

## **WHY BE CONCERNED ABOUT SAME-SEX MARRIAGE?**

***Dr. Gary Gromacki***  
***Associate Professor of Bible and Homiletics***  
***Baptist Bible Seminary, Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania***

Surprisingly, moral values was the top issue influencing voters in the 2004 election. Moral values influenced voters more than the war in Iraq, terrorism, and the economy. People in America are concerned about the moral values of their leaders on abortion, stem-cell research, and same-sex marriage. President Bush's stance on moral values helped him win reelection. On Election Day 2004 eleven states approved bans on same-sex marriage. But the battle for traditional marriage is far from over. This article will (1) review the recent history of the battle for traditional marriage, (2) explain some relevant scripture texts that defend traditional marriage and condemn homosexuality, (3) show the results of cultural acceptance of same-sex marriage, and (4) give some action steps to show how Christians can get involved in defending traditional marriage today.

### **RECENT HISTORY OF THE BATTLE FOR TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE**

June 30, 1986 – The United States Supreme Court gives its decision on *Bowers v. Hardwick*. Hardwick had been charged by Bowers, the Attorney General of Georgia, with violating the Georgia statute which criminalizes sodomy. Hardwick had been discovered committing the act of sodomy with another adult man in the bedroom of his home. Hardwick brought a lawsuit in federal district court, challenging the constitutionality of this statute. In a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court rules the Georgia statute to be constitutional.

The United States Supreme Court states:

The Constitution does not confer a fundamental right upon homosexuals to engage in sodomy. None of the fundamental rights announced in this Court's prior cases involving family relationships, marriage, or

procreation bear any resemblance to the right asserted in this case. And any claim that those cases stand for the proposition that any kind of private sexual conduct between consenting adults is constitutionally insulated from state proscription is unsupportable.<sup>1</sup>

The Supreme Court also states:

It is obvious to us that neither of these formulations would extend a fundamental right to homosexuals to engage in acts of consensual sodomy. Proscriptions against that conduct have ancient roots. Sodomy was a criminal offense at common law and was forbidden by the laws of the original 13 States when they ratified the Bill of Rights. In 1868, when the Fourteenth Amendment was ratified, all but 5 of the 37 States in the Union had criminal sodomy laws. In fact, until 1961, all 50 States outlawed sodomy, and today, 24 States and the District of Columbia continue to provide criminal penalties for sodomy performed in private and between consenting adults. Against this background, to claim that a right to engage in such conduct is “deeply rooted in this Nation’s history and tradition,” or “implicit in the concept of ordered liberty,” is, at best, facetious.<sup>2</sup>

September 1996 – President Clinton signs the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) which is passed by the Republican-controlled Congress. This act states that “the word ‘marriage’ means only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, and the word ‘spouse’ refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife.”<sup>3</sup> It also states in Sec.1738C that no state could be required to recognize “a relationship between persons of the same sex that is treated as a marriage under the laws of such other state.”<sup>4</sup> This bill moves through a legislative fast track and receives overwhelming approval in both houses of Congress.

December 3, 1996 – In the case *Baehr v. Miike* originally entitled *Baehr v. Lewin*, Judge Kevin Chang rules that the refusal of the State of Hawaii to grant marriage licenses to three same-sex

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<sup>1</sup> *Bowers v. Hardwick*, 478 U.S. 186 (1986), <<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com>> (accessed 29 October 2004).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>3</sup> <<http://www.lmaw.org/federal/doma.htm>> (accessed 15 April 2005).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

couples violates the Hawaii State Constitution and that the state has failed to demonstrated a “compelling state interest” that could justify this “discrimination.” Judge Chang delays ordering the state to issue same-sex marriage licenses until the Supreme Court has heard the state’s appeal.<sup>5</sup>

December 1999 – Vermont’s Supreme Court recognizes “civil unions” for homosexuals: “We hold that the state is constitutionally required to extend to same sex couples the common benefits and protections that flow from marriage under Vermont law.”<sup>6</sup> The court finds it discriminatory to deny marriage licenses to homosexual couples, depriving them of benefits such as tax breaks, inheritance rights, and health insurance. The court leaves it to Vermont’s legislature to decide whether the state will include same-sex unions in its marriage laws or establish another system to recognize homosexual partnerships.

April 26, 2000 – Governor Howard Dean of Vermont signs a bill creating marriage-like “civil unions” for homosexuals and lesbians. This law is the first in the nation granting same-sex couples nearly all of the benefits of marriage. Under the law, same-sex couples will be able to go to their town clerks for licenses and have their unions certified by a judge or a member of the clergy. Break-ups will be handled in Family Court, just as divorces are, although they will be called dissolutions.<sup>7</sup>

May 15, 2002 – The Federal Marriage Amendment (