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A Case Against Gay Marriage

V large majority of Americans are opposed to gay marriage, but they often do not have the vocabulary to articulate reasons for their opposition. This white paper attempts to state the principal reasons to oppose gay marriage. The author's hope is that pastors will use this material as talking/teaching points with their congregations.

Imagine thirty years ago a pastor standing in his pulpit on Sunday morning, predicting that in 2004 the President of the United States would have to propose passage of a constitutional amendment to define marriage as a union between one man and one woman. Most, if not all, of his congregation would have thought he was nuts. Yet, on February 25, 2004, President George W. Bush did exactly that – he endorsed the passage of a constitutional amendment to define marriage as between a man and a woman. Prior to this, 38 states had taken legislative action to pass Defense of Marriage legislation to protect heterosexual marriage.

Many Christians are tempted to give up any resistance to the homosexual onslaught because it seems like a lost cause. When we consider the fact that a majority of those who work in the mass media are in favor of gay marriage or same sex “domestic unions,” favor employer benefits for same sex unions, and make every attempt to silence those who oppose their position, it can appear to be a lost cause. Even among Christian college students there seems to be widespread support for homosexual marriage. Pollster George Barna's research published in November 2003, revealed that over 40 percent believe that two committed homosexuals should be allowed to legally marry.

Baylor University, a Southern Baptist school, saw their campus newspaper publish an editorial in favor of homosexual marriage. In an editorial in the *Lariat*, the editors said, “Like many heterosexual couples, many gay couples share deep bonds of love, some so strong they've persevered years of discrimination for their choice to co-habitate with and date one another. Just as it isn't fair to discriminate against someone for their skin color, heritage or religious beliefs, it isn't fair to discriminate against someone for their sexual orientation. Shouldn't gay couples be allowed to enjoy the benefits and happiness of marriage, too?” Evidently,

these editors have not read a Bible recently. The University's administration denounced the editorial but has not disciplined the editors.

Despite the backing of Hollywood and much of the national press corps, Americans are largely opposed to homosexual marriage. In August 2003, an Associated Press poll found that 52 percent favor a law banning gay marriage. A Pew Research study released in October 2003 reported 59 percent opposed gay marriage, up from 49 percent in an earlier study. Even the New York Times/CBS poll, conducted in December 2003, found that 61 percent were opposed to gay marriage.

In short, Christians should not be so quick to give up. Much of the American population is with us on this topic, regardless of what the press tries to tell us. Despite decades of relentless propaganda in television programming, film, music and news coverage portraying homosexuality positively, Americans still have not accepted homosexuality as a normal behavior. Therefore, Christians should be all the more vigilant and confident in opposing attempts to mainstream it.

There are a number of strong arguments to be made against the gay rights agenda, particularly its efforts to legalize gay marriage. However, Christians need to remember that taking a position against homosexual practices or homosexual marriage does not give one license to mistreat homosexuals. Regardless of a person's actions, beliefs, etc., they still deserve to be treated with dignity since they were created in God's image.

The following are some talking points to use in teaching your people and communicating within your community concerning homosexual marriage and domestic unions:

Point #1: Homosexual marriage is not a civil rights issue.

Proponents of homosexual marriage argue that denying homosexuals the right to marry is a violation of their civil rights. They claim that just as it was wrong to prohibit blacks and whites from marrying, it is also wrong to bar homosexuals access to the rights and benefits of civil marriage.

For many years, state laws prevented interracial marriage, but the U. S. Supreme Court found these laws unconstitutional and in violation of the equal protection provisions of the Constitution.

Gay activists make a similar argument for gay marriage, claiming that they are being discriminated against for being

what nature made them. They cannot help being homosexual any more than a black can help being black. In short, homosexuals claim that sodomy is a natural occurring act that should be protected by law in a manner similar to the legal protections afforded race.

However, skin color and sexual behavior are entirely different. The first is an inborn characteristic while the second is behaviorally based and has everything to do with individual character, moral choices and society's basic rules of conduct. If civil rights laws can be used to justify the behaviors of homosexuals, there is virtually no place to stop. New laws would need to be passed on a daily basis to accommodate the claims of smokers, gamblers, pornography addicts, etc.

