

Churches Ill-Equipped to Fight Traditional Marriage Battle

Why should marriage be defined only as a union between a man and a woman? In 2003, **Chuck Colson**, founder of Prison Fellowship, was part of an effort to pass a constitutional amendment to that effect. Colson at that time discussed why the issue is so important and to understand what the implications are if society broadens its definition of marriage.

Can you lay out a solid argument for why marriage is to be only between a man and a woman?

Marriage, as an institution between a man and a woman, is basically for procreation. Homosexual marriage, therefore, is an oxymoron—there is no such thing. It is something else. It is two people coming together for recreation, not for procreation. Procreation can only happen between a man and a woman.

Every society has recognized this, going back to the beginning of recorded history. Societies recognize that it is in their self-interest to preserve this institution and to give it a distinct status under the law. Marriage is the institution that civilizes and propagates the human race. It is where children are raised and learn the ways of right and wrong. Their consciences are informed in the family.

What do you say to people who argue that no one has the right to stop them from doing their own thing in a consenting relationship?

I wonder if that person would really believe you should do your own thing if it involves incest or polygamy. Is that

person really saying that there is no place where you draw the line on sexual behavior? I don't think so. There are reasonable boundaries that the law tends to protect. My argument would be that society's survival depends on the family. And the institution of the family is in deep trouble. So you have a serious question about whether this society can continue.

What evidence is there that society is better off with traditional families than without them?

There is a very telling statistic that appeared in *Development and Psychopathology*. Researchers found that in the inner city, 6 percent of kids from intact families became delinquent, while 90 percent of those from single-parent families became delinquent. That is a huge gap: In the intact family, kids have a very good chance of making it. In the inner cities, the single-parent family is almost a ticket to prison.

How well are churches dealing with this issue?

I don't think most churches understand the precarious legal situation we are in, where, apart from a constitutional amendment, we are going to have families either be heterosexual or homosexual—it will be a matter of choice. And when that happens, everything begins to unravel. It will be hard to convince people that homosexuality is a sin if it is legally recognized for marriage. There will be serious implications for the church in terms of being able to preach the authority of Scripture.

Pastors need to teach their congregations about the dangers of what happens when the family fractures—and teach about the current crisis. I would tell pastors, “The ship is sinking. We're not going to have any society left if we don't protect the marriage bond. And the homosexual movement is trying to unravel it. You've got to stop it. You've got to talk about this lovingly, openly and honestly.” I think this is the No. 1

domestic issue facing America today, and I don't see how any self-respecting pastor can ignore it.

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