

The Gay Tax by Caillean Maureen McMahon

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Abstract

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Article

The Gay Tax

Today, I had a moment of unusual clarity. Like a lightning bolt in the sky, the darkness of the tangled alliances and motivations involved in the opposition to same-sex marriage was illuminated for me and I finally understood it all. It is about a tax.

The opposition to gay and lesbian civil partnerships, domestic partnerships, marriage, benefits and adoptions is not about protecting the “sanctity of marriage” or “keeping children in the best environment.” The demand that there be no gay bashing protection, no employment protections for gays and lesbians is not about opposing “special rights.” Boycotts of shows with LGBT themes, of the companies that sponsor them or other gay events are not about family values.

It is all about a tax. It is about the Gay Tax.

The Gay Tax is paid in money, pain, discomfort, distress, and disadvantage. Occasionally you pay the price of the tax with your life. If these things are changed through protections or the confirmation of various gay rights, then the “tax” is not being paid. The religious right is very serious about our continuing to pay the tax, in fact, we must pay the tax forever in their view of the world.

Being gay is a luxury in the mind of those who oppress us with this onerous obligation. We are supposed to be all heterosexual, Conservative Christian and of course tithe to the fundamentalist or conservative church of their choice. Since we “choose” not to do some or all of these things, we must pay a luxury tax, the Gay Tax, to live our lives.

God has somehow not seen fit to come to earth and demand the tax himself; his self appointed representatives demand collection in his name believing that they alone understand his will. They demand a forum to do this, public places, our schools, our workplaces, our government, our bedrooms. When something unfortunate happens to one of us, when we are harassed, beaten, fired, or when we lose our homes to unknown family members of our deceased partner, we pay the Gay Tax and the Right wing can righteously proclaim that it is the price for the luxury of being gay.

There must be no place where we are safe from obligation of this tax. The Right is now demanding that

companies remove protections for gays and lesbians in the workplace, that they end domestic partner benefits, that the complicated measures that we take legally to ensure our partner's keeping our joint home in the event of our demise go unrecognized by the courts and easily undone by legal challenges.

Anti-Bullying LGBT speakers must not be heard in schools. Bullying, slander, harassment, and the all too frequent gay teen suicide are part of the tax imposed upon us. Religiously conservative students must be allowed to wear anti-gay messages on their shirts and hand out anti-gay tracts to others; they are tax collectors in training. Gay teens must know their place and learn early on of their obligation to pay the tax to those who believe that they are charged by God to collect it.

There can be no same-sex marriage, domestic partnerships, or civil unions. The lack of legal protections or benefits for our relationships is all part of the Gay Tax. If you want a life partner, you are supposed to get one of the opposite sex. Any other relationship is a luxury and must be taxed.

There can be no protections in the workplace. First of all, it interferes with the tax collectors work and secondly it defies the righteousness of the tax. Right wing religious leaders have divine revelation and their personal interpretation of the Bible and other religious books to prove to themselves that they are correct in their earnest endeavour to enforce the Gay Tax wherever and whenever a gay or lesbian person exists.

We have no right to expect the government to change this; government officials are now chosen by a faith test administered by conservative Christian ministers. Supreme Court Justices, Senators, Cabinet Members and candidates for the presidency are screened by the religious right in consultation with the President to make sure that they will continue to enforce the Gay Tax. State Constitutions are being amended all over America to write into law permanently the holy obligation to pay for the luxury of being gay. The Federal Constitution may soon be amended to make sure that every inch of America is coerced to collect the tax, whether it's people wish to or not just as the Fugitive Slave Act forced free states to imprison and return escaped slaves to the same states that are dominated by those who, having lost the battle of racial discrimination now use us as the bogeymen of their nightmares. The secular democracy that Jefferson, Madison, Adams and Franklin all contributed to the creation of was a myth; America was the place "God's Holy People" and them alone. Our living here is another luxury; for being in the United States we must all pay the "Gay Tax."

Lying, slander, intimidation and murder are approved methods of tax collection. The Army of God extolls a man who dynamited a gay club in Atlanta on their web site. Paul Cameron, a defrocked psychologist, is quoted as a research scientist. False facts, figures and other flawed or overtly untrue information are the tools of the trade of the enforcers of the Gay Tax. The Commandments are not applicable to them in their holy and righteous duty.

We have, however, in our arsenal, one weapon that the collectors of the Gay Tax cannot take away from us; we can ignore them. We can dare and live our gay and lesbian lives publically. We can be seen, heard. Bit by bit, we can weave ourselves into the day to day life of the nation and make the attempt to exclude us appear as what it is - hatred. We need to shout to our brothers and sisters, as the Irish patriot Michael Collins did to Ireland, "if they shut me up, who will take my place? Will you take my place?" We are all taxed, it is time that we all refused to pay. It is time that we were all heard.

For the tax collectors, with their mythological history of America as God's land and Chosen People, I

add one last quote from Collins that summarizes our defiance: “Give *us* the future, we’ve had enough of your past. Give us back our country, to live in , to grow in, to love.” That is our rallying cry, that is the totality of the Gay Agenda, and the cry of our hearts.

Caillean Maureen McMahon

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