

Salt & Light

Summer 2004

The Newsletter of the Social Concerns Ministry Team

You are the salt of the earth...
You are the light of the world...

Educating and informing the church body in light of biblical principles

Mt. 5:13-14

Editorial Note:

Contact your Congressional leaders! Make your views known! We have never begun our editorial note with such words, but the challenge addressed in this issue of *Salt & Light* is so significant, and Congress will be voting on a Constitutional amendment to govern it so soon, that your elected representatives need to know where you stand regarding same-sex marriage now. To get contact information on your U.S. senators and representative, go to the web sites www.senate.gov and www.house.gov.

To help you think through the questions raised by same-sex marriage, this newsletter begins with an article identifying and discussing those questions. The second article provides some biblical perspective on same-sex marriage. The newsletter then concludes with an article explaining the proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution and why Christians should get involved in addressing the challenge of same-sex marriage.

Same-Sex Marriage: Answers to Questions

From: www.citizenlink.org

Many people, even Christians, are confused by the arguments they are hearing today on the subject of homosexual marriage. Superficially, what the advocates are saying may seem fair and logical. Scratch the surface, however, and you'll find that their assertions don't hold up.

Q: Shouldn't two people who love each other be allowed to commit themselves to one another?

A: Absolutely, and people do that all the time. But we don't call it marriage. There are lots of loving commitments that are not marriage. Friends are committed to each other, a parent is committed to a child, grandparents to their grandchildren, and people are committed to their pets. All of these are forms of love. All of them result in commitments. None of them is marriage.

Q: What's wrong with letting homosexuals marry?

A: No human society—not one—has ever tolerated “marriage” between members of the same sex as a norm for family life. And that is what is at stake here, making “marriage” between two men or two women as normal as between one man and one woman. It is saying that neither arrangement is any better than the other. As Dr. Dobson writes, only until the last few “milliseconds” of history and experience (i.e. Canada and some European nations) have we arrogantly believed we can improve upon this ancient and universal institution.

This public meaning of marriage is

not something that each new generation is free to redefine. Marriage is defined by the God of nature and nature's God—and a wise society will protect marriage as it has always been understood. Marriage is the way our culture promotes monogamy, provides a way for males and females to build a life together, and assures every child has a mother and father.

Q: But isn't it better for a child to grow up with two loving same-sex parents than to live in an abusive home or be bounced around in foster care?

A: You're comparing the worst of one situation (abusive heterosexual parenting) with the best of another (loving same-sex parenting). That's apples and oranges.

Actually, research reveals that child abuse is at its lowest when children live with both biological parents compared with higher rates for children who live with at least one non-biological parent or caregiver.¹ Same-sex parenting situations make it impossible for a child to live with both biological parents, thus increasing their risk of abuse.

Those who want homosexual marriage are not asking to take the children living in the most difficult situations, so it's intellectually dishonest to preface the argument with that claim. They are asking for the same thing all parents desire: healthy, happy children they can call their own. So let us dispense with the

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The Bible and Marriage

From: Focus on the Family Newsletter, September, 2003

The Holy Scriptures set forth the Creator's plan for marriage and family. To deviate from that model is to invite disaster. As early as the second chapter of Genesis, we learn that God created Eve as a "suitable companion" for Adam who would complement him physically, spiritually and emotionally. This "marriage" was the very first institution that God created, and it continues to be the primary institution of society to this day. God designed marriage between a man and a woman as the first system of interdependent human relationships, as well as the means by which spiritual teaching is passed down

through the generations. In his letter to the church at Corinth, Paul reminds us that men and women mutually complete one another: "In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman" (I Cor. 11:11). Marriage is also upheld as a beautiful illustration of the relationship between Christ and his bride, the Church (see Eph. 5:25-33).

God's design for marriage is not simply some lofty, spiritual ideal. The Bible also outlines a specific plan for human sexuality. Throughout scripture, God's intention for human sexual relationships is clearly limited to the heterosexual union between a

man and a woman in marriage (see Genesis 1:27-28, and 2:18, 23-24). By stark contrast, sex outside of that relationship, whether it be of a heterosexual or homosexual nature, is clearly identified as sin. With particular regard to homosexuality, Paul warns: "...God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relationships for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion" (Rom. 1:26b-27). †

Answers to Questions

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idea that same-sex couples will serve some high social good by only taking children in the most difficult situations. They have never asked for this.

Q: Apart from the issue of children, don't gays have the same right to marry that heterosexuals do?

A: All people have the same right to marry, as long as they abide by the law. You cannot marry if you're already married, you cannot marry a close relative, an adult cannot marry a child, you cannot marry your pet, and you cannot marry someone of the same sex. Let's be clear, *everyone* has access to marriage as long as they meet the requirements. This is not about access to marriage. It's about redefining marriage to be something it has never been.

Q: But I thought homosexuals couldn't help it? This seems intolerant.

A: Then nature itself is intolerant. Marriage has not been "imposed" upon culture by some religious institution or government power from

which it needs to be "set free." It was established by God, is enforced by the nature which God bestowed upon mankind, and we tamper with it at our own peril.

Here's what is intolerant. Same-sex "marriage" is being forced upon us by a small, but elite, group of individuals dressed in black robes—judges—who say that thousands of years of human history have simply been wrong. That is a very arrogant notion that will bring great harm to our culture.

Q: But haven't we seen all kinds of family diversity in various civilizations throughout history?

A: No. Anthropologists tell us that every human society is established by males and females joining in permanent unions to build a life together and bear and raise their children. The differences we see in family from culture to culture are primarily variations on this model: how long the male and female stay together, how many spouses either can have and how the labor is divided. Some cultures make greater

use of extended family than others. Family diversity is largely confined to these differences. But there has never been a culture or society that made homosexual marriage part of its family model.

