in some sort of ethical sense. My essay merely corrects and refutes a theory presented in my own book, while drawing out a couple of other implications of polygamy as it relates to the Fisher Principle.

From here on, I will discuss Mr. Martin’s points in the order that he makes them. Martin categorizes

the Fisher principle as a “statistical principle that can be applied to everything from intelligence to male pattern baldness” and “a reasonable mathematical explanation for the tendency of genetic deviations to regress back to the norm.” Perhaps I didn’t explain the mechanisms of the Fisher principle clearly enough because it is not a “statistical principle” and it has nothing to do with baldness, intelligence, or any “genetic differences.” A “statistical principle” says that if you flip a coin only five times, you might get tails five times, but if you keep flipping it long enough, eventually you will get heads 50% of the time on average and tails 50% of the time. That is called regressing back to the norm. If you roll a dice, you might roll a six five times in a row, but if you roll it long enough, you’ll eventually come to the point where you will get a six, or any other number, only one time in six on average. *That* is called regressing back to the norm. *That* is a statistical principle. The Fisher principle has nothing to do with this. Say you have ten couples who, for whatever reason, have a natural tendency to produce five times more girls

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We will attempt to take an honest, fresh look at the subject of the family from a Biblical perspective, and to recover truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13). Readers are encouraged to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21). This publication is not intended to provide personal or legal advice.

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than boys. If they were in a closed society with each other, and their offspring could only intermarry with each other (whether polygamy is practiced or not is irrelevant), then any family, over the course of the next generation or two, who happened to have more boys than the others, would be at an advantage and would produce more offspring in the long run, thus passing on these advantageous characteristics. As gender parity is reached, ability in having more boys than the other families ceases to be an advantage and we are left with a roughly one-to-one ratio. This does not belong in the category of a “statistical principle”; it belongs in the category of natural selection, something which Martin himself later on says is “patently obvious.”

Mr. Martin says that I exaggerate “the Fisher Principle’s relevance to the distinction between monogamy-only cultures and those that permit polygamy, because the ‘why’ he proposes for explaining its relevance is a dynamic that is certainly just as true in monogamy-only cultures as it is in polygamous ones.” I guess I didn’t make myself clear enough in my paper. I hope I can do better here. The Fisher principle is not relevant at all to this distinction in the sense that it will tend to equalize the gender ratio no matter what type of culture we’re referring to. But it *is* relevant in the following sense: In an outwardly monogamous society, it’s true that a lot more people, both male and female, end up having more than one partner throughout their lives. This *is* a problem, but it’s not a gender ratio problem. In principle, under normal conditions, there *are* enough men for every woman to have one all to herself. Why a large portion of men in our current culture aren’t “husband material” I will address shortly. However, in a society which accepts polygamy, that is, one which approves of men having more than one partner, but which restricts women to having only one, you face a problem of simple mathematics. In such a society it is systematically impossible for a portion of the men to have a partner unless they “poach” wives from other men. The Fisher principle is relevant in that it tells us why the problem that Mr. Martin associates with our current monogamous culture, that of women feeling the need to “poach” men from other women, is not a problem inherent to monogamy itself. It is also relevant in that it shows that the problem of “spouse-poaching,” while not *inherent* to monogamy, *is* inherent to polygamy, because, under a polygamous system, a portion of the men, in order to find a sexual partner, *must* “poach” them. In fairness to Mr. Mar-

tin however, the problem of “husband-poaching” *is* in fact commonly associated with monogamous cultures. But the ultimate cause of this is, I believe, a *real* gender ratio imbalance caused by war. The social chaos created by such a war will continue to affect the next generation because a little bit of a “culture of acceptance” will always be created by immoral activity and passed on to the next generation. And the cumulative effect of many devastating wars can indeed bring us to our situation today; that is, one in which there is an imbalance between the numbers of *marriageable* men and woman without there being a real gender ratio imbalance.

Mr. Martin thought that I might be “implying that a *need* to correct disparity in numbers between unmarried marriageable men and unmarried marriageable women is the primary concern for those who promote Biblical polygamy.” Well, whether I think this or not is irrelevant to the purpose of my paper. The purpose of my essay was to discuss why the Fisher principle helps disprove a theory presented in my book and to draw out a couple of other implications from these findings. It had nothing to do with ethics or a desire to prove or disprove “Biblical polygamy.” I agree that correcting this gender disparity might not be the *primary* concern of advocates of biblical polygamy, but it’s certainly one of the main ones (see Martin Madan’s *Thelyphthora*, Clyde Pilkington’s *The Great Omission*, and *We Want For Our Sisters What We Want For Ourselves* and many other pro-polygamy books). It’s also the only argument under consideration here. Again, my essay is not supposed to be an attack on biblical polygamy, but even if it was, to simply address one of the main arguments commonly used in support of polygamy does not qualify as a “straw man argument.” Accusing me of a straw man argument is itself a straw man argument.

Mr. Martin says that “largest reason why I object to Mr. Anderson’s analysis is that he bases it on at least two underlying questionable assumptions: (1) Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution; and (2) that a one-to-one gender ratio represents an imperative ideal.” Let me deal with the second objection first. If, by “imperative ideal,” he means that we *ought* to have gender parity, then he has misunderstood me. I do not discuss “oughts” or “ideals.” I only deal with the fact that the Fisher Principle does, *in fact*, insure that there will be a roughly one-to-one gender ratio. He also says that “our culture has given no indication that it is significantly troubled by a failure on its

part to approximate gender ratio parity.” I’m not sure what he means here because our culture does, in fact “approximate gender ratio parity.” There are more women who want to get married than men, perhaps, and this does cause trouble, but there is no gender ratio imbalance in our current culture. Since there is no “failure” here and there *is* “trouble,” I’m not sure what he’s talking about. Maybe he can elaborate further.

Mr. Martin also asserts that my analysis is based on “Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution”; in other words, my “thesis is built on the sand of evolution.” In this case, I don’t know how I could have made myself clearer. Let me quote from my essay:

*The Fisher Principle explains why there always tends to be an equal number of males and females born in every species of life where there are such things as males and females. This fact rests on **two universally-recognized assumptions** and the **logical implications** which flow from them. First, it is a fact that some families tend to produce more male offspring and some families tend to produce more female offspring. Second, the tendency of a couple to produce more of one gender than the other is determined, at least partially, by genetic factors.*

Let me say from the outset that I am a young earth biblical Creationist and that I believe that Darwin’s theory that all life arose through a purely unintelligent process of random mutation and natural selection is false. My thesis does not rest on this false theory. It rests on the “two universally recognized assumptions” mentioned above and their “logical implications.” Essentially, the process I am referring to is a type of “natural selection” because any time there is slightly less of one gender than the other, the former will be at a reproductive advantage and spread their genes more until the “shortage” disappears. Sure, Darwin believed in and taught the concept of “natural selection.” Yes, Ronald Fisher was an evolutionist. But all young earth creationists also accept these assumptions and, to my knowledge, they are not disputed by anyone. My thesis rests on nothing more than these two universally recognized facts and their necessary implications. If someone wants to discredit the conclusions of my essay, they have to show why these *particular* assumptions are false, or that the logic used to derive implications from them is invalid. Mr. Martin is not the only one who has gotten the impression that my essay was based on

Darwin’s theory of evolution in some sort of general sense. But I hope this explanation will put such nonsense to rest forever.

I agree with what Mr. Martin says about feminism and the differences between men and women. I discuss this in my book. I talk about how the biological differences between males and females could have and, indeed, have inclined *men* to polygamy more than women (p.17-20). There’s no question about it. Martin says that I ignore “the fact that the incidence of polygyny is less a matter of a disparity between raw numbers of available single men and single women than it is driven by the fact that males far outnumber females when it comes to those who avoid marriage like the plague.” Let me quote from my essay:

*But for us in North America in the current generation, disease, accidents, and especially war are not huge killers like they used to be. Other things have taken their place. There are 15 times more males in the prison system than females. There also seems to be more homosexuals and pornography addicts among males than among females. So, in our day, males have found other ways of eliminating themselves from the mating market. I think it’s fairly safe to say that, in our culture today, as a result of prison, homosexuality and porn addiction, there are not more than 90 marriageable males for every 100 females.*

Does it sound like I “ignore the fact that polygyny is driven by the disparity of marriageable males to females when it comes to those who avoid marriage like the plague” like he claims? I recognize that there is an excess of marriageable females to marriageable men. And yes, this disparity *is* the result of natural biological differences between the sexes. But it cannot be blamed on these differences *alone*. Rather it is these natural differences interacting with *other* factors, such as a history full of devastating wars. Martin says that he believes the ratio is far less than 90:100 when it comes to marriageable people. This might be so. Maybe it’s 70:100. I don’t how someone would go about calculating this. But the thing is this: If polygamy became just acceptable enough that these 30% of women found good husbands and good polygamous homes, what happens to the 30% of men who were not interested in marriage? We have to realize that “the sheer number of men who entirely remove themselves from the marriage market” only exists because *uncommitted* sex is very available. Why

commit if you don't have to? Or, "why buy the cow if the milk is free?" If you take these "extra" women and exclusively unite them with stable men who already have wives, these "extra" men are "left high and dry." Either they shape up and get responsible enough to commit themselves to a wife or they don't pass on their genes. So, in a generation or two, this class of irresponsible men has all but disappeared and you're back to a one-to-one ratio of marriageable men to women. This does away with the social need for polygyny on the one hand; yet it creates a far greater acceptance of it, since a far larger percentage of the future generation will have grown up in polygamous households and will have adopted the views and inclinations of their parents. "No need" and "great acceptance" is a recipe for disaster.

Mr. Martin then addresses the subject of government. What he says here makes me think that he must be getting my essay confused with someone else's, because I have never been in favor of government intervention. Mr. Martin should have referred to my book since my attitude concerning the state is reflected there (p. 73-75). It puzzles me that anyone could come away with the impression that he did. But just in case anyone else misinterpreted me in the same way, let me explain. Mr. Martin stumbles over my use of the word "allowed/allowing." I use the word six times. Here they are in *context*:

*A lot has been said among advocates of polygamy about an "excess of females" in our current society. Apparently this excess of females can best be handled by allowing some men to have two or more wives.*

This quotation refers to advocates of polygamy wanting polygamy to be acceptable in the eyes of anyone – government, society, just anyone. It should be obvious that there's no promotion of government regulation here.

*I suggested that this would then lead to an increased production of girl babies (just as an increased demand for any other good will result in an increased production of that good), thus allowing all men to have at least one wife, while allowing some men to have more than one.*

This quotation refers to mathematics itself "allowing," in a metaphorical sense, every man to have at least one wife and a few to have more than one. This

is due to the bride price somehow creating a surplus of females. Nothing here about government whatsoever.

