

Prop. 8 Traumatic Stress Disorder



The verdict is in. The California Supreme Court has ruled and the voter's voice on marriage has been preserved, at least, for the moment. I must confess, though, that while I'm relieved, I'm a bit fatigued. Watching Miss USA contender Carrie Prejean assaulted for stating her views on marriage has been brutal. Hearing actor Sean Penn admonish supporters of the California law, Proposition 8, at this year's Academy Awards ceremony to "sit and reflect and anticipate their great shame and the shame in their grandchildren's eyes" was ugly. Reading about how Proposition 8 opponents were circulating Google maps detailing the locations of Proposition 8 supporters' homes to harass them was insidious.

I'm sure I'm not alone. Many Christians may be hesitant, if not completely resistant, to engage the culture on issues that contradict their values and beliefs the next time around. But we must ask ourselves – as the church, what should our response be? The answer for me comes in looking back at how the early church responded to similar opposition. They were committed to stand for what they knew to be truth, even if it meant the ultimate sacrifice. Many were sent to their death in the jaws of wild beasts in front of a coliseum of eager spectators. Today rather than facing the lions, the church now faces the merciless jaws of litigation. Instead of an audience of robed spectators, there is now a virtual coliseum of media correspondents, magazines and talk shows ready to voice their particular perspective on the events. The attitude against the church is the same but the venue for persecution has been modernized. As a result many churches have gone underground on this issue of homosexuality and are fearful to engage the

topic at any level. Some believe there is too much to risk and besides; gay marriage will eventually be federally legalized so why fight it?

But wait a minute. Who is the real victim in this scenario? Is it really the church?

The interesting thing about fear is that it desensitizes us to the needs of others by causing us to be preoccupied with our own concerns. When the church does not respond because of fear, others fall victim in this tragic truth war. What about the people that are looking for an alternative to unwanted homosexual struggles? What answers will they find? Will the only message they hear be one that directly opposes God's divine plan and creation?

I remember growing up in the church in the 1980s while struggling with unwanted same-sex attractions. At times, I have wondered what course I would have taken had I grown up in today's culture. There are so many options that appear to be based on truth and love that were not available 20 years ago. Would I have taken the same road or would I have chosen a path that was more harmonious with my proclivities? I would like to think I would be where I am today, but I have my doubts considering the growing, fearful silence of so many within the church.

Consider the men and women that may never know the merciful truth of Christ because we have allowed ourselves to become intimidated by those who oppose this truth. Are we communicating to these men and women that they are not worth the risk? Perhaps it is not the church that is in the coliseum, but rather those who have been blinded to the false promises of gay ideology. They are being sacrificed to a culture that methodically destroys God's intended design for gender and sexuality. The spectators are not the activists, politicians, or media, but rather the church as it sits in deafening silence, fearful that if they speak out, the culture

will turn on them.

We must not shrink back in silent terror. If fear dictates our response, many will be lost. More than ever, we need to be a voice of truth in a compromised culture. So many men, women and children are in need of a redemptive message on homosexuality. The life-giving power and love of God cannot be contained by a cultural gag order or even by legal mandate. It is the church's high calling to proclaim it to those who need to hear it no matter what the cost may be. Jesus considered us worth it. May we follow His example as we press past our fatigue.

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