Activists react strongly to the contention that homosexuality is contrary to nature. Yet, the scientific evidence is stacked against them. No reputable scientific research supports the claim that homosexuality is a naturally occurring condition. The medical literature is devoid of peer-reviewed research supporting the claim that homosexuality is biological.

Some gay rights activists acknowledge that homosexuality is not natural, but intend to press for legalization of same sex marriage anyway. Organizations such as Better Humans contend that we should not let what is "natural" define our social values. Instead, they contend that we should deploy reason over nature, refusing to submit to what is natural. As one activist put it, "Just because heterosexual marriage has been the only form of marriage recognized for the last two thousand years is no reason to not change it." Some who subscribe to Transhumanism¹, which is a permutation of Humanism, claim that we must reject the so called natural order to improve humanity. We should do what is "reasonable," not what is natural.

However, this refusal to accept the norms of nature notwithstanding, there are certain facts of life that must be recognized. Social features are open to change. Inherent, natural ones are not. Marriage, like many important social institutions, is a combination of natural reality (the biology of procreation) and social construct (the culture that nurtures and supports procreation). Transhumanists may truly believe that medical technology may one day remove the obstacles to same sex procreation (and it may), but this technological Tower of Babel will not eradicate other significant gender-specific features of heterosexual procreation and marriage.

Point #2: Scripture condemns homosexual practice.

First, it is not necessary to condemn people who have homosexual "desires" any more than we should condemn those who have heterosexual desires. Due to the Fall, perverse passions abound and they are not limited to homosexuals. However, Scripture clearly describes homosexual relations as immoral and subject to divine judgment. God is not indifferent to issues of human

sexuality. Homosexuals pervert God's pattern for marriage at their own peril.

For example, Genesis 19 contains the first reference to homosexuality in the Bible. There is no doubt about the intentions the men of Sodom had for the two men who visited Lot's home; they intended to engage in sexual relations with them. Jude 7 provides an illuminating commentary on Genesis 19, stating that the sin of Sodom involved going after "strange flesh."

Leviticus 18 and 20 both call homosexuality an abomination, a term that is used five times in Leviticus to convey intense divine disapproval. Their intended purpose cannot be misconstrued; Israel was to have nothing to do with homosexual practice.

Several passages in the New Testament address homosexuality. Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10. All three passages clearly identify homosexual practice as deserving of divine judgment and outside of the boundaries of acceptable human behavior.

Despite aggressive attempts by various pro-homosexual commentators to explain these passages in a manner that treats homosexuality as morally benign, the tenor of Scripture is clearly and consistently against homosexuality.

Point #3: If homosexual marriage can be justified by the equal protection language of the Constitution, so can polygamy and incest.

Many gay activists reject this argument, calling it a "red herring," or "slippery slope" fallacy. They are fond of saying that there is no connection between gay marriage and such outlawed practices as incest or polygamy. However, there is strong evidence that the slope leading from gay marriage to polygamy and incest is indeed slippery.

In a Friend of the Court (*amicus curiae*) brief filed in the case of *Lawrence v. Texas* (2002), gay rights activists argued that overturning the Texas anti-sodomy law would not directly lead to subsequent claims that homosexuals should be afforded equal protection under the law as it pertains to marriage rights. Yet, this is precisely what is being argued in both California and Massachusetts. Ironically, small town mayors, as well as their big city counterparts, have taken it upon themselves to interpret state constitutions as being "gender neutral," thereby claiming that they (the mayors) have the right to marry homosexuals under the equal protection language of the Constitution.

The equal protection language of the Constitution guarantees protection to persons regardless of race, religion or national origin. The framers of the Constitution did not have in mind the protection of persons on the basis of sexual orientation or preference. If one's sexual preferences become a protected class under the equal protection clause, there can be no argument that will be sufficiently compelling to prevent the Supreme Court from expanding that class to include those who wish to marry blood relatives or multiple partners.

¹ Transhumanism is a movement which seeks to transcend the limitations of human existence through the use of technology, e.g., genetic engineering, cloning, etc.