*Whether polygamy is allowed or not makes no difference. If it isn't allowed, then some of the girls will be left out and won't reproduce. If it is allowed, then all of the girls will reproduce, but the men will reproduce even more.*

This quotation could refer to government, perhaps, or just societal norms in general. For the purpose of the argument it doesn't matter. My point here is to show that whether or not polygyny is practiced does not change the fact that families which produce the rarer sex will have more offspring in general. No promotion of government regulation here either. As should be clear by now, I never use the term allowed/allowing in the context of government power and I do not even hint at promoting government intervention. Thus, the several paragraphs he devotes to criticizing my supposed love of government can be dismissed as a colossal straw man argument.

Mr. Martin thinks that I overemphasize "the degree to which the average man would be significantly more likely to engage in formal polygamy simply if social ostracism costs were lowered." Practically all pro-polygamists believe that the removal of social stigma would result in an increase of polygamy sufficient to take care of the needs of the "extra women." Otherwise, one of the main arguments in favor of polygamy would be undermined. And if my estimate of 90 marriageable men to 100 marriageable women is too high (perhaps it is 70:100 or 80:100), then that alone represents a significant increase. Furthermore, I don't believe that social stigma is "far down the list of why the *average* modern man would likely never choose to be married to more than one woman at a time." Social ostracism is a very painful thing. If this were not a cost involved with practicing polygamy (and as anyone who practices or advocates it will tell you, it is a *huge* cost), then the demand for engaging in polygamy would go up dramatically. We can't tell exactly how much. But economic logic tells us that it *must* go up. Furthermore, if social stigma were truly removed, then women, themselves, would also be far more accepting of it. And if this were the case, then "juggling" two women would be far easier than it would be in our current cultural climate, doing away with the claim that the idea of "I can't even handle the wife that I have, let alone two" is the chief reason

men would avoid it. Indeed the only thing that would keep a widespread acceptance of polygamy among the “men” from creating an increased demand for it would be the fact that the vast majority of women still hate the idea with a passion *and* continue to have a say in who they marry.

Mr. Martin says that he disputes my “assertion that removing polygamy’s current stigma would lead to the use of artificial means to produce more girls than boys.” If, by “removing polygamy’s current stigma,” he means removing it to the extent that both men *and* women are totally okay with it (but not okay with polyandry, of course), then we *would* probably see very high bride prices and probably artificial attempts to create more females, followed by violence. Or more likely, we would go straight to violence. Just imagine if most women didn’t care whether or not a prospective mate was married or not. Just imagine if all she looked at was characteristics such as wealth, charm, responsibility, integrity, etc. and that deep down inside she was not bothered a bit by the fact that her man had another woman. Does anyone have the slightest doubt what would be the result?! There would be a massive surplus of men completely unable to acquire a mate. Doesn’t this sound a bit problematic? Yes, I think Mr. Martin is right in that we will never see people using artificial means to create more girl babies in response to rising bride prices. Mr. Martin is not the only one to see a problem with my theory of artificially increasing the female/male ratio. Another believer in biblical polygamy, after reading my essay on the Fisher Principle, also saw this error. He showed me why my theory was in error. And I wish I had had this insight prior to writing my paper. He said that such high bride prices would never arise because, if women were in such high demand, they would include, as part of their bride price, a demand for a promise “to forsake all others.” In other words, it is the deeply instinctual, biologically based hatred of polygamy by women which would forever keep it from being the social problem I was worried about. So, astronomical bride prices could never arise precisely because you could *never* remove the social stigma against it amongst the women.

As a side note, it would not require “devoting precious resources” to increase the likelihood of conceiving girls. Such methods are simple and free.

As another side note, China’s gender ratio is about 108 males to 100 females. And if they have the prob-

lem we have here in America, that of a large number of men who have removed themselves from the marriage market, then they also have a shortage of marriageable men.

My parenthetical remark that “maybe cultures that favor boy babies have a fair amount of polygamy in their past” was an off-hand remark, a concept that I have not explored.

I’m not claiming this as a proven theory. I’m just saying that something like this is what we would predict in a culture that engages in any kind of artificial sex selection in favor of girls. I may indeed be wrong in this theory. However, a careful reading of the paragraph reveals that, in context, the idea is not based on “antecedence” like Martin claims. And comparing my claim to that of claiming that hunting, breastfeeding, and public urination is related to gender preference is a sign of confusion and Mr. Martin needs to read the passage more carefully before he comments on it.

We would predict that societies where polygamy is more prevalent would be more violent because, under widespread polygamy, it is mathematically impossible for a portion of the male population to find an outlet for their sexual desires, especially given the fact that after a few generations, the large majority of the men would be the sons and grandsons of men who have the qualities to attract multiple women despite stiff competition. Who, in their right mind, would not see this as a recipe for violence? Any community experiencing such permanent internal violence is far less likely to possess that relative security of property rights necessary for the capital accumulation needed to form a long lasting civilization. This is what economic theory predicts. And the empirical evidence bears this out. All the great civilizations were outwardly monogamous, at least for the mass of commoners (their polygamous rulers were such a tiny fraction of the population that it barely made a difference). And yes, I know that *outwardly* monogamous societies engaged in a lot of extramarital affairs. But these affairs were not socially sanctioned and therefore not permanent. When these women were cast off, they went back into the mating market. So there was never a surplus of men who had absolutely no way to find a mate. Of course, such promiscuity causes huge social problems of its own, but not on the scale of a system which totally deprives a large group of men of all hope of ever finding a mate.

As for America, if the early day colonists had come to America with an ethic, held by both men *and* women, that said that a second, polygynous marriage is just as legitimate as a first, monogamous marriage, there would have been constant civil war. Their resulting internal weakness would have made them vulnerable to the French or Spaniards or whoever and eventually, these people would have been conquered and conformed themselves to the monogamous social system of their conquerors. America is powerful and aggressive in the world because it can afford to be. It has a wealthy tax base to draw from. This wealth is the result of the large scale capital accumulated and invested over the last 200 years. And this was only possible because property rights in America have been relatively secure. This country *has* been relatively peaceful internally through most of its history. If, early on, we had 20% or 30% of the male population totally barred from any hope of sexual companionship, the violence would not have allowed the relative internal harmony necessary for America's eventual wealth and power. As for the rise in violent crime in the last fifty years or so, other factors are responsible, such as the war on drugs, decrepit government education, forced integration of blacks and whites, and probably a host of other things.

This brings us to the next point. Mr. Martin has a problem with my claim that:

*Keeping the Fisher Principle in mind, and applying a little deductive reasoning, it's easy to see why the average person (whether male or female) in modern Western Civilization reacts with such disgust, revulsion and unthinking emotionality to the idea of a man having more than one wife. We are literally genetically predisposed to be that way. Natural selection has made it this way.*

Mr. Martin doesn't believe it has anything to do with a genetic predisposition but that it has more to do with 1500 years of brainwashing by the Catholic Church and fear of social ostracism. I have explained why cultures in which both men *and* women truly accept and live polygyny while firmly rejecting polyandry or any other sexual relations outside the marriage covenant cannot survive and thrive in the long run and will be outcompeted and defeated by those cultures which reject such a system. And history has proven this to be generally true. Men *and* women who generally accept the romantic, monogamous "ideal" will tend to have more offspring in the

overall scope of human history because their civilizations will do better than those which adopt other ideas about sex. This cannot be explained solely by the idea that they were brainwashed by the Catholic church. It is merely an example of natural selection, which, again, is a common sense principle accepted by everyone, including biblical creationists. I see the Catholic Church's attitude about polygamy as more of a *reflection* of the general antipathy toward polygamy common throughout Western Civilization rather than one of the chief causes of it. And this general antipathy, I believe, has at least partially, a genetic basis. Although the ultimate reason for Western Civilization's rejection of polygamy may be genetic, institutions such as the Catholic Church have risen out of Western Civilization and then certainly did help reinforce these attitudes. However, I think that we place way too much responsibility for anti-polygamy attitudes on purely cultural forces. I myself have also made this error (see my book p. 41).

Now I want to take a moment to focus on men and women individually. First, let's look at women. Consider the case of a young teenage girl who grew up in a polygamous family and grew up believing in polygamy. If such a girl sees her boyfriend, or a boy she has a "crush" on, kissing another girl, that stings her deep down inside. She might then tell herself that it's wrong to feel that way, that it's wrong to want a man all to herself, and she might eventually put up with the idea like all her father's wives have, but not without a great deal of pain, effort, support from other women and other activities to distract her. That stinging feeling (call it jealousy if you want) is natural and is hardwired into the female brain. It has absolutely nothing to do with Catholic Church brainwashing. The severity of that natural feeling might vary somewhat from individual to individual and from culture to culture but it seems to be universal among women to one degree or another. Women are clearly and obviously hardwired to be more opposed to polygamy than men. First, as we've already discussed, any society composed of women who, deep down in their heart, enjoy sharing their man, would lack the internal harmony necessary to survive. Societies composed of women with a natural hatred of "man-sharing" would do far better. The second reason is found in my book (p. 41-42). Even in a simple "hunter-gatherer" economy, where resources are extremely scarce, women who strongly desire to possess a man exclusively will do better and have more offspring in the long run because *all* of his resources

can go to *her* and *her* children and not be divided with other women and *their* children. So, women's natural disgust and revulsion at the thought of polygamy is genetic, not learned.

Now let's look at men. Men obviously tend to be friendlier toward polygamy. As I discussed in my book (p. 21-23), men are hardwired to be attracted to women; in particular, to those women who manifest most fully those characteristics which both differentiate women from men and those which are most closely associated with optimum fertility. It's easy to see why this continues to be the case. More fertile women tend to have more offspring than less fertile women. So men who are attracted to more fertile women will have more offspring than those who are attracted to less fertile women. The vast majority of men have inherited this tendency from those ancestors. But a man with polygamous desires is not at an advantage in the long run. It is true that a man with multiple women can pass on more of his genes, *initially*. Physically, a man could easily father 100 children. But, assuming there is no welfare state or any other institution to take care of them, how well are they going to do? How many of them are going to survive to pass on their own genes. Furthermore, if I live in a society that allows me (through social norms or government rules or church laws or whatever) to impregnate so many women, I either live in a society engaged in rampant promiscuity or strict polygyny, both of which will lack the social stability and internal harmony necessary to survive. So, in the long run, my genes do not proliferate by being able to marry multiple women. Even in the case of men, I believe there is somewhat of a natural, genetically predisposed distaste for polygyny, especially when we see it in other men. If we engage in it ourselves, or desire to, then we lose this distaste because the benefits in our own case tend to outweigh and blind us to this slight prejudice. Also, in order to attract women, practically all of whom hate the idea of sharing their man, men with a dislike for polygamy themselves would be at an advantage over men who openly declared their desire for it. Thus, in a couple of different ways, natural selection also favors men who somewhat dislike polygamy.

