

What's the Christian Response to the Gay Marriage Controversy?

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A group of Crystal Free attendees joined several thousand others at the "Minnesota for Marriage Rally" at the State Capitol on Monday, March 22.

In the Monday, August 4, 2003 issue of Time magazine the following was one of many letters replying to the question, "Should gay marriage be legalized?" Letters came in on both sides of the issue. From the world's perspective this letter probably makes sense to many:

"I find it deplorable that anyone who considers themselves a Christian to be against anything founded on two people loving one another. Isn't that exactly what Jesus was trying to teach us? Legalizing gay marriage would be one more recognition that love conquers all."

It sounds good on one level doesn't it? I mean Jesus is all about loving people, right? Unfortunately, these sentiments don't reveal the entire story. In fact, the writer may not even be aware of what is really involved in the homosexual lifestyle. What this person doesn't recognize is how a truly loving God would never condone such destructive life choices.

Particularly since the sexual revolution of the 60s and 70s, the institution of marriage has taken a hit. It's no secret that divorce has skyrocketed, even for churchgoers, and broken homes have led to a wake of consequences from rebellion in

children to increased drug and alcoholism. While the answers aren't clear-cut, one thing is sure, the definition of marriage is not the problem. The problem is in the way we have strayed from what marriage was intended by God to be. After all, when you're lost, straying further off course does not lead you home!

William J. Bennett, well-known author, radio commentator and former Secretary of Education (1985-1988), puts it well: "As the proponents of gay marriage are quick to point out, promiscuity, adultery, cohabitation, divorce and out-of-wedlock births have severely damaged the institution of marriage. But this is not an argument for the redefinition of marriage. That the family is struggling today is not because of a design flaw. The problem is our failure to live up to the design. What nature joins let no gays put asunder. Marriage is meant to be between one man and one woman. Period."

So, is it *really* that big of an issue? How does this affect our everyday lives?

- **Marriage is intended by God to be between a man and woman.** The Bible declares this fact in many passages, including Genesis 2:24-25 and 1 Corinthians 7:2. That should be enough for any of us, but many have chosen not to live by God's design. That's when it helps to also understand and communicate some of the reasons we believe He designed things this way. Regardless of whether or not we accept and follow God's ways, the earthly consequences of not doing so are often the same for everyone.

- **Isn't homosexuality the result of genetics?** That's what the homosexual community and the media are telling us. But is it true? Do homosexuals have a choice or are they simply the victims of genetic predisposition? Consider an article posted on the Christian Medical & Dental Association website entitled, "CMA Doctors Highlight Homosexual Health Hazards" (2/13/04). It says, "The nation's largest faith-based group of physicians asserted on February 16, 2004 that homosexual marriage wrongly invokes genetic determinism and defies

common sense." CMA Executive Director David Stevens, M.D. noted, "A key assumption behind the arguments for homosexual activity and marriage is that 'genetics made me do it.' Yet at this time there is no scientific data proving that same-sex attraction is genetically determined. There is, however, valid evidence that many individuals who desired to abstain from homosexual acts have been able to do so. Acting on homosexual attraction, like acting on heterosexual attraction, is voluntary."

Addressing the medical aspects of homosexuality, CMA Associate Executive Director Gene Rudd, MD noted, "Homosexual acts are associated with increased risks of tissue injury, organ malfunction and infectious diseases. These and other factors result in a significantly shortened life expectancy that is greater than smoking two packs of cigarettes a day. The medical evidence also indicates among homosexually-active individuals an increased incidence of drug and/or alcohol dependence, compulsive sexual behavior, anxiety, depression and suicide."

Rudd added, "It is crucial that while we raise these concerns, we also continue to reach out to homosexual individuals with compassion and to condemn hatred directed against them. As Christian physicians, we frequently provide medical care for homosexual individuals and we must present the issue candidly—not gloss over the facts. And the evidence clearly shows that practicing homosexual behavior is very harmful to health." Stevens concluded, "The health evidence and common sense clearly indicate that redefining marriage is bad public policy."

- **Where might acceptance of homosexual marriage lead?** If, as a society, we are told we can't hold specific ideals regarding who we can or can't marry, what would stop someone from having two spouses, or marrying a sibling or even the dog they love? This may sound silly, but if you step back even less than 30 years ago, few would have believed we'd be having this discussion at all. Robert H. Knight, Director of the Culture

Gay Marriage, continued...

& Family Institute says, “Marriage is of such importance that it is uniquely protected in the law and culture. It predates the law and the Constitution, and is an anthropological and sociological reality, not primarily a legal one. No civilization can survive without it, and those societies that allowed it to become irrelevant have faded into history.”

