

# How Should the Church Respond in Perilous Times?

The times in which we live are unprecedented in the history of America. Every generation thinks the cultural decline is worse than in prior times. These times are clearly unprecedented—at least in American history. But the threats we face today are not unprecedented in Judeo-Christian history, a point I will address later.

Let me give just two examples. For the first time in world history, the citizens of a country are being forced to participate in genocide. No government has ever forced its citizens to participate in genocide until now. Yet, that is what is happening in America with the ObamaCare law, which forces employers to provide and/or pay for abortion-inducing drugs or devices. And many individuals are now being required to make a monthly payment separate from their insurance premiums to fund abortion.

The second example is the deconstruction of marriage. Until 2000, no government in world history had every officially sanctioned same-sex unions. Norway, Denmark and Sweden were the first to do so. In 2004, Massachusetts was the first state in America to put the government's sanction on same-sex "marriage." Throughout all of world history, we are only 14 years down this road and only 10 years in America.

When the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear five cases involving same-sex marriage, the immediate result was that same-sex marriage became "legal" in Indiana, Oklahoma, Utah, Virginia and Wisconsin. But the impact was much broader than just five states. Since June of 2013, multiple federal and state courts have struck down statewide constitutional marriage amendments passed by overwhelming margins of the voters.

Prior to June 2013, over 60 lawsuits were filed across the country seeking to have the courts force same-sex marriage on the people. Liberty Counsel was involved in more than 50 such cases. We won every case except one in California by a 4-3 vote, but that decision was quickly overturned by Proposition 8, a statewide marriage amendment.

In June 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court in a 5-4 opinion stated that the federal Defense of Marriage Act that affirmed marriage as the union of one man and one woman for federal purposes was “unconstitutional.” This was the match thrown on gasoline that spread fire across the country. Then in 2014, the Court stood by to watch marriage burn.

The implications of same-sex marriage on the church and the culture are staggering. As a policy matter, same-sex marriage is bad for children. The policy sends the message that moms and dads are irrelevant to the well being of boys and girls. Same-sex unions forever deprive children from having a mom or a dad. Children do best when raised by a mother and a father. The complimentary genders are important to the well being of children.

I cannot in this limited space go list all the reasons why and how same-sex marriage will have a negative impact on marriage, personal health and children. But I do want to focus on one area of concern—religious liberty and freedom of conscience. The agenda behind same-sex marriage is aggressive and intolerant. We are witnessing a clash of worldviews and this is a zero sum game, meaning that co-existence is not possible. This is not because Christians are intolerant, but because the agenda will not tolerate an opposing worldview.

When same-sex marriage came to Massachusetts in 2004, Catholic Charities’ adoption ministry was forced to shut down after decades of placing orphans in homes with moms and dads. The government required the adoption ministry to cease operation because the ministry refused to place children in same-sex

households. This same tragic story is repeated in other states where same-sex marriage has been sanctioned by the government.

In New Jersey, same-sex unions caused a Christian denomination to lose property tax exemption on a facility when it refused to allow it to be used for a same-sex ceremony. In New York, a farm owned by Christians was fined \$10,000 for refusing to allow a same-sex ceremony on the property. In New Mexico, a Christian wedding photographer was fined and forced to cease photographing weddings unless and until she agreed to photograph same-sex weddings. And in Oregon, a baker was forced to stop baking wedding cakes because she refused to bake a wedding cake celebrating a same-sex union.

HGTV breached a legally binding contract with Jason and David Benham for a reality TV show called "Flip it Forward" when a homosexual publication pressured the cable channel to drop them because they publically supported natural marriage. And of course, you have heard about Chick-fil-A and Duck Dynasty.

The list of similar conflicts is endless. Same-sex marriage will affect everyone. From what is taught to your children and grandchildren (and I am not just talking about "alternative" families), to your profession, business, business license and more—everyone will experience the intolerance of the agenda.

The church is about to enter rough waters. We are not witnessing a bump in the road that will soon pass. The threat to the family and religious liberty will exponentially increase. The church cannot compromise on this critical issue. Marriage predates religion and government. It is part of God's natural created order. God made male and female and ordained marriage. From this union, and only from this union of male and female, another human is created in the image of God. You can no more change the natural created order of marriage than you can change gravity. It is what it is no matter what anyone thinks about it.

The church needs to rise up and pastors need to be bold. Christians may soon face the same choice that Martin Luther King Jr. faced—whether to obey an unjust law. When confronted with that question, King relied upon thousands of years of Judeo-Christian doctrine. He said some laws are just and these you must obey. But there are times when the government passes unjust laws. These are laws that are contrary to God's natural created order and natural law. When a law of man directly collides with a law of God, believers have the duty to disobey the earthly law. And for this, King found himself in jail. He had no other choice.

Same-sex marriage is contrary to God's natural created order and natural law. Until recently, sodomy was called a "crime against nature." When you are forced to affirm same-sex unions or sexual relations outside of natural marriage, then you must decide to obey God or man. That time has come. It is not in the distant future. It is now.

As I said, these times are unprecedented in American history. But in Judeo-Christian history these times are not unprecedented. The children of Israel faced far worse times in Egypt. While being crushed by the most powerful nation in the world, God liberated the Israelites, and today we celebrate Passover. Esther and Mordecai faced even greater threats. The King of Persia issued an irrevocable decree to kill every Jew on March 7. It cannot get any worse than to face total annihilation on a day certain. Yet, when the people prayed and then acted, God intervened. Instead of the end of the Jewish people, today we celebrate the Feast of Purim.

God will do the same in our generation if His people pray, repent and seek His face. He will hear our prayers, forgive our sin, and heal our land. Make no mistake—troubled waters are ahead. The question is, what will the righteous do? The answer to that question will determine our destiny.

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