Why then, do men desire it at all? I don't believe that most men really naturally desire *multiplicity* of wives *per se*. What they *do* desire is a woman who meets their needs. A married man, with a wife who meets his needs, does not desire polygamy. Unmarried men

live in hope of finding such a woman, and thus, don't desire polygamy. A married man, without principles, will either divorce his wife and try to marry a woman who does meet his needs or he will engage in secret affairs with women who do meet his needs. It is only in the case of very principled married men, married to women who do not meet their needs, and who have the courage to take a stand for a very unpopular cause, that we see a genuine desire for polygamy.

God did not create men to desire multiple women, but He *did* create men to desire a *woman*. And when she is not the woman that he craves, he will look elsewhere. If she is, he will not. It's as simple as that. I've talked to people who are polygamists and to people who desire it, and it usually comes down to his wife not being attractive enough or not giving him enough sex. Indeed, isn't this obvious? *All* men who marry do so because they want to be in a sexual relationship with the woman. If it wasn't for sex, they wouldn't marry her. And there's nothing wrong with this. It is a legitimate motivation for marriage. Would-be polygamists might retort, "Oh, no, I just want another wife because my current wife needs help around the house or with the kids, or, my wife just needs the companionship" or "so and so is a poor single mother without anyone else to take care of her." Then why not hire a housekeeper? Help your wife make some friends. Help the poor single mother. Show Christian love to her. Pray that she finds a husband. All this can be done without marrying the other woman. The only thing which cannot be done without marrying her is to have sex with her. Thus, sex and the sexual attraction leading up to it is the real motivation for wanting to be a polygamist. We live in a fallen and broken world and no spouse is ever going to be perfect. Maybe men need to be more tolerant of their wife's imperfections. Men are also not perfect. Women also have needs. If those needs go unmet, she might also look to some other man to meet those needs. On the other hand, perhaps we should shape up and become the type of husband or wife that our spouse craves. Most relevant to the topic of polygamy, women need to take their husbands sexual needs seriously. Nowadays, there is a lot a woman can do with things like clothing, makeup, hairstyles, healthy diet, weight loss, cosmetic surgery, etc. to make herself more attractive for her husband. Women tend to drastically underestimate the importance of physical attraction to their husband. The feminist movement is probably responsible for this relatively recent phenomenon. For women, *be* feminine and *be* a woman

to your husband. Men do not need *multiple* women. But they do need a *woman*.

We do not need polygamy to provide husbands for all those poor women who can't find any. There *are* enough males to go around. Unfortunately, these males know they can get sex without marriage so there's no incentive to live responsible lives and get married. A lot of women would be just as bad, except for the fact that they are the ones left holding the baby and so they tend to smarten up a little faster. How did our culture get to be this way? It is probably due to several interrelated factors influencing and reinforcing one other. Unequal gender ratios following the great

state building wars of the 16<sup>th</sup> through 20<sup>th</sup> centuries played a huge role. The rise of materialistic ideologies in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries played a big role. The rise of the welfare state and government education in the 20<sup>th</sup> century also had a catastrophic impact on the morals of our culture (see my book p. 73-75). The forced integration resulting from the industrialization and urbanization occurring in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century and the feminist campaign to “defeminize” women in the 20<sup>th</sup> century probably also contributed to the destabilization of the family. And of course, all along, a culture of acceptance continued to grow, finally reaching a tipping point in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is probably the first time since the days of the Roman Empire that “anything goes.” So, let me assure you, these poor abandoned women are not the victims of “monogomania” (as Tom Shipley calls it). The solution for these women in the short run, is to show them Christ's love and to take care of them as well as possible (without having sex with them) and in the long run, to form “islands of reasonable people” (as Hans Hoppe calls it), places where men are real men, women are all feminine, there is no welfare state and no reliance on government whatsoever, where education is controlled locally, and ultimately by the parents, and a biblical worldview is inculcated into the minds of the young. That way, others can see our example and imitate us.

Let me end by briefly straying into the realm of ethics and stating my opinion of “biblical polygamy.” My view is that God did allow polygamy at a certain time for a certain purpose and I know that it is not explicitly condemned anywhere in scripture. However, that does not mean that the scriptures portray it as “ideal.” And given my understanding of gender ratios

and why they tend to be one to one, “plural” marriage is an inferior form of marriage at best. I would not advocate breaking up polygamous marriages that already exist. I believe there is sufficient biblical warrant for their continued existence. But neither would I encourage any future ones and I would certainly advocate training up the next generation to reject it. I could say a lot more on this topic but we better save that for another time.

I hope I have adequately answered all of Mr. Martin's points and cleared up all confusion regarding the purpose and meaning of my former essay.

— Mike Anderson  
2015

### Keith Martin's Response

What this really comes down to is a couple guys struggling to understand the world God has given us. In that spirit, I have some apologies. The first is for assuming that Mike based at least some of his Fisher Principle essay on Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. I am glad to be wrong. Mike Anderson, as a young earth Biblical creationist, is even more opposed to Mr. Darwin's musings than am I, so I humbly request his forgiveness. I am also sorry for misunderstanding Mike's use of various permutations of the word ‘allow’; he has satisfied me that he did not intend to prescribe government intervention.

The next is not an apology *per se*, but Mike is on the mark when he criticizes the manner in which I asserted that most men would not be interested in multiple wives. I should have more clearly articulated my position, which is this: that, for reasons unassociated with the acceptability or legality of polygamy, most men will never desire multiple wives; they are averse to polygamy for reasons that include everything from additional provider pressure to increased ‘honey-do’ expectations to being hounded by more than one woman for sexual favors. While on average men are interested in having more sexual partners than are women, a wide range of variability exists within each gender cohort, and many of the men who opt out of marriage have relatively low sex drives. In the locker room, men may talk as if they're sex machines, but reality is something else, and, in private, many men acknowledge that the prospect of having to satisfy two or more women on a regular basis scares the pants off of them. Wanting some

‘strange’ is one thing; wanting to take on another global commitment is quite another. I tend to doubt that the removal of polygamy’s social stigma would inspire vast numbers of men to choose a committed polygamous lifestyle, so I am confident of the following: (a) men who truly want everything associated with having more than one legal wife would be able to meet that desire if polygamy were destigmatized, and (b) men desiring just *one* mate would still be able to meet that desire in the context of legalized polygamy. I base these assumptions on the fact that – in addition to men being unavailable due to death through violence (and this dynamic is not important just because young men are reckless; men also populate 97% of the most violent *but entirely essential* vocational roles) – one of the most notable reasons for the imbalance between available marriageable women and available marriageable men is that more men simply lack sufficient interest in marriage compared to their female counterparts. Men avoid marriage for far more common reasons than the ready availability of uncommitted sex. For many men, putting forth the effort to obtain sexual intercourse is rarely worth it even when no strings are attached (whereas obtaining sexual intercourse does not require as much effort on the part of women, so the effort involved in procuring a mate is less of a factor for them). I therefore do not see how allowing men to have multiple marriages will cause those uninterested men to suddenly become marriage material. After all, the numerous openly-polygamous world cultures have not succeeded in pairing up all women with husbands, even though some men have 3 or more wives – and, by the way, the unmarried men in those cultures are no more violent than the unmarried men in monogamy-only countries.

Mike also asked me to elaborate on my statement that our culture has given no indication that it is significantly troubled by a failure on its part to approximate gender ratio parity. I apologize for being inarticulate; I should have simply stated that *no one cares* about gender ratio parity. Our culture does not even care about the disparity between unmarried marriage-seeking men and unmarried marriage-seeking women. People *do* care about whether they have the freedom to engage in the relationships they want to have (witness the force of the gay marriage debate). Mike’s essay seemed to indicate that he thought gender balance mattered – as in, ‘Hey, the Fisher Principle proves we don’t need to worry about gender parity, so – whew! – there’s no need for polygamy!’ – as if

at best it could be considered a temporary necessary evil. I realize, though – now that I’ve twice read *Economics of Sex and Marriage* (referred to subsequently as *EOSAM*), *Gender Ratio and the ‘Fisher Principle’*, and Mike’s response to my response – that Mike’s conclusions come less from his concern about gender equity than they do from mistaken conclusions about *why* his bride price theory was wrong.

Rounding out my *mea culpas* – and right now I’m imagining straw men swatting each other with brooms, so I don’t want to beat this to death – but I have to acknowledge I could have been more comprehensible when I suggested Mike *might* be engaging in a straw man argument. I was solely focused on the very important distinction between *need* and *desire*. I got the impression Mike mistakenly declared that the paramount concern for Biblical polygyny supporters was to satisfy a *need* unmarried women have for marriage. I asserted that Mike could be setting up a straw man argument when he utilizes the issue of women’s *needs*, because women themselves are more likely to label marriage as something they *desire* than as something they *need*. If I have misunderstood Mike in this regard, then I not only stand corrected but will have to admit to having made my own straw man argument about a straw man argument. (I have a feeling, though, that I could rewrite this paragraph a hundred times without getting those broom-wielding straw men out of my mind’s eye!)

Having made those apologies and caveats, and before returning to the philosophical underpinnings of Mike’s response, I need to address a couple technical issues. The first relates to Mike’s distortion of my reference to statistical principles. I did *not* “categorize the Fisher Principle as a ‘statistical principle that can be applied to everything from intelligence to male pattern baldness.’” Nor did I say the Fisher Principle had anything “to do with baldness, intelligence, or any ‘genetic differences’”. Mike took me out of context by twisting one of my sentences. The first paragraph in my previous response clearly identified **regression back to the norm** (not the Fisher Principle) as that sentence’s “statistical principle that can be applied to everything from intelligence to male pattern baldness.” Furthermore, Mike is misinformed if he believes statistical principles are restricted to applications related to luck or chance. Statistical principles are essential in the study of correlations and causation; empirical science across the board would be *lost* without statistical principles, and science is

in no way limited to the study of chance. The principle brought to light by evolutionist Ronald Fisher in his 1930 book, *The Genetical Theory of Natural Selection*, while applied specifically by Fisher to the gender ratio, is a mathematic explanation for why equity is statistically maintained over the long run in regard to the prevalence of competing exclusive traits in any species as long as two contributors are required to produce offspring. The Fisher Principle specifically explains why gender ratios among humans at birth will almost always remain in a range close to true balance (and if 1:1 isn't a norm being regressed to, I don't know a better example), but the underlying logical explanation is not specific to the Fisher Principle or gender equity; the same process of reasoning explains why a great many other genetic traits remain equitably balanced within the human population. Statistical principles are not restricted to explaining matters of chance such as coin tossing but are numerous and varied in character. Natural selection is at the heart of Fisher's explanation for why gender ratios will always tend to regress to the norm, but, just because something is explained by natural selection does not prevent that explanation from also being mathematical or statistical.