Point #4: The history of human civilization supports heterosexual marriage.

Many gay activists contend that marriage is principally a religious custom and that the prohibitions against same sex marriage actually impose a religious interpretation on their relationships. Thus, they argue that marriages recognized by the State should not be forced to meet overtly religious standards.

However, while marriage does arise from religious traditions, heterosexual marriage itself serves a measurable good for secular society. Therefore, there is ample justification for the State to preserve and protect the special status of heterosexual marriage. A society can do just fine without homosexual unions, but it cannot survive without heterosexual ones. Medically assisted procreation technologies notwithstanding, same sex marriages offer nothing distinctive to society.

There is no historical precedent for state sanction of homosexual marriage. While homosexual practice has arguably been present in virtually every culture, there exist no records to support the notion that any society provided legal endorsement of homosexual marriage. Furthermore, there are no historical accounts of any society or civilization thriving where homosexual practice was considered normal human behavior.

We need state recognition of marriages because people who live together become intimately dependent on one another and we need to recognize, protect and manage those dependencies. Families are a different kind of social unit than individuals, and things work best when families are granted certain rights and responsibilities, so we need to have rules about what families are. Children, in particular, thrive best when raised by families and their care needs to be managed by binding contractual arrangements to protect their interests and those of their caregivers.

Point #5: Marriage is heterosexual to support the proper rearing of children.

In 1885, the United States Supreme Court felt so strongly about the importance of marriage to a stable society that it made marriage a requirement for new states to enter the union. The Court said, "The life of the state rests on the basis of the idea of the family, as consisting in and springing from the union for life of one man and one woman in the holy estate of matrimony; the sure foundation of all that is stable and noble in our civilization, the best guaranty of that reverent morality which is the source of all beneficent programs, social and political improvement."²

Innumerable sociological studies support the claim that children are best cared for in a stable, intact home where both a mother and father are present. Although children can be cared for by single parents, the ideal is a two-parent home where children see role models of a mother and father. Children gain much of their understanding of what it means to be a wife, mother, husband and father from observing their parents.

Research conducted on the children of divorced parents suggests that such children often have more difficulty making gender distinctions than children in an intact home. They tend to be more depressed, have a higher incidence of substance abuse or chemical dependence, have increased incidence of illness, depression and developmental problems.

While infidelity is not uncommon among heterosexual married partners, the connection between homosexuality and multiple partners is significant. Monogamy is not the norm in the homosexual population. Despite the fact that AIDS has prompted the homosexual community to encourage monogamy for nearly twenty years, HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases continue to climb among homosexuals. Even the homosexual literature acknowledges that homosexual monogamy is fictional. In his book, *Virtually Normal*, Andrew Sullivan, who is homosexual, writes about the openness of the homosexual "marriage" that reflects "great understanding of the need for extramarital outlets between two men, more so than would be tolerated between a man and a woman."³ In other words, monogamy is not monogamy.

A lengthy history of marital infidelity within the ranks of heterosexual married couples attests to the destructive toxin of infidelity, even among couples with so called "open marriages." Wife swapping, swinging and other forms of marital thrill seeking have been thoroughly documented to have devastating effects on healthy marriages and healthy child rearing. The State should never be in the business of encouraging unhealthy behavior by providing it special treatment.

Point #6: Legalizing homosexual marriage undermines the moral foundation of marriage.

Marriage as traditionally defined – the union of one man and one woman – is the most important social institution around the world. Legalizing homosexual marriage would allow a tiny minority of people to change long held moral codes and the social commitments that sustain it.

Advocates of homosexual marriage frequently ask, "What harm is done to heterosexual marriages if same sex marriage is legalized?" The short answer is – they harm everyone else. When homosexual couples seek State approval and all the benefits that the State reserves for married heterosexual couples, they impose the law on everyone. Millions of people who do not believe homosexual practice is moral would be forced to accept it anyway.

Homosexuals would turn civil rights laws into battering rams, using the courts to hammer resisters into submission. An employer who offers medical insurance to employees would be forced to provide it for the homosexual partner of an employee. Schools would be required to treat homosexuality as normal in its curriculum and co-curricular activities.

Some gay marriage activists argue that permitting homosexuals to marry will actually stabilize gay relationships, despite a Dutch study which showed that

² *Murphy v. Ramsey* 114 U.S. 15, 45 (1885)

³ *Out* magazine, December/January 1994, p. 161.

homosexuals in a “committed” relationship had an average of eight sexual partners outside the relationship per year! Stanley Kurtz, writing in the *Weekly Standard* states, “After gay marriage, what will become of marriage itself? Among the likeliest effects of gay marriage is to take us down a slippery slope to legalized polygamy and ‘polyamory’ (group marriage). Marriage will be transformed into a variety of relationship contracts, linking two, three or more individuals in every conceivable combination of male and female.”⁴

Thus the greatest harm that can come from legalizing homosexual marriage is the abolition of marriage itself, an avowed goal for some homosexual groups. At the very least, same sex marriage will certainly weaken the belief that monogamy lies at the heart of marriage.

What Can Christians Do About Gay Marriage?

1. Ask God to continue having mercy on America.

Anyone who knows anything about God should be surprised that God’s full judgment has not yet fallen on America. Years ago, Ruth Bell Graham, the wife of evangelist Billy Graham, said, “If God does not judge America for its sins, he will have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah.” The arrogance and presumptuousness of homosexuals in the United States tempts the Lord.

2. Churches must strategize to strengthen heterosexual marriages.

The antidote to perversion is purity. Churches should focus on promoting those things that will most strengthen existing marriages. The divorce rate among Christians is unacceptably high, thus the children of divorced parents frequently lack the kind of role models they need as they prepare to enter marriage themselves. Churches must sponsor marriage enrichment weekends, special speakers and schedule special opportunities for married couples to strengthen their marriages. One thing that churches can do to strengthen marriages is to establish a policy of limiting how much involvement a married couple can have in church ministries and activities. Sometimes a person whose marriage is in trouble will become immersed in church activities to avoid dealing with marital problems. Churches need to be alert to this and be prepared to head off a problem before it can develop.

3. Christians should engage in the public policy debates about same sex marriage in their workplace, community and the political arena.

Although homosexuality and the question of gay marriage are moral and spiritual issues, they are also public policy issues that must be debated. Christians must be prepared to engage people in the debate of these issues by being well informed. This means that churches should make sure that they have well-researched, well-documented materials available to their people.

This includes being prepared to counter the pro-gay messages conveyed through school curricula and the mass media. Churches can become a clearing house for educational materials that tell the truth about homosexuality, gay marriage, etc.

4. Recruit a task force to maintain a Christian presence at school board meetings, city council meetings, county commission meetings, etc. to monitor pro-gay activities.

The time to oppose policies, ordinances, rules and laws is before they are enacted. This requires vigilance and persistence. You cannot succeed in preventing the further encroachment of the gay rights agenda if you do not know what is happening and who is behind it. It is not by accident that certain mayors have taken it upon themselves to initiate the marriages of homosexuals. These moral raiding parties are probing actions designed to see how strong the opposition to gay marriage will be. It is one thing to take a public opinion poll and quite another to take action in order to gauge the intensity of the response.

Being a regular presence at local policymaking meetings sends a message to would-be rouge mayors that unilateral actions designed to advance homosexual interests will be met with stiff resistance. It should be obvious that the best way to combat the problem of public officials taking matters into their own hands is to not elect them in the first place. This means that Christians must be strategically engaged in local politics.

Conclusion

Churches must do much more than simply oppose homosexual marriage. While preaching and teaching a biblical marital ethic, the Church must also hold marriage partners to a high standard of accountability. Churches must insist that pastors do not marry couples without proper premarital counseling. Church members who are unfaithful should be properly disciplined and the Church should conduct annual marriage seminars, retreats or other events to enrich the marriages of its members.

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⁴ Stanley Kurtz, “Beyond Gay Marriage,” *Weekly Standard*, August 4, 2003, Volume 8, Issue 45

