

What's WRONG With Gay Marriage

Same-sex marriage is not just wrong on religious grounds – it is bad policy for any society. Here's why...

A letter arrives bearing the distinct appearance of an invitation. The return address sticker indicates it's from your friend Steve. You open it quickly, suspecting it's a wedding invitation. You wonder, Who's the lucky gal?

Then your heart sinks, and you gasp as you realize it's not a gal at all. The invitation tells you your dear friend Steve is marrying Bob.

Suddenly you're full of conflicting thoughts and feelings. You are repulsed at the thought of two men getting married, yet you truly love Steve. You know that what they're doing is repugnant but you don't want to reject your friend.

You also know what God's Word says about homosexual practices, but you don't want to be perceived as a bigot. You feel devastated and question how American society became so perverse.

It wasn't always this way. Throughout human history, as expressed in all kinds of cultures and taught in all major religions, marriage—until recently—had always been between a man and a woman. It was so clearly the intended design that no one thought marriage needed to be defined by law.

Heterosexual marriage was certainly the practice in the West. But that was when the United States and Europe were, to

varying degrees, Christian nations. Now, however, nations such as Denmark, Norway and Sweden have legalized same-sex marriage, while other nations, including Canada, are about to. In the United States, Massachusetts has made same-sex marriages legal, and a few other states are following its lead.

Even some American churches are at various stages of blessing same-sex unions. The once-solid mainline churches, which had previously led revivals and changed America for the good, are embroiled in the gay-marriage debate.

What Does God Say?

At times of upheaval, when everything that seems right is being shaken, people who truly love God instinctively reach for Scripture to find truth. There are several passages that refer to homosexual behavior, all of which condemn it:

1. Genesis 19; Judges 19; Ezekiel 16; Jude 7 (scriptural condemnation of either homosexual acts or attempted homosexual acts)
2. Leviticus 18:22; 20:13 (texts that prohibit a man from lying with another man as with a woman)
3. Romans 1:26-27 (passage that claims homosexual behavior occurs among people who deny God)
4. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; 1 Timothy 1:8-11 (lists of sins that defile people and keep them out of the kingdom of God).

The Bible is clear in its rejection of homosexual behavior, and, therefore, by extension, homosexual marriage. Scripture defines marriage as between man and woman (see Gen. 2:24), and Christians should do everything in their power to make sure society reflects marriage as God instituted it.

Others may object to our using Scripture as the basis for demanding that the state keep marriage between one man and one woman. Some will ask, "What right do you have to impose your views on us?" Some will remind us of the separation of church and state as mandated in the Constitution. Some will even seek to educate us, insisting that attraction to people of the same sex is genetic—simply "the way God made some people."

How do we respond to such views? Our answer is threefold.

First, law is always the imposition of the will of some people on others. Laws against racism and child labor, to mention just two issues, are examples. Historically in America, laws, though not based on the distinctives of a particular denomination, are based on the Judeo-Christian ethic.

It is not possible to have a "neutral base" to the law. Everyone reasons from some predetermined ideology. Secularism is as much an ideology as Christianity is.

Second, the phrase "separation of church and state" appears nowhere in the Constitution. That document simply mandates that there be no established state church. Belief in Divine Providence and in biblical morality are woven into the fabric of our nation.

Third, no credible scientific study shows that same-sex attraction is genetic. The few studies that are often cited are flawed.

The belief that homosexual attraction is caused by how one is raised is still the theory with the most credible evidence. It

is for this reason that we do not refer to individuals as “homosexuals.” They are individuals who presently have a same-sex attraction.

Look at the Facts

Though Scripture is the bedrock of our belief, we often find confirmation of God’s Word in scientific and sociological data. In other words, God’s truth demonstrates itself to be life giving; beliefs and practices that go against it do not. We see in the data the devastating truth that homosexual practices and same-sex relationships are harmful.

Medically, some same-sex acts cause damage to human tissue and are associated with a variety of infectious diseases. People who regularly practice such acts statistically have a shortened life span and a poorer quality of life.

Also, sexual relationships between people of the same sex—particularly men—have a much briefer duration than heterosexual marriage. As a result, both children and society in general suffer. Children need a stable home life with two parents present, each modeling a distinct gender.

If the purpose for marriage were simply to satisfy the desire of different individuals at a particular moment, there would be no reason to prevent all manner of groups from defining themselves as married. Why not allow three men to be married? What about two women and a child? What about two men and an animal? It is ludicrous to suggest that our laws should be changed to accommodate such bizarre arrangements.

Same-sex marriage expresses the message that marriage is out

of date and that it is separated from parenthood. What is at stake, therefore, is the God-ordained role of marriage—with all the stability for individuals and society that it brings.