The other technical issue deserving attention is raised by Mike's assertion that a careful reading of his essay paragraph about cultures favoring boy babies would reveal that he presented an idea not based on antecedence. I was not confused in my use of the term 'antecedence' in criticizing Mike's conjecture that "maybe cultures that favor boy babies have a fair amount of polygamy in their past." By its very on-its-face nature, such a statement *implies* antecedence, which simply means that one is suggesting that something in the past (in this case, polygamy) did precede or might have preceded something in the present or future (in this case, the favoring of boy babies). Mike wants to have it both ways here, introducing a biased assertion while saying he doesn't really mean it that way. Nor can he just repeatedly assert without reference or even an appeal to anecdotal experience that a lack of sexual outlets necessarily leads most men to violence. This is a canard that even feminist rape theorists reject. If it were true, then China would be awash in violence, given, as Mike notes, their 108:100 male:female gender ratio. Whether one considers or doesn't consider what percentage of those men are interested in *marrying*, it is undeniable that they have a much greater imbalance than does our culture when it comes to the amount of men lacking available sex-

ual partners. Newspapers from the Chinese diaspora have documented that in large mainland Chinese cities, where the male:female imbalance is significantly greater than their national average, men waiting in lines after work for their turns with prostitutes has become a regular occurrence, further exacerbated on any given night by the majority of men in line not making it into such establishments before having to go home unsatisfied. Perhaps this will eventually lead to violence, but as of yet this is not the case. If Mike wants to imply the antecedence of either polygamy or lack of sexual satisfaction to widespread violence, he needs to present evidence and specific examples. Neither women nor men are monolithic. All women do not abhor \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank), and all men are not prone to \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in this other blank). Some men are prone to violence (evidence exists that, across cultures, specifically men between the ages of 15 and 25 are the most violent, whether or not they have available mates), but the antecedents for that proneness are certainly not limited to whether or not they're getting laid. Some of the most violent sociopaths lack any significant desire to engage in sexual activity. Therefore, it is an empty argument to state that polygamous cultures would be more violent due to it being mathematically more difficult for a portion of the male population to find sexual outlets. One only has to observe how creative people can be in meeting their sexual needs in monogamy-only cultures to realize that men without partners do not have to resort to violence. When one combines this truism with recognizing that the balance of negotiation between men and women tends to be carried out within a generally narrow range of demands, we simply do not need to worry about polygamy leading to catastrophe.

Obviously, I remain in opposition to the general ethos of Mike's Fisher Principle essay. Despite his strong insistence that they are reviews of *what is* rather than *what ought to be*, I do not read either the original essay or his subsequent response as being value-free social theory, and I do not believe any discerning reader would be surprised to learn, upon reading Mike's response conclusions, that his position is that plural marriage is at best an inferior form of marriage. Had Mike described his approach as opinionated or editorial in nature, I would have had far fewer objections to his essay or his response to my response. To take a stand against polygamy and then to point to the mechanism of the Fisher Principle to provide partial support for that stand would

have hardly raised an eyebrow, but instead Mike asserts that his personal point of view does not inform his Fisher Principle-related conclusions, thereby elevating them beyond their actual significance. Mike's book and essay occasionally veer into ethical pronouncements (Mike appears to rely on uninformed, slanted conjecture from too few sources to draw ethical and moral conclusions on fornication, homosexuality and pornography in *EOSAM's* Chapter 9); therefore his belief that he is describing value-free social theory creates a blind spot for him. While he states that, in his essay, he does “not argue that we *ought not* have polygamy,” multiple examples contradict that denial:

- In *Gender Ratio and the Fisher Principle's* 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph (“... this apparent *need* for ‘plural marriage’”), Mike makes his first of many uses of equivalents to the word “need” in reference to whether or not polygamy is justified (e.g., “... no reason for polygamy at all ...”, in the 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph). Such word choices are not arbitrary; instead, they indicate Mike's values bias. His essay, in fact, *ends* with one of these references to need.
- His bias comes through at times in the relaxed use of words that require rigor in their usage. In one such example, Mike says, “In principle, under **normal** conditions, there *are* enough men for every woman to have one all to herself.” This is blatantly inaccurate. The sentence could have been more accurate by substituting ‘ideal’ for ‘normal’ (only, of course, if one considers gender equity to be an imperative), but there is nothing **normal** about there being “enough men for every woman to have one all to herself.” The word ‘normal’ means (a) that which is highly common, or (b) the average situation, or (c) the middle point between far extremes. I addressed this in my first response: normal is not represented by the way things would be if we lived in fantasyland. Normal is what can be characterized as the typical state of affairs, and if any cultures exist in which gender equity exists between interested, marriageable men and interested, marriageable women, those cultures are certainly far outnumbered by the more normative ones in which such women outnumber such men. This is not just the case in the present day; it has likely been the case throughout human history. Mike himself describes this dynamic in *EOSAM* but reverses himself in his essay. One cannot genuinely assert that a lack of any of the major

causes for gender imbalance could be considered normal, now or at any time in history. War is much closer to a constant threat to humanity than it is an occasional disturbance. War is thus a given, as are the constitutional (God-given) differences between men and women, which include aspirational differences, differences in sex drives, different reproductive capacities and differences in modes of attraction toward the opposite sex. Those givens are causative when it comes to determining the relative successes of prohibiting or not prohibiting polygamy.

- Mike sometimes has a bias represented by inconsistency. The best example is what gets the blame for violence: when polygamy is allowed, polygamy gets the blame; when monogamy is the sole standard, violence is blamed on forced integration, improper education and the occurrence of wars.
- Mike's essay assumption that having multiple wives will dilute the resources a man has for each of his children reverses his book's recognition of the extent to which each wife can make her own contributions to family resources.
- Mike states that, if the early colonists had been polygamous, there would have been “constant civil war,” resulting in internal weakness that would have led to their being conquered by the French. (I'm wondering: would that have meant the arrival of French kissing on our shores at an *earlier* or *later* date?)
- He declares that the combination of (a) a lack of necessity for polygamy and (b) great acceptance of polygamy would be “a recipe for disaster.” The term “disaster” has inherently negative connotations. What a switch from book to essay! In *EOSAM*, Mike described a *number* of societal benefits if polygamy were to be permitted. In his essay, the underlying assumption is that societal *disaster* will be produced by men who want extra wives but can't get them. To cite something I purposefully choose because of its known correlation with male-female dating patterns, I would think we can agree that the existence of sports cars is not a *necessity*, that there is also a *great acceptance* of sports cars, and that since their advent a stark contrast has existed between the number of men who would love a sports car and the number of men who can afford to possess one. I doubt Mike

would declare that this is a recipe for disaster.

- He fails to recognize that the problem of poaching spouses is inherently *more* of a problem in monogamy-only societies than it is in ones that permit polygamy. In a monogamous culture made up of real-life men, real-life women and the adult gender disparity that consistently presents itself across cultural lines, many women have to poach husbands just to have *one* husband. Polygamy *inherently* diminishes that problem, because those women have the option of sharing a husband. Polygamy, on the other hand, would only have the potential to lead to a *need* to poach spouses *after* all the excess interested marriageable women were married – and then would only lead to the poaching of wives to the extent that men who truly desired to participate in all of the ramifications of multiple marriages had not already exhausted their numbers. Mike's unfounded assumption that the vast majority of men would not only truly desire multiple wives but couldn't be stopped from being homicidal to procure them represents something other than a look-at-the-facts approach.
- “A married man, with a wife who meets his needs, does not desire polygamy.” What empirical evidence does Mike have to make this declaration? I believe a more reasonable assertion, albeit one not as worthy of being put in writing, would be that a married man who does not desire polygamy, with a wife who meets his needs, is prone to concluding that, since *he's* satisfied with *his* situation, the only thing standing between any other man and full satisfaction is *the right wife*. I, in fact, know some men like that. They don't want more than one wife, and the wives they have meet all their needs. Why wouldn't they mistakenly assume that all men would want exactly what they want or have? Why wouldn't they further mistakenly assume that, even if all men had marital desires identical to theirs, there would be a one-to-one supply of women whose capacities to meet such desires would perfectly match their mates?
- “It is only in the case of very principled married men, married to women who do not meet their needs, and who have the courage to take a stand for a very unpopular cause, that we see a genuine desire for polygamy.” This sentence, biased as it is, is actually generally true – but *only* in the context

of a culture that denies the option of polygamy, and Mike does not place this sentence in that context; he instead places it in the context of an overall attempt to argue that neither men nor women want polygamy.

- Perhaps the most glaring indication of Mike's bias shines through when he declares the intentionality of God Himself in regard to polygamy. “God,” says Mike, referring to the same God Who provided Moses with guidelines for proper behavior in polygamous households without mentioning that polygamy went against His intentions, “did not create men to desire multiple women, but He *did* create men to desire *a woman*.” Willingness to be certain of what *God* wants and doesn't want for one's fellow man when it's not explicitly declared in Scripture has propelled the Roman Catholic Church and its historical allies, which include contemporary anti-sexual conservatives, to be comfortable using any means at their disposal to enforce that certainty.

I realized after reading Mike's recent response that I was guilty of some confusion, so I re-read *Economics of Sex and Marriage*. I would have better represented Mike's point of view had I done that while writing my initial response to his essay. However, after reading all three documents contemporaneously, I discovered that, even besides what he introduces about the Fisher Principle, Mike presents a *number* of conflicting philosophies and conclusions. Before reviewing the book, I was preparing to write that Mike's praxeological and/or anthropological research had led him to different conclusions about polygamy from the ones to which my research had led me, but now I think it would be more accurate to state that Mike is more in disagreement with himself than he is with me. In *EOSAM's* Chapter 8, Mike *refutes* the argument that an insufficient number of women to satisfy all men who want multiple wives would lead to violence, but his Fisher Principle essay *presupposes* that such a situation would lead to violence. Another case in point: in Chapter 7 of *EOSAM*, Mike states, “Polygyny was extremely common the world over before the dominance of European civilization, and is still widely practiced in other cultures,” but he shifts gears by the time he reaches his response, claiming that “all the great civilizations [have been] outwardly monogamous.” To level such a charge in order to justify dismissing polygamy is to write off *every*, or at least *almost every*, culture that existed prior to the Greco-

Roman establishment of the city/nation-state.