• **Research has shown that marriage between a man and woman is the best environment in which children can be raised.** Knight adds, “Children learn crucial things about family life by observing our crucial relationships up close: interactions between men and women, husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, and parents to children of the same and opposite sexes. Human experience and a vast body of social science research show that children do best in married, mother-father households. It is wrong to create fatherless or motherless families by design. The effort is being driven by the desires of adults, not the needs of children. The drive for homosexual marriage leads to destruction of the gold standard for custody and adoption. The question should be: ‘What is in the best interests of the child?’ The answer is: ‘Place children, whenever possible, in a married, mom-and-dad household.’”

Many of the images we see in the media present homosexual couples in seemingly loving, committed relationships. They may, in fact, really love one another. One of the problems with this picture, however, is that it doesn’t reflect the average homosexual relationship. The fact is that most homosexual relationships, especially for males are rarely monogamous—even the small percentage of long-term ones. Even if some resist God’s standards, they need to be aware of what the homosexual lifestyle is truly about before advocating marriage and child adoption for these relationships.

• **What’s the loving response?** To approve of gay marriage, or even adopt a “live and let live” philosophy opens the door for a downward spiral and domino effect of consequences. If we believe that

the homosexual lifestyle is the unfortunate and sinful choice of people trying to find satisfaction in the wrong places in life, we need to lovingly point them to the true source of satisfaction. To accept their sin makes us no better neighbors to such individuals than if we place a bottle of whiskey into the hands of an alcoholic. People living this lifestyle need loving, grace-filled truth from us, not approval to live out destructive patterns.

“My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.”

– Jeremiah 2:13

• **Consequences for the church.**

California is already enacting laws that actively seek to enforce hate crimes (as some define them). If homosexual marriages become legalized we may be opening a door to where voicing God’s truth regarding homosexuality becomes a crime. Randy Thomasson, Executive Director for Campaign for California Families, has expressed concern that “churches will be forced to marry homosexual couples.” Resistance from pastors could result in lawsuits, criminal charges, and hate crime prosecution. He says he can see a future where churches “will lose their religious freedom...and their tax-free status” if pastors take a stand and refuse to marry homosexual couples.”

What can Christians do?

• **Take a stand.** Our culture worships at the “altar of tolerance.” We are told to accept all lifestyles or risk being branded as intolerant and bigoted. There are certain issues, however, in which we must be divinely intolerant. God is passionately for heterosexual marriage. We can’t be “wishy-washy.” Have courage! It’s the most loving and righteous response.

• **Pray for our nation and our government leaders to make wise decisions that reflect God’s truth.** Also pray diligently for those who struggle with same-sex attractions. Love them, while being clear that you cannot condone their lifestyle. Pray that the Lord would expose the deceptions of the enemy and draw them into His loving and hope-filled truth. To humbly accept and gen-

uinely experience Christ’s love brings freedom to all who desire true affirmation.

• **Build healthy relationships with those who struggle with homosexuality.** God hates their sin but loves them. He sent Jesus to die for them. They have been deceived and believe a lie. They need to see Jesus “with skin on.” That’s where you and I come in. We need to love them and accept them as sinners beloved of God just like any of us.

• **Share Christ with those in the homosexual lifestyle.** What homosexuals and all people need most in life is an authentic and personal relationship with Jesus Christ. To embrace and experience this is transformational! A solid, trusting, safe relationship with you is the perfect soil for planting the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

• **Speak the truth in love.** Ephesians 4:15 says we are to speak the truth in love. The truth spoken without love won’t be received. Let people know what God says about homosexuality and marriage. They are being inundated with the culture’s viewpoint. Without a consistent voice of truth in their lives, it’s easy to be swayed by the voice of the deception.

Chances are the “gay marriage issue” won’t go away. The further our culture slides from living under God’s truth, the more the beauty and purity of sexuality will be challenged. In unity, let’s speak the truth, even when it’s “politically incorrect.” As we do so, ask the Lord to shine His light and love into the hearts of those who may disagree. The sweet scent of His goodness will attract those who truly seek Him.

For additional information on this topic:

- HOPE Ministry: www.cefc.com/care/hope.html
- Eagles’ Wings Ministry: www.ewm.org
- Exodus Int’l.: www.exodus-international.org
- “Citizen Link”: www.family.org/cforum
- “Family in Focus”: www.family.org/cforum/fnif
- Minnesota for Marriage: www.mnvoter.com
- Minnesota Family Council: www.mfc.org/resources/backgrounders/homosexuality.htm

Inclusion of non-CEFC websites does not necessarily represent an endorsement of all their information.

¹“Concerned Women of America” (www.cwfa.org): “The Case for Marriage,” by Robert H. Knight; September 29, 2003.

²Guest Commentary; “What Would America Be Like If Gay Marriages Were Validated?” by James L. Lambert; March 12, 2004; © 2004 AgapePress.