On Minnesota marriage equality debate: canards lead, sympathies succeed

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A disproportionate number of homosexuals are pedophiles, and some ingest urine and feces. They are also into bestiality. The foregoing is a paraphrasing of a document recently removed from the Minnesota Family Council’s website because it was “a distraction,” according to spokesman Chuck Darrell.

John Nienstedt, the Archdiocese of Minneapolis and St. Paul, avoided comparing marriage equality to humans copulating with animals in a column published last week, instead opting to equate a homosexual wanting to marry a committed and consenting partner to desiring to wed a sibling. Such are some of the quality canards that are already being dug out, dusted off and rolled out in the 17-month march to Minnesota’s vote on the marriage equality amendment come November 2012.

But while these asinine comments make great copy and fire up the opposite sides of the debate’s spectrum, they will not be dispositive in the outcome. Those who do not recoil from relating homosexuality to pedophilia, bestiality and incest are beyond reach, not to mention beyond the pale. Their bait to feed on the bottom of logic must be avoided in favor of courting the silent, decent but recalcitrant majority with compassion and appeals to their better angels from ours.

The two groups, while putatively on the same side, are ripe for a chasm, and are conflated at marriage equality’s peril.

The well-intentioned, those that know axiomatically that homosexuals do not troll schools for victims, should not be shamed for not seeing through the “love the sinner, hate the sin” mantra for the logically bankrupt refusal to confront the reality of anyone sans an asexual that it is.

The well-meaning, those that think civil unions are sufficient, should not be chided for being traditional or cherishing the idea of marriage that they have always known. Insults are not the proper avenue because they stimulate little but the gut. It is the mind that moves the masses, touching heads and hearts.

To change them, ask skeptics what they would think if the situation were inverted and they were given the false choice of marrying someone they were innately not attracted to. Ask them how they would feel telling their relative, friend or co-worker that she should be happy with her civil union because it is the same as their marriage.

The equality movement for gays has made considerable progress in the last 30 years. And a recent Star Tribune article asserted that 55% of Minnesotans are against engraving discrimination into their civil rights charter.

That same article, however, provided a far more reliable statistic than a random sampling: Anti-marriage equality ballot measures in other states are a perfect 29 for 29. The incongruity of polls and anonymous voting can be attributed to suffering political correctness and avoiding conflict being easier than embracing change, a reality that should not be lost in the land of Minnesota Nice.

To align polls and results, the undecided and amenable can be persuaded to join the marriage equality movement by elevating that cliché into a reality with logic and compassion while opponents lose the middle ground by failing to even pay lip service to it.