The United States of America itself, contrary to Mike's position, does not owe its success to monogamy. To the protection of property rights and other contracts? – sure! Natural resources? – you bet! The best example of free-market capitalism in the world? – of course! A willingness to stand tall to fight for its survival? – without a doubt! A constitution designed with a separation of powers in order to maximize individual freedom? – quite likely! Those are all bedrock foundations for America's survival. This is the first time, though, I have ever heard anyone credit monogamy. Again, I vigorously dispute that large sections of the male population are prevented from acquiring female companionship or that, even if they were, they would simply become mindless marauding animals, but it is ludicrous to assert that we couldn't have survived as a country if 20-30% of American men were totally barred from any hope of sexual companionship. In *EOSAM*, Mike indicates his awareness of how conditions during the conquering of the American western frontier led to prevalent prostitution, but that many-decades-long endeavor, certainly considered one crucial prerequisite to America's eventual long-term success, was characterized by the existence of a great many unmated men – and it did not self-destruct because of that. Certainly more than 30% of the people who participated in taming the frontier in pursuit of establishing population outposts from sea to shining sea were *men* who had little or no access to possible mates. Yes, violence was required in their collective project, but they did not self-destruct due to anger issues. When it comes to the beginning of the American experiment, just a moderate level of research uncovers that the original whites fleeing Europe to establish communities on our Eastern Seaboard were religious descendants of the Anabaptists, whose history included making a very public effort to reestablish Biblical polygyny. History is written by the victors, so the Anabaptists are frequently belittled for their proclivities, but that does not erase the fact that major Reformation figures joined forces with the Roman Catholic Church to obliterate the Anabaptists (Martin Luther, to his partial credit, did not promote their extermination, but he did very actively look the other way). We all learn the shorthand version that America was started by people seeking religious freedom; what most are never told in school is that those freedom seekers weren't predominantly being oppressed by state-based authorities – they were instead fleeing perse-

cution from *Organized Religion*. But, no, according to Mike, fear has nothing to do with why the average modern human being has an unexplained aversion to polygamy!

I would have said that for Mike to deny that fear is the primary motivator is naïve, but this is another example of what seems to be Mike changing his mind. In *EOSAM*, Mike made a global argument supportive of polygamy; in his essay he headed in the other direction, which seems to encourage Mike to deny what he earlier recognized. Fear by definition is what motivates people to avoid social stigma, and my observation is that women tend to be more directly afraid of social stigmatization than men, who are affected by it more indirectly through the women in their lives. Even the degree to which most women prefer to have their husbands all to themselves is based on fear that they'll have trouble competing with other wives if their husbands have sexual options, fear that they or their children will not be fully protected, and fear that they will have to share scarce resources with the offspring of other women. These, though, are only the surface fears and are thus why they more easily reach our conscious awareness. Behind those fears are much more profound fears that relate to centuries of generational fear of the state, of church enforcers, and of the palpable power wielded often enough over the ages when Church and State have combined to enforce their dictates. It's actually an understatement to describe what has occurred as 1500 years of Catholic brainwashing. I particularly love Clyde Pilkington's use of the phrase, "two thousand years have added a thick maze of twisted tales masquerading as the truth." 1500 years ago, during what we now refer to as The Dark Ages, the Catholic Church was wedded for centuries to the ruling state powers of Europe – from The Holy Roman Emperor to the various kings and queens of those nations. If one challenged *that* power structure, one was then subject to something far worse than social stigma. One was, first of all, threatened with eternal conscious torment (Hell) after death, but secondly one was threatened with the promise of incarceration or physical torture – and those threats came from organizations that launched the Crusades, conducted the Inquisition, and dominated armies from China to Scotland. In our recent history, we can remember how beat-down the citizens of the Soviet Union were in the wake of just 50 years of fearing their leaders' purges. How can we legitimately minimize the effect that 1500 years of propaganda initially enforced by

rape and pillage combined with seemingly credible threats of eternal damnation has had on societal acceptance of polygamy? I'm not denying that genetics has a role to play; perhaps those who have been taught to fear the fear-spreaders are, through natural selection, more likely to pass along their fear of those with fear-spreading genes, but fear remains the *paramount* motivator for avoiding entering into a polygamous relationship structure.

If Mike really believes that Roman Catholic Church dogma is a reflection of pre-existing attitudes among its members, then I suspect he is unaware of that Church's 200-year 1<sup>st</sup> Millennium campaign to convince its members to restrict their sexual activity entirely to pleasure-free attempts to procreate – or that that Church introduced celibacy as a requirement for the priesthood during that campaign. Does Mike believe pre-existing attitudes among priests inspired The Roman Church to prohibit them from having wives? Ironically, human nature actually won a partial victory in those centuries, because the Roman Catholic Church was unable to overthrow behind-closed-doors personal desires, but can you seriously identify a more powerful motivation than fear (of excommunication and/or eternal damnation) for survival into the present of the prohibition of priests to marry? Yes, yes, I know full well that the prohibition hasn't stopped all priests from acquiring sexual partners, but – just as with official monogamy – the *façade* of priestly celibacy survives after more than 1600 years. That is a testament to the power of fear to persuade us to censor ourselves when the only rational cause for the censorship is our belief that that censorship will save us from the horror of unpopularity. This amounts to circular logic, as in:

Behavior A is socially stigmatized.

We don't want to be socially stigmatized.

Therefore we are opposed to Behavior A.

Therefore Behavior A *should* be socially stigmatized.

We don't want to be socially stigmatized.

Therefore we remain opposed to Behavior A.

Etc.

To borrow a phrase from William F. Buckley, I think what most impresses me about the *Patriarchs' Journal* is that it is “standing athwart history and yelling, ‘Stop!’” What I assume when reading *PJ* is that, while the publication clearly promotes Biblical polygyny and cultural strengthening of the institution of marriage, it also provides a forum for article authors to represent a wide variety of opinions related to polygamy. I personally am more of a Libertarian than an Old Testament Jew – and am thus in favor of freedom across the board when it comes to entering into marriage contracts. Neither The State nor The Church should have the power to coerce people into fitting into a small collection of molds. There are certainly God-given, natural differences between men and women, but within each gender exists other distinctions that influence relationship choices people make. All individuals within *any* given group do not share all of the same specific characteristics.

Conversely, it is important not to make general conclusions based on what amounts to anecdotal evidence. Extrapolating cultural truisms from individual examples is unreliable, and assigning generalized genetic origins from an anecdotal example is even more unreliable. The same principle applies to assuming that what is best for the majority of people would be even better if we convince the remaining minority that it would be ideal for them as well. Genetic mechanisms do have a tendency to reinforce the prevalence of monogamous marriages, but in my analysis Mike gives this too much weight in coming to his conclusion that plural marriage is inferior. Given that he is a young earth Biblical creationist, I would think it is safe to assume Mike would agree that God is the author of DNA, which means He designed us to be distinctly different from one another based on a dice-roll of nearly unlimited possibilities. Furthermore, God is omniscient, so He knew even before He created DNA how we would turn out. It is thus wrong to assume that the human majority can ever ascertain that those who are idiosyncratic or out of the norm are immoral or antipathetic to the wishes of our Father. I'll provide my own personal individual experience as an example. [Please note that the following is **not** intended to prove that everyone should be polygamous!]

One 9<sup>th</sup> grade day in 1969 rural Texas, sitting in the gym bleachers as was the habit of most students willing away the time between lunch and the next scheduled class, I was holding hands with my girlfriend of

several weeks, talking with her and her best friend, who sat on her opposite side. At one point, her best friend got up, walked around us, sat next to me, and grabbed my hand, holding it in a nearly identical manner to my girlfriend. I was 15 years old, so this situation produced all the physical, hormonal and mental reactions one would expect from an adolescent boy. However, stronger than any of those thoughts and feelings was a sense of being lined up perfectly with the universe. I looked more than once at each girl, and it was obvious that each was entirely aware of what was going on with the other girl's hand. The implication was clear; whether they had planned it or it had occurred spontaneously, I was certain that each approved of the situation and that it wasn't a matter of there being some kind of substantive distinction between how each of them was expressing affection. Just as I was literally having the thought that this seemed so perfect that I must have been wrong about believing that God would disapprove, my girlfriend's best friend said loud enough for both of us to hear, "This is nice," after which my girlfriend laughed and commented, "We're both your girlfriend now" – not a question; just a friendly, matter-of-fact declaration with the unspoken assumption that all three of us would see it the same way. That first day, sitting there holding both of their hands, it didn't even cross my mind that this would cause problems. When the bell rang, we got up and walked our individual ways, the girls into the middle school for their 8<sup>th</sup> grade classes, and I floated on Cloud Nine back over to the high school.

The three of us ate lunch together the next day, and then headed back to the upper levels of the middle school bleachers. Once again, we held hands. Once again, I felt like this was an experience of balanced oneness with God's laws for the universe. Each girl wanted me to be her boyfriend, and they were both willing to share me. Sure, I'm aware of what some reading this have to be thinking, and you'd be right: of course we hadn't thought the whole thing through; of course we hadn't considered all the adult ramifications; and of course we weren't as fully introduced to the complexities of sexual relationships that would be the case for each of us in subsequent years. But no one else our ages had that kind of prescience either, and, in the context of the nature of my experience at that point in my life, I felt like it was perfect. At the same time, I noticed on that second day that a few people were looking askance at the three of us, which alerted me that social disapproval would eventually

demand our attention.

The following day, we held hands again at the top of the bleachers, but the looks of disapproval became increasingly disapproving as the minutes passed. Eventually (inevitably?), another young woman marched up the bleachers and confronted girlfriend #2: "What is it you think you're doing?" calling out #2 by name. "What does it look like?" she replied. "Well, it looks like you're trying to steal your best friend's boyfriend – and right in front of her face." "I'm not stealing her," she retorted; "he can have *two* girlfriends!" Mind you, among the three of us we had not had any kind of serious discussion about this beyond the few words that had passed among us 2 days earlier.

