

George O. Wood: Supreme Court Decision a Call to Pray for Spiritual Awakening

Wednesday morning, the United States Supreme Court issued rulings in two highly anticipated same-sex marriage cases: *United States v. Windsor* and *Hollingsworth v. Perry*.

I am grateful the Supreme Court upheld the right of the states to legally define marriage as the union of a man and a woman, rather than striking down such laws via judicial fiat.

However, I am concerned that the court's uniformly negative portrayal of opponents of same-sex marriage in *United States v. Windsor* is both false and demeaning. And I am concerned that its Fifth Amendment reasons for overturning the federal definition of marriage (in the **Defense of Marriage Act**) will be used in the future to overturn similar state definitions.

It is especially disturbing that Justice Kennedy, in his majority opinion, identified "animus" against homosexuals as one motivating factor in the adoption of the congressional Defense of Marriage Act. To apply the word *animus* to those who hold to the view that marriage is reserved for a man and woman is an inflammatory accusation that ignores our principled arguments and demeans our motives.

You see this *animus* in Christians being labeled as haters, homophobes and bigots when the reverse is true. Humanitarian care and love for neighbor is a timeless value demonstrated daily by Christians. If the culture can dehumanize followers of Christ by attaching hateful labels to them, then it's only a matter of time until Christians are first marginalized for their faith, deprived of their **First Amendment** rights and ultimately persecuted.

Americans disagree about the advisability of **same-sex marriage**. In their often-heated debates, they deserve to have their reasons and motivations portrayed honestly by the other side. And they deserve the right to resolve these issues at the ballot box, one way or another. This is the essence of self-government.

In his dissent, Justice Scalia predicted this decision is only the first shoe to drop. As American culture shifts away from its Judeo-Christian heritage, the speed of that shift will only be accelerated in the days to come.

The decision today is a call to Christians to fervently pray and actively work for a great spiritual awakening in our land. God tells us what to do now: "If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chron. 7:14).

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