Q: But how does someone's homosexual "marriage" threaten everyone else's families?

A: Gay activists are not asking for just one homosexual marriage, even though they often personalize it by saying, "Don't you interfere with my family and I won't interfere with yours." What the activists want is a new national policy saying that no longer is a mom and a dad any better than two moms or two dads. That policy would turn some very important principles upside down:

Marriage would become merely an emotional relationship that is flexible enough to include any grouping of loving adults. If it is fair for two men or two women to marry, why not three, or five, or 17? The terms "husband" and "wife" would become merely words with no meaning.

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Answers to Questions

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Parenthood would consist of any number of emotionally attached people who care for kids. “Mother” and “father” would become only words.

Gender would become nothing. The same-sex proposition cannot tolerate the idea that any real, deep and necessary differences exist between the sexes. It must rest on a “Mister Potato Head theory” of gender difference (same core, just interchangeable body parts). If real differences did exist, then men would need women and women would need men. Our children would learn that sexual differences are like mere personality traits. Wait until your kids start bringing those papers home from school.

Q: Even so, traditional marriage isn't doing all that well, with so many divorces.

A: You're right. Marriage isn't working well, so what should we do? Erase the marriage laws? Look at it this way. We have laws against murder, but people still commit murder, so what should we do? Erase the murder laws? Of course not. When laws aren't working,

legislators try to fix them. We should strengthen marriage, and many are beginning to do just that.

As a matter of fact, the evidence favoring marriage is so overwhelming that the federal government has begun the inclusion of a marriage training component in all state welfare plans.

Q: What benefits does marriage provide?

A: Research consistently shows that married adults do better in virtually every measure of well-being. Married people live longer, happier lives. They enjoy higher levels of physical and mental health, they recover from illness quicker, earn and save more money, are more reliable employees, suffer less stress, and are less likely to become victims of any kind of violence. They find the job of parenting more successful and enjoyable and they have more satisfying and fulfilling sex lives. These benefits are largely equal for men and women.

Compared with children in any other situation, children with married parents need to visit doctors less often for physical or emotional

problems, and they do better in all measures of intellectual and academic development. They are more sympathetic toward others and much less likely to be in trouble at school, at home or with the police. They are much less likely to use drugs and be involved in violent behavior or premarital sexual activity and childbearing. It is uncommon for kids who live with married parents to live in poverty or be victims of physical or sexual abuse.²

Research is clear: marriage makes a substantial, positive difference in people's lives.

¹ Catherine Malkin and Michael Lamb, “Child Maltreatment: A Test of the Sociobiological Theory,” *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 25 (1994): 121-133; David Popenoe, *Life Without Father* (New York: The Free Press, 1996).

² Popenoe, *Life Without Father*; Glenn T. Stanton, *Why Marriage Matters: Reasons to Believe in Marriage in Postmodern Society* (Colorado Springs: Pinon Press, 1997); Deborah Dawson, “Family Structure and Children's Health and Well-Being; Data from the 1988 National Health Interview Survey on Child Health,” *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 53 (1991): 573-584. †

A Constitutional Amendment? What Can I Do?

First of all pray! Realize that our “struggle is not against flesh and blood but...against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph 6: 12).

Contact your legislators—call or write them about your support for the Federal Marriage Amendment (FMA). Write letters to the editor of your local paper outlining support for marriage between a man and woman. James Dobson's Focus on the Family newsletter (Sept., 2003) again provides us with helpful background information:

“Here is the wording of the Federal

Marriage Amendment.... ‘Marriage in the United States shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman. Neither this constitution or the constitution of any state, nor state or federal law, shall be construed to require that marital status or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon unmarried couples or groups.’

“While not perfect, the FMA represents what may truly be our last opportunity to ensure that traditional marriage is legally protected. The first sentence prohibits the redefinition of marriage by either a court decision or an action of a state

legislature. The second sentence preserves the democratic process at the state level by allowing state legislatures to determine the allocation of the benefits associated with marriage. The key strength of the FMA is that it precludes the courts from distorting existing constitutional or statutory law into a requirement that marital status—or the legal incidents thereof—be reallocated pursuant to a judicial decree. In layman's terms, that means the FMA will ensure that the constitutional status of marriage is

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A Constitutional Amendment

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determined by the American people and their representatives, rather than by unelected judges.

“This effort to save the family is our D-Day, or Gettysburg or Stalingrad. This is the big one. If we cannot pass a Constitutional amendment protecting traditional marriage, gay marriage *will* become a reality. It will no longer be a matter of *if*, but *when*. And the answer to that question is, ‘soon.’

“I’m thankful that our President spoke out on this divisive issue during a recent press conference, saying ‘I believe marriage is between a man and a woman and I believe we ought to codify that one way or the other.’ Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist also weighed in on the issue. He said, ‘Marriage is very simple: a union between one man and one woman, not two men or three men or four men, or one man, or one woman,

or two women, three women, or three women and three men. It’s not that. It’s one man, one woman. It’s what the law of the land is.’ More than 100 editorials and articles followed his statement, and all but three of them were negative! It’s important that we encourage those leaders who are willing to form a strong, united front on this issue. We need to convey to them in the strongest possible terms how important this issue is to us. We cannot accept compromise or uncertainty in the face of the current onslaught of gay activism. We should

also express our displeasure to conservative representatives and senators who waffle on the FMA.”

Use this newsletter to talk to friends and coworkers! Contribute money to groups who are fighting for traditional marriage such as Focus on the Family Action (a lobbying group), go to www.family.org/protectmarriage for more information. The stakes are so high—don’t stand on the sidelines on this important issue. †

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