I'll never forget either the words or the particular emotional content with which the confronter responded. She grabbed girlfriend #2's hand away from me, declaring loudly enough to attract the attention of anyone within an 8-row radius, "That's *sick!*" She pulled girlfriend #2 down the bleachers, warning me to stay in my place. Girlfriend #1 then admonished me to escape the gym with her, and when we got outside she informed me she was heading immediately to class because she was so upset and embarrassed about what had just happened. As I wandered in a daze back toward my school, I was stopped by girlfriend #2, who notified me that her confronter had convinced her (*that quickly!*) that she must have been out of her mind to think a boy could have two girlfriends at once – and further explained to me that she would never again touch me or let me touch her. Ever. Under any circumstances. Even in the event that girlfriend #1 and I broke up, which, as it turned out, happened 2 school days later, when girlfriend #1's older brother took me aside to inform me that his entire family had persuaded his sister that I was "sick" (there was that word again) and that she should break up with me. Being the glutton for punishment that I sometimes am, I went to the trouble of having girlfriend #1 confirm it to me. So, within a week I went from two girlfriends to zero girlfriends. I'm sure it doesn't take much imagination to recognize which state felt more perfect and wonderful.

I understand – what we experienced that week was just one of a million micro examples of the macro administration of social stigma justice. I had no question at the time that the heavy hand of the social taboo police had smacked me down. It took me de-

cedes to understand more fully the nuances of how and why such enforcement mechanisms spring into action to punish that which conflicts with established norms. Included in that more sophisticated understanding is my awareness that The Big Hammer is rarely employed to bring truly unique deviants into compliance; as long as an individual behaves in a way that no one else would really *want* to behave, little or no effort is wasted on trying to change that individual. Social pressure is, however, typically brought to bear against people acting outside of the norm in a way that many normal people might want to emulate if they did not fear the social consequences. Mike labels polygamy as a practice that meets this criterion of being desired by a significant amount of people – and he *also* demonstrates his support for the use of stigmatization to effectively prohibit the practice of it. In taking this stance toward marriage choices, though, Mike cannot adequately recognize my actual phenomenological experience or the full *existence* of others who consider themselves capable of thoroughly loving more than one spouse. He posits a world in which, rather than being who I am, I must be someone else. Mike denies that I can legitimately desire to be married to more than one woman. He refuses to appreciate that, no matter how much any *individual* meets all of my other needs, a single woman cannot meet my desire to be married to more than one woman, a desire I have recognized ever since at least as far back as 1969.

Later, as a student in bachelor-level behavioral psychology and in master-level counseling studies that began in humanistic/phenomenological psych and finished in psychotherapy training, I did fall prey for decades to the social services industries' insistence on defining anything either outside of the norm or outside of their latest prescriptions for utopian societal salvation as evidence of some type of mental disfiguration. Along the way, I glommed onto a number of alternative lifestyle options given temporary countercultural approval through promotion by people like my professors, but instead of trying to fit my round peg into a square hole I was simply engaging in the equally futile exercise of fitting into a triangular one. Psychology is at best a very soft science and has demonstrated over time that most of its application has little potential for creating real improvement in people's lives – especially in comparison to turning over one's life to God, which I eventually returned to doing. God made me the way I am for some purpose, and to assume that the large numbers

of people who do not fit into the Normal boxes that the majority of people belong in is to assume that God makes mistakes. Refusing to make that assumption, I instead prefer to seek out explanations that discover Love rather than insisting on interpretations that reward people for thinking they will meet God's approval only if they get Normal – especially given that Normal these days appears to include the perverted belief that most of what Clyde Pilkington refers to as “the divinely appointed pleasures of life” are instead tests of our ability to avoid succumbing to inappropriate temptation. God is Love, however, so, even though He clearly uses evil forces to emphasize to us how dependent on Him we are, I feel confident He does not *judge* us with tests we couldn't help but fail. More simply put: God did not make us horny for the purpose of condemning us for being horny.

Conversely, God also did not make us automatons who simply instinctively act out the programming of our DNA. We are admonished to fellowship with each other, and we are by design social beings, not only to satisfy each other's biological needs but to provide opportunities to influence each other. In my second reading of *EOSAM*, it became clearer to me that Mike incorrectly claimed dominance of genetics over culture. The Nature vs. Nurture Debate raged on particularly powerfully during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and I would agree with those who've declared Nature the champion of the debate. Personality, for example, is far more determined by genetic factors than by cultural ones. However, that does *not* mean that Nature has *vanquished* Nurture as an influence – it's just that Nature is more powerful. *More* powerful, not *overpowering*. In any given individual or group of individuals, culture and genetics interact, and failure to recognize significant contributions from environmental factors colors a number of Mike's conclusions.

I believe Mike's anti-polygamy bias contributed to faulty conclusions in his Fisher Principle essay, but I also believe that those conclusions were fatally flawed because, when Mike realized his bride-price theory was wrong, he settled too quickly on his explanation for *why* he had been wrong. He wondered why no one had caught his error – I blame my own failure to notice on having focused on what I considered to be Mike's more important *EOSAM* accomplishment of applying Austrian economic theory to the realm of marital choices: noting that increasing permissibility of formalized polygamy would affect the relative

value of women vs. men in monetary terms – but perhaps why others didn't notice the error was because, like me, they were not predisposed to define his error as being as significant as he has considered it to be. For my part, I so vigorously applauded his erudite explanation for why women would be more highly valued in a polygamy-friendly culture than they are in polygamy-unfriendly cultures that I failed to concentrate on Mike's proclamation that a significant number of parents would strategically alter the gender of their children for the purpose of satisfying *any* hypothetical demand for additional women.

What if Mike was wrong at page 59 of *EOSAM* when he concluded that only homicide could alter the fundamental one-to-one gender balance? What if he was (a) simply wrong when he went on to conclude that, because (b) the Fisher Principle would always ensure gender equity, polygyny cannot satisfy a disparity between marriageable men and marriageable women, because (c) no disparity will ever actually exist? What if this conclusion is over-stated and/or irrelevant? What if, instead, Mike's bride-price-theory error was his original conclusion that a significant number of people would ever consider manipulating their children's genders for the purpose of profiting financially from their eventual sale of daughters to the highest bidders? What if the Fisher Principle, while explaining an at-birth tendency to maintain gender equity, has absolutely no relevance to the issue of monogamy vs. polygamy? What if the existence of boy-producing families and girl-producing families has no bearing on whether people choose polygamy or vice versa? What if Mike simply came to an incorrect conclusion while writing *EOSAM*, a conclusion that didn't derail his overall theses but a conclusion nonetheless that incorrectly declared that bride prices could escalate to the point that people would purposefully produce more girls in order to turn over a cash profit?

Aside from incorrectly assuming that women could not make their own additional "bride-price" demands on top of what parents require, Mike's mistaken extreme-bride-price conjecture unwittingly assumed a breakdown of the taboo against blatantly treating one's children as commodities, as well as being a failure to take into account the dynamic relationship between supply and demand he himself described in *EOSAM*. Supply-and-demand considerations would discourage men from ever being willing or able to pay bride prices so high that couples would begin to

consider having children for the purpose of selling them in 18 years or so. The USDA currently estimates the future cost of raising a child born this year as being in excess of \$100,000, so one would have to charge a bride price significantly higher than that to produce a worthwhile profit, not to mention overcoming the guilt of commoditizing one's child. That anyone would be willing to pay \$150,000 in today's dollars for a second wife seems ludicrous on its face. Mike did not have to look any further to correct this error. He didn't have to seek out a questionable relationship between gender equity at birth and the incidence or preferability of polygamy. He just needed to remember that the laws of supply and demand would tend to keep things in a *reasonable* range. That would have required a correction, or perhaps an inserted footnote, in a future edition of *The Economics of Sex and Marriage*, instead of the writing of an entire essay. Apparently that wasn't God's plan in the matter, and I'm thankful it wasn't, because I believe Mike's essay has led to a useful discussion, but he wasn't as wrong as he thought he was in the first place. Mike made a mistake, but it wasn't the mistake he ended up thinking he had made – and it wasn't a mistake of the magnitude he concluded it to be.

Mike is also guilty of making a static versus a dynamic analysis of the issue of whether there will be sufficient women for the demand in a polygamy-supportive culture. A specific example is his concurrence with the supporter of Biblical polygamy Mike mentions who declared that very high bride prices would never arise because women would begin to demand that their potential mates forsake all others. Mike, though, didn't have to resort to contemplating extreme scenarios to reach the conclusion that such things as (a) exorbitantly-high bride prices or (b) the instigation of utilizing artificial means to create additional female babies will never occur. All one must contemplate is that the supply-and-demand dynamic will kick in as soon as fewer men are available than women seek (as is the case in the current situation) or as soon as noticeably fewer women are available than men – at which point women would start bargaining for either better husbands or additional marital perks, which, though, would *immediately* create a slowing of demand for those women. Bride price would never increase to the point of fulfilling the desires of all men who, to one degree or another, might want a second wife, because, as the price increased, the overall desire on the part of men to pay the price for a second wife would decrease.

Only extreme individuals will ever be so compelled to meet all their desires that they will pursue those desires no matter the cost. The rest of us react to cost and availability. If women start asking for more than they've previously been seeking when it comes to agreeing to marry, then on average men will become less compelled to seek them as wives – and vice versa, of course: the more men require, the less likely women will be to seek them as husbands. Such human choices do not swing on pendulums that only reverse once they've reached an extreme; they are *always* seeking stability (regressing to the norm), so I consider it absurd to contemplate a situation in which we would even reach the pure paradox of women demanding monogamy from their husbands in order to agree to be second wives. Instead, whether in a supposed monogamy-only culture or in one that does not criminalize polygamy, the terms of negotiation between potential partners will ebb and flow around a reasonable center of demands. It's just that that reasonable center will exist in somewhat different 'locations' depending on whether or not polygamy is forbidden. When monogamy is the only approved option, the reasonable center of demand is placed at a point where *most* women receive an unfair official advantage over men but a significant minority of women is left out in the cold. Later in his response, Mike exhorts concerned men to rescue excess single mothers by providing them financial assistance and help around the house while refraining from having sex with them, thus eliminating the preeminent reason for marrying them. I would counter that, putting aside how one interprets the motivations of the men involved, this prescription is *easily* characterized as still leaving those women out in the cold. Rather than recognizing that the excess women have generally the same range of needs and desires for intimate affection and sexual gratification that the wives of monogamous men have, Mike inherently treats sex in that prescription as something that men *inflict* on women – a viewpoint that the coalition between feminists and works-oriented Calvinists is happy to promote, but one which I declare to be not only abhorrent and anti-sexual but also anti-Love and in opposition to a position of respecting the manner in which God created us. Of course women *in general* hate the idea of polygamy with a passion; they've been brainwashed over centuries to believe that each woman is *entitled* to have a husband all to herself whether she meets the needs of her husband or not. In a system in which a woman is reinforced to believe that she is entitled to limit her husband's sexual

expression to herself but he is *not* entitled to sexual fulfillment, why wouldn't women grow comfortable thinking that they can punish their men for wanting more in the arena of companionship, sexuality and affection?