It is foolish for us to bury our heads in the sand and pretend the adoption of same-sex marriage won't affect us. It will.

The problems of society always land on our doorstep. No amount of isolating our children from television, movies and unsaved children will prevent prevailing societal opinions from shouting loudly and seductively to them, not just when they are young but even more incessantly when they are living on their own. What kind of legacy are we handing the next generation?

In Canada and in some European countries, speaking against homosexual practices and same-sex marriage is now classified as a hate crime, and people are being punished for it. When will this happen here? What other biblical teachings will be added to the list of "hate speech" if we don't do something now?

We may lull ourselves into a false complacency by recalling that in the 2004 elections many voted for conservative moral values. But this was only because of a concerted effort on the part of many people. Though we should thank God for the results, we must realize that the forces that would destroy biblical morality haven't given up. They are hard at work now, preparing for the next battle. Are we?

I mentioned how ludicrous it is to most people that three men or two men and an animal could form a marriage. And yet, the notion of same-sex marriage was thought by most people to be

ludicrous only a few generations ago. This should convince us that Christians cannot remain idle in the cultural wars over morality. If what was once ludicrous is now becoming the law, what will happen a generation from now with what is considered ludicrous today?

We may think our churches are safe because, after all, we're "Bible-believing Christians." The sad truth, however, is that too many charismatic and Pentecostal churches have watered down the message by placing too minimal an emphasis on the Bible's teaching, substituting instead an emphasis on feeling the presence of the Lord or receiving one's weekly allotment of blessings. Too many of our churches deem "doctrine" a dirty word and instead opt for "feeling blessed."

God wants us to be concerned not just about ourselves and our families but also about our nation, the world and the church at large. Paul tells us that when one suffers, all suffer (see 1 Cor. 12:26).

We are called to sound the alarm, and if we don't, blame for the destruction wreaked in society may, in part, fall on us (see Ezek. 3:16-21). So how should we respond? I believe we must take seven key steps:

1. Learn what the Bible teaches about marriage. Being able to mouth a few Scriptures is not sufficient. We have to know what the Word says in full and in context. What does God say marriage is all about?

2. Know basic facts about the effects of same-sex marriage. Every Christian should have scientific studies handy that report the negative medical and sociological consequences of

same-sex marriage so we can speak intelligently on the subject.

Though some have already formed a strong opinion, a large number haven't. If we can wisely and lovingly present people with the facts, many will accept God's truth.

3. Support ministries that help heal homosexuals. Many individuals give in to homosexual behavior because they think there is no alternative. Ministries such as Exodus International () often are led by people who have been healed from homosexual attraction and who can help others find wholeness.

4. Get our own houses in order. It is hollow for us to speak against same-sex marriage when so many Christian marriages end in divorce. Marriage-enrichment seminars must be a regular part of the life of every congregation. At the same time there must be a climate of openness and honesty so that when a Christian marriage isn't working well people can acknowledge that without fear of being judged and can receive help.

I'm not advocating that we wait until we have our own act completely together before we work against same-sex marriage or anything else that is contrary to God's will. We must speak and act forcefully, but with the humility that comes from knowing we are sinners just like those we are trying to persuade to accept the truth.

5. Be involved in the political process. As Jesus reminds us, though we are not of the world, we are in it (see John 17:15-16). If a Christian does not occupy a particular legislative seat, a pagan will. Can we count on nonbelievers

to discern and do what is right in leading the nation? Some of us need to run for office.

And all of us need to write letters and send e-mails to our state and federal officials. A simple, polite note stating your position and how you will vote in accordance with that accomplishes much. If several people from the same church mount a letter-writing campaign, make sure each letter is individually worded and written.

6. Love. We should not be surprised that pagans behave like pagans! But Jesus told us to love our enemies (see Luke 6:27).

Often people who act immorally or hold views contrary to Scripture are won to Christ not so much by our clever arguments but by the power of our love (backed up by words and deeds, of course). Carrying a sign reading “God hates fags” misrepresents His compassion. God loves all homosexuals.

7. Pray. Though prayer is not a substitute for working hard, working hard will not bear fruit without prayer.

If we follow these steps, God will help us win the battle for traditional marriage and for other moral issues in our nation. As His grace empowers our hard work and fervent prayer, we will see fellow citizens changed by His truth and lawmakers influenced to enact laws based on biblical principles. Though the current moral condition of America may be an indication to the contrary, it is not too late to re-establish righteousness in our land.

Mark A. Pearson is president of Institute for Christian

Renewal and conducts teaching conferences and healing crusades in churches around North America. He is the author of Christian Healing: A Practical and Comprehensive Guide, published by Charisma House. He may be reached at i4cr@.