

Freedoms

By Wesley Trobaugh



On 11 July 2005, the first homosexual couple were married in Spain. A week later, Mahmoud Asgari and Ayaz Marhoni were hanged in Iran for “committing homosexual acts.” On one side of the world, the cause for equal human rights is advancing at a pleasingly swift pace. On the other side (going either way), the same cause seems to be crawling deeper and deeper into a sectarian hole.

Perhaps a remnant of the Black Legend, Spain has always had the image of being backwards and intolerant, bound by the chains of the medieval Church. Nothing could be further from the truth. In 1965, this may have been the case, although I am convinced that the mind of the Spanish individual has always been ahead of its society. Forty years later, society progresses, in many ways, faster than we can seemingly handle. I think we’re up for the task. Someone has to lead the way.

In Spain the social ramifications of same-sex marriage have been minimal. There was a group of people that demonstrated in the streets, screaming that their

families were in danger and what-about-the-poor-children. The children have been through it all; *we* have been through it all. What do a married, live-in mother and father guarantee? If one of them or both of them are abusive to the child or to each other, it guarantees nothing. If they married because of circumstances other than love and out of free will, it guarantees nothing. If they didn’t want a child to begin with, it guarantees nothing. I speak from experience. And even though the “endangered” family is a gripping emotional argument, the only argument that has been able to stand and that those not wanting to appear to be neo-fascists are able to hold is the semantic one: what is the definition of marriage?

Marriage is a man and a woman. Says who? Are we so stuck in a linguistic rut that we cannot add semantic properties to a word? Were we not able to add “female” to every occupational sememe, from doctor to president to *gasp* priest? Were we not able to add “cordless” to the sememe telephone? Were we not able to add “democracy” to the sememe Spain? We dominate language. Language does not dominate us. If it did, we would be at a lack of words for practically everything.

Call it what you may; legally it is marriage. Nobody is forcing anyone to marry anyone else, regardless of their sex; the law simply grants the same rights to homosexuals as heterosexuals have always had. If your religion or your ideas or your principles do not allow it, you don’t have to do it.