The postmodern feminist perspective has cemented the power that women wield over men in this regard by asserting that male sexual desire is oppressive toward women and does not *deserve* to be satisfied. Given the current unconscious ubiquity of this feminism-butressed perspective, it is no wonder that so many men act like they're engaging in a eunuch competition. Mike's essay similarly puts the female side of the genetic equation on a pedestal while simultaneously dismissing the male side. I'll be glad to stipulate that *generally* women are hard-wired to prefer monogamy and that *generally* men are hard-wired to be attracted to women; but don't we also have to acknowledge that *generally* men are hard-wired to prefer polygamy (which would especially be the case if the costs were as low as they currently are for women preferring monogamy) *and* that women are *generally* hard-wired to be attracted to *men*? Where is the logic behind organizing society to show full deference to one side of the gender divide? It almost seems axiomatic that the best long-term strategy would be to create a balance between the positions of the two sides of the monogamy/polygamy dichotomy. Within that context, isn't allowing freedom of choice the most reasonable option?

Mike's prescriptions for men, though, while overly idealistic when it comes to ensuring a satisfying marriage, do contain some inherent validity. I agree with those Bible scholars who assign primary responsibility for the state of a marriage to the husband. So, certainly, men should thoroughly love their wives. Men should thoroughly protect their wives. Men should thoroughly ensure that their wives are provided for (which does not prevent women from making their own contributions to that provision). And men should look inward when seeking solutions for their dissatisfactions in life. However, Mike would have to ignore the realities of human nature and natural selection that he typically respects to believe that making the most of the situation through self-improvement and enhanced treatment of one's spouse is going to erase certain baseline realities that prevent marriageable men as a class from achieving companionship and/or sexual satisfaction if all men are limited to one mate at a time.

There's an axiom about how a picture is worth a thousand words. Advanced Statistics teaches its students how to compile and graph two- and three-dimensional representations of combined sets of related empirical data. Please bear with the following attempt to boil down 2 years of instruction into a set of mental images that, I hope, will help demonstrate certain obstacles that, in the context of monogamous marriage being the only viable relationship choice, would frustrate any attempt to resolve male-female differences through counseling and good intentions. Imagine a three-dimensional bell curve, which would look a lot like a bell, oddly enough. A two-dimensional bell curve plots the prevalence of a specific characteristic over a continuum in which the majority of responses are grouped together in the middle with outliers trailing off in either direction, but the three-dimensional bell will plot (at least two) different specific characteristics over (two or more) different continuums, graphing how those individual bell curves will impact each other. For our bell we will consider *ranges* of orientation for both men and women toward being in a committed intimate relationship (bell curve 1), and *average levels* of interest in sexual activity (bell curve 2). If we created separate bells for males and females, we would notice that the female bell would be a symmetrical one with very small edges (similar to an Easter bonnet), whereas the male bell would be quite lopsided and would have a very wide edge on one side (much like one of those caps with something like an "I'd rather fish than shop" message on its flat front and whose dome leaned seriously off to one side but had a long, thin front brim); this is because men generally have higher sex drives, which drives the dome part of their bell over to one side, but men who are generally disinterested in marriage (and also generally possessed of sex drives low enough to dissuade them from going to the trouble of being as sexually aggressive as is generally necessary in male-female relationships, which includes subjecting themselves to the potential embarrassment of impotence and/or rejection) constitute a significant minority, thus creating the wide edge on the front of the bell. In other words, the brim of the lopsided male bell would represent a large portion of those men who aren't sufficiently interested in marriage.

Men and women do not exist in separate universes – or separate bell-curve hats. When it comes to the issue of marriage, they don't even exist as independent actors milling around within a bell-curve hat,

so we have to take this a step further. Imagine, now, a 3D bell curve representing a monogamous culture that matches men and women within it in a 1:1 fashion. Representing *actual* mates and *potential* mates, we'll assume for this exercise that there is one man for each woman and artificially exclude the 1.5% of the population that prefers homosexual matchups. What will this look like? Well, this bell is *slightly less* lopsided than the male bell but contains edges *significantly more* like the male bell than the female bell. Why is the combined bell basically just a softened version of the male bell (a slightly lopsided traditional baseball cap instead of a lopsided trucker's cap)? Well, the point of using our imagination this way is to formulate a realistic viewpoint of how men and women pair up in our officially-monogamy-only society. Generally speaking, women are more oriented toward getting married (at least once, which correlates with men tending to be quicker to *remarry* after a divorce). Women are also more oriented toward having children, whereas men are, generally-speaking, more desirous of sexual activity than are women. The combination of these two dynamics in the 3D male-female bell curve means that the majority of male-female pairings in the dome of the bell will be marriages in which the man has a higher sex drive than his woman, whereas the pairings around the edges will be of women who are interested in being married and men who are not (their pairing, of course, will usually *not* be a marriage). OK, so what? Just their bad luck, right? If those women would just learn to apply their makeup more skillfully, er, I mean, if they would just be a little bit more persuasive, then they might be able to poach, er, I mean, win the heart of one of the *marriageable* men and get themselves into the dome cohort. Which, of course, would put some other poor female soul out in the cold (or on the brim), but, hey, nothing would stop *her* from stealing, er, poaching – oh, my goodness, I just can't seem to say this properly – what I *mean* to say is that she could gently draw someone else's husband's attention to the possibility that he might be able to seriously trade up by acquiescing to *her* charms and, it goes without saying, dumping his current ball-and-chain.

So, any time you see a middle-aged husbandless woman who would have liked to have married and had children – or a man who behaves for all intents and purposes as someone who will never have any desire to get married – you can think, "Ah, there's someone from the brim of the bell curve cap." How-

ever, it is not just the disparity of raw numbers that works against Mike's prescription being an antidote for unsuccessful marriages or lack of male sexual satisfaction. The numbers issue just accounts for why the edges are populated by women who want to be married and men who don't. Imagine that, for the sake of furthering this exercise, we have the power to ignore the edges of the 3D bell curve. What would be left?

The better question is: Why is it still lopsided? The answer is two-fold:

- (1) On average, the women tend to have a greater desire for marital permanence; and
- (2) On average, the men tend to have higher sex drives.

Only a minority of the men in the married-pair dome have a real hope for full sexual satisfaction unless they dull their desire with exhausting hobbies, dangerous outdoor sports or alcohol or other drugs – because, on average, the women have lower sex drives than do the men. This is just God's Design, or, as the atheists put it, Nature's Way, a situation amplified by how much effort men and women *do* put into pairing themselves up with partners who have relatively equal sex drives, but this just means that, instead of almost every man across the board being paired up with a woman who doesn't want to fool around as much as he does, most men who have average to lower-than-average sex drives find themselves paired up with women who are, in actuality, hornier than average for their gender, but the men and women in those pairs are sexually well-matched. Those folks are thus properly paired in the context of being permitted only one spouse, but then who is left over? Well, outcomes are more varied than I'm describing in this simplified explanation, but there is no way around the fact that many high-drive men are paired with low-drive women. The *well*-matched men look around at the *mis*-matched men and say, "Hey, *I'm* satisfied, and you probably would be too *if you treated your woman better.*" However, to take that tack is an approach that ignores basic constitutional differences between men and women, as well as to fall prey to that post-modern feminist thinking that says anything non-optimal about women has to be the fault of mean, nasty, rascally, oppressive men.

It's time to stop labeling men who want more sexual

interaction as wolves and women who want less as damsels in distress. Perpetuating those myths for the sake of avoiding questioning the degree to which we knuckle under to the arbitrary conventions of the world is simultaneously failing to respect the manner in which God purposefully made men and women. It is simply a *given* when God created men and women to be so different that, within the context of limiting one man to one woman and vice versa, the men are generally going to be less than satisfied with their sex lives no matter how pious they are or how eagerly they imbibe Ken Keyes' *Handbook to Higher Consciousness* philosophy. In a system that limits everyone to monogamy, and given the average disparity, for every man who finds a mate who meets his sexual needs and desires, there is another man who must accept having his met far more infrequently than he would reasonably desire – and we can't Fisher Principle our way out of *that* conundrum.

Let's not, though, get sucked into the trap of over-emphasizing the sexual component of why some men desire more than one wife. Certainly, sexual variety is well-established in empirical studies as something desired more by men than by women, but what Mike doesn't address or even acknowledge is that most men who will be sufficiently motivated to create legal contracts with more than one woman are predominantly men who want to be husbands in *every* sense of the word to more than one woman. These men do not just want another sexual outlet. They want to *love* more than one woman. They want to provide financial and/or emotional support to more than one woman. They want to protect more than one woman. They want to be the head of more than one "family." Often, they want to have children with more than one woman, and along with that they also want to provide support, guidance and love for all of their children. Metaphorically speaking, these are men with bigger than average hearts, and they want to share their hearts and minds as well as their bodies. Admittedly, the Fisher Principle, as a genetic explanation, most specifically addresses the sexual relationships between men and women, but when Mike begins offering his prescriptions for meeting love needs without polygamy, he not only demonstrates his ethical bias against polygamy but fails to recognize that, among the male population, there is a wide range of willingness and desire to be loving across the spectrum of love's possibilities. Instead of recognizing that some men have more love to share than one woman may even want to absorb or engage

with, Mike demonstrates the standard error exhibited by typical adherents of Organized Christianity: identify the sin, establish guilt for the sin, and prescribe penance for the sinner, toward the end of earning some form of (Heavenly, worldly or marital) salvation. He thus fails to acknowledge that, even with an abundance of advance research and caution, a person who has an overflowing amount of love to give can end up being married to someone who simply doesn't want to be loved anywhere near as much as the love her partner has to give; someone with a big heart can end up with someone who generally wants to refrain from matters of the heart, whether that be sexual love, supportive love, companionship love, co-parenting love, protective love or all of the above. For the sake of appeasing those uncomfortable with the notion of polygamy, Mike's essay and subsequent response damns the heretofore-described big-hearted person to a life in which s/he must continuously be thwarted in her/his expression of love. In doing so, he betrayed his intention to write a value-free, non-directive essay that would only briefly stray into the realm of ethics. This is especially puzzling to me, because *EOSAM* did such a good job of articulating how beneficial polygamy could be to so many additional women and men.

