

Gay Marriage

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Heated discussion in the State Supreme Court regarding the constitutionality of Proposition 22 (the one man, one woman marriage bill passed in 2000), reinvigorates the question: Why is the Christian right so concerned about what others do in private? And it's not merely homosexuality.

At the risk of sounding self-deprecating, I confess that Christendom is extremely narrow in painting the boundaries of amorous: no premarital, no extramarital, no incestuous, no pedophilia, no gay, no lesbian, no bisexual, no polyamorous, no trans-sexual, no bigamy or polygamy, no necrophilia, no bestiality, no prostitution. According to Christians, it's mom, dad, junior and sis. Departing from that is simply wrong and should not be sanctioned.

The Christian right opposes the type of liberty necessary for these multi-variegated sexual preferences to flourish and are, therefore, viewed as a bigoted lot. Our culture comforts itself by assigning them with a psychological disorder and then hoping they'll go away. But that doesn't seem to be happening. Are Christians truly bigots or are there good reasons for their narrow view of what should constitute a household?

Reasons to oppose divergent unions should not be founded upon ignorance, anger, hatred, self-righteousness, psychosis or simply because people think it's yucky. After twenty-five years of ministry, I've seen all these ugly dispositions in the church. It's carnal indignation and it's wrong. But there are good reasons for the exclusive 'mom and dad' criterion.

As a Christian, I believe the declaration of Scripture (which clearly addresses the subject in question) is sufficient to arrive at an ethical conclusion. But it is a mistake to think the ethics of Scripture are arbitrary—as if man would be happy if God would just leave him alone. No one knows man like God knows man. And no human counsel can elevate the soul and culture of man, like the wisdom found in God's word.

A biblical apologetic for the traditional household:

At creation God declared that one thing, and only one thing wasn't good—it wasn't good for man to be alone. Biblical anthropology suggests something incomplete in a single gender. The simple nature of the case is that there are two genders. These two genders are interdependent, that is, they can't survive without each other. Men and women were engineered by God in such a way as to produce life. But these physical life-giving distinctions are not the end of it.

Men and women are emotionally and psychologically distinct as well. Interests and temperament between the sexes is universally divergent. And regardless of what examples one uses to demonstrate gender distinctions, it is virtually impossible for any rational person to ignore that they exist.

One reason Christians push for the traditional family is due (or at least should be due) to the recognition of gender distinctions and how they work together augmenting the spiritual and psychological well-being of children and culture. A household which contains the necessary components to produce healthy, happy and well-balanced offspring is a household comprised of a mom and dad. To publicly promote a model which purposefully ignores or excludes this does harm to households and the societies which households produce—it therefore becomes a public affair. Prisons are not comprised of inmates raised by loving moms and dads.

And even if a couple is past the child bearing age, or doesn't intend to have (or adopt) children they still provide a model. An eighty-year-old couple who can no longer have children (even those who never had children) still convey to their culture the substance of what generates a healthy psyche. They are still the archetypal standard of an ideal home.

It is occasionally argued that this ideal may become impossible if a parent dies or leaves. But the mere assertion acknowledges that when this happens the ideal has been compromised. It is one

thing to fall short of an ideal out of necessity or neglect, it is quite another matter to alter or abandon ideals altogether.

A final explanation, one that is less likely to be embraced by our increasingly apostate culture, is the picture given in Scripture of fathers, mothers, husbands and brides. God calls us to view Him as a Father with the father's attending roles of love, provision and protection. Jesus is compared to a groom who lays down His life for His bride, the church. It can easily be argued that human roles have, as their primary design, these pedagogical ends.

We can say these are private matters but they inevitably become public and work their way into the fabric of our corporate psyches. After all, if it were truly a private matter it wouldn't be at the State Supreme Court.