Mike says we have to realize that the number of men who remove themselves from the marriage market exists only because uncommitted sex is very available. I find it hard to imagine, though, given that the monogamy imperative is only one of many dynamics characterizing our culture, that the prevalence of commitment-free sex would come close to being eliminated if polygamy were to be added as an acceptable option. As long as women exist who ask for little in return, there will be men who avail themselves of noncommittal sex. However, when men are interested in marriage, they look way beyond sexual satisfaction – and needing to be desired as a human being as well as a male lover becomes highly elevated. Men on the prowl use very different selection criteria than do men looking for long-term relationships. In addition, to whatever (I suspect minimal) extent pornography is siphoning off potential husbands, the acceptance of polygamy will have no effect on the availability of the Internet, which has transformed access to porn from something engaged in by desperate deviants or those lucky enough to have bathroom *Hustlers* into an activity available at a mouse click or a wave of a hand over a smart phone. Absent some global disappearance of sufficient energy to

produce and power wireless devices (not to mention workplace computers, where statistics demonstrate that most pornography is accessed), readily-available porn has already done most of the damage it may or may not have done to the marital pool.

What I continue to suspect that Mike fails to recognize is that, even if we could eliminate war, prison, homosexuality and pornography, significant numbers of men would still avoid committed relationships. They form part of the normal range of human maleness: men for whom even casual sex isn't worth the effort one has to put into it within our easy-sex-availability culture. As of yet, genetic science has not isolated a DNA code or other genetic marker predicting male lack of motivation to marry, and such men are liberally sprinkled among families who also have their share of men who do demonstrate marital motivation. So the question of what happens to the 10% or 20% or 30% of men who would hypothetically remain unmarried after polygamous men match up with previously unmarried women is not necessarily one whose answer would accurately declare that those men will get into even more mischief than they would in a monogamy-only culture. Any such concern also begs the following question: why, for the sake of some kind of balance, would we give women who *want* to participate in a committed marriage the message that, for the sake of society, they should focus on marrying men who don't even really want to be married? Oh, wait – that does sound like the message our current monogamy-only regime already promotes to many women: "Suck it up, cupcake; a drunk, disinterested or ambivalent sperm donor is better than no sperm donor at all!" Such men are not *left* "high and dry"; they *place* themselves in their intimacy-deprived situations and are *not entitled* to a balanced share of the affection they are not willing to foster or provide, any more than women who are not committed to fully satisfying their husbands should be entitled to expect those husbands to remain unsatisfied for the sake of misguided mores.

As stated earlier, I thoroughly understand that Mike's stated purpose in writing the Fisher Principle essay was to correct an error in his book, but it is also just as clear to me that his essay's purpose was to assert that, to whatever extent polygynists believe that the issue of excess numbers of unmarried women begs to be corrected, the Fisher Principle proves there is no need for polygyny in that regard because natural selection will equalize the gender ratios without any

temporary or permanent societal support for polygamy – and I continue to consider this assertion to be fallacious, because Mike is comparing apples to oranges. Not only are polygyny promoters not primarily motivated by a desire to ensure that we reach any form of gender parity, but the Fisher Principle and its application of reproductive mathematical logic to the prevalence of males vs. females (at birth or at any other age) does not address the main reasons why disparity exists between the numbers of interested unmarried men and interested unmarried women. I stipulated last time and will repeat my stipulation: the Fisher Principle is a concretely accurate explanation for why gender ratios will tend to gravitate toward parity. That is not in dispute. But the Fisher Principle does not explain why men take themselves out of the marriage pool in greater numbers, nor will the mechanics of the Fisher Principle ever have the power to alter the actual factors that produce gender disparity specifically in regard to availability for marriage and parenthood. To begin with, the Fisher Principle focuses solely on the gender ratio between raw numbers of males and raw numbers of females. In order to address the issue of gender ratio in the potential marriage pool, one would have to take a step from Ronald Fisher's focus back into the statistical and mathematical reasoning *behind* the Fisher Principle. To do that, one would have to identify the genetic characteristics that lead human beings to have both the drive to be in a committed relationship and personality traits that avoid self-centeredness and excessive violence while simultaneously seeking increased intimacy and familial responsibility. The Fisher Principle only explains why those with genetic markers for producing male children will tend to regress to the norm relative to those with genetic markers for producing female children. In essence, then, Mike's essay is unwittingly an effort to use a theory that explains why oranges tend to be round to explain why apples tend to attract worms.

Maybe what is in order is the formulation of something we could perhaps call the Patriarch's Principle that explains why those with genetic markers for producing boys with a predisposition for marriage are consistently outnumbered by those with genetic markers for producing girls with such a disposition. My intuition says that empirical study toward such a Patriarch's Principle would discover that the logic behind the Fisher Principle is not universally applicable to every genetic either/or – not to mention not being universally applicable to genetic dichotomies that

*aren't* either/or's – because certain genetic predispositions toward certain behavioral traits are so closely wedded to gender that no degree of over-production of the opposite gender will dislodge those associated characteristics. *That* is part of why Mike unwittingly created a straw man argument, because his essay is devoted to the belief that the Fisher Principle has a significant enough impact on the topic of polygamy to warrant the essay's existence. Thus, while Mike's response indicates that he and I agree that a one-to-one gender ratio does not represent an imperative ideal, we do not agree that the dynamic of gender parity has anything at all to do with whether or not that dynamic will eliminate the general disparity between unmarried women who desire marriage and unmarried men who desire marriage. My hunch, in fact, is that (a) if 10% or 20% more boy children could be produced at birth, and (b) if that disparity were to also sustain itself through the child-bearing years, we would *still* find that more women numbers-wise (including both those carrying a predisposition to produce male babies and those carrying a predisposition to produce female babies) would want to be married than the number of men with the same inclination. In other words, the Fisher Principle explains only why opposing potential genetic characteristics tend to equalize – it, however, fails to factor in that certain genetic characteristics are predominantly associated with only one gender.

Analysis of natural selection is also fine in the non-judgmental abstract, but the existence of natural selection processes does not mean only the *fittest* reproductive strategy deserves to be permitted. God clearly intended for us to be fruitful and multiply, but if this were His sole purpose for us, He wouldn't have had to equip us with such a capable and complex *second* brain (you know, the one in our heads). Mike distinguishes between instinct and action in his book, but he muddies that distinction by assigning reproduction as the paramount purpose for our genitals. Reproduction could have been accomplished absent *action*, given that God could have left our skulls empty and loaded us up with the reproductive capacities of dogs. Reproduction, though, where sexuality is concerned, is just the *instinct* to the *action* of becoming one flesh. The evidence is all around us proving that human beings are far more concerned with hooking up than with producing children. Otherwise, instead of generally appearing to be boys with breasts, most models hawking beer or gracing the pages of fashion magazines would instead be *pregnant* women. Advertisements

aren't designed to persuade men to unconsciously associate products with reproduction; they instead tend to lead men around by their, uh, *first* brains – activating the fantasy that buying their products or engaging in their services will get one in bed with some hot chick. And, men, let's be honest with each other: we're not usually fantasizing about getting those girls pregnant. What primarily drives any of us to want to be married to more than one woman is not *instinct*. Our instincts would certainly have their say as far as *whom* we might choose as a second wife, but what we metaphorically refer to as our *hearts* would actually be in charge of whether we even made the *choice* to enter into that significant of a commitment. Now, assuming Intelligent Design – about which Mike, I, and probably the majority of *Patriarchs' Journal* subscribers agree – it would seem logical to conclude that God, our Intelligent Designer, purposefully created our instinctual sexual mating urges, and if God purposefully created a set of compelling desires that so infrequently lead to reproduction but much more frequently lead to one-flesh bonding, then isn't it logical to conclude that it is God's intention that we make full use of our sexual desires? Given that I don't know the Mind of God, I can't be certain that I've come to the correct conclusion, but I believe I've establish that, in any dispassionate analysis of human mating behavior, we can't accurately assume that, through natural selection, sexual attraction operates predominantly based on reproductive value, no matter whether our assumptions are based on just genetics or a combination of genetics and morality. Nor can we assume that morality is one-dimensional, because, in opposition to what Mike asserts in *EOSAM*, not all moral believers assume the existence of Hell and thus many believers base their moral calculations on considerations other than fear of eternal damnation.

The final question I want to ask Mike is this: If your essay was not intended to argue against polygamy, and if you acknowledge that the Fisher Principle pertains only to reproductive gender balance as measured either at birth or as of some point in the child-bearing range, and if you further acknowledge that other societal dynamics (war, etc.) do sway whatever inexorable work the Fisher Principle does to equalize gender ratios, what other than disapproval of polygamy was it that *motivated* you to feel compelled to write an entire essay on how the Fisher Principle disproves the belief that polygamy would alleviate the desire to be married among excess females? You state that it came from needing to correct a mistaken theory related to why there would be imbalance, but

your theory correction spends more time focusing on the lack of need for polygamy than it does on considering the extent to which your bride price theories might have resulted in certain incorrect conclusions in your original book. I'm an advocate for the acceptability of polygamy, and I'm willing to state that I'm biased in that regard. My request is that Mike and others who share his perspective on polygyny and other forms of polygamy consider acknowledging that their disapproval colors the manner in which they do research and form conclusions.

In the 1971 film *Fiddler on the Roof*, protagonist and patriarch Reb Tevye repeatedly cries out to God for relief from what he experiences as rejection of "Tradition!" I notice every time I watch him, though, that Tevye plays fast and loose with quotations from "The Good Book." For the most part, the traditions he and his fellow adult villagers hold most sacred are not those initiated by the Mosaic Scriptures. Instead, his daughters and their suitors are rebelling against human-created standards that had developed in between biblical times and the script's 1920's present. Reb Tevye's ongoing communications with his Lord are exemplary, even though they often stray into complaining, because at least he is not *murmuring*. But, in the present time, we have to question ourselves just as Tevye did: have we become more concerned with adherence to the standards of the world or with obedience to the standards of our God? Our Father does not exhort us to seek approval from our community; our faces are to be directed toward His Light instead. That is where we should be seeking wisdom in any debate about monogamy vs. polygamy. What have God and His prophets told us about polygamy? Did His apostles offer further clarification or negation of God's earlier words on the subject? Scientific study of the effect of polygamy on our culture is worth considering, but in the end it can be only marginally authoritative. I trust God. If He decided that we were to anathematize polygamy, I suspect He would have told us so. While we wait for further Divine Guidance on the matter, I'm just going to imagine a not-so-lopsided metaphorical 3D Bell-Curve Hat that allows for polygamy and other relationships that will expand rather than diminish our opportunities to fully express love to others. 



Keith (1954- ) has had careers as a radio DJ, dorm director, psychotherapist and small business owner, in addition to stints as a writer, landscaper, warehouse manager and public school teacher. He resides in Greenville, PA, enjoying the greatest roles of his life: husband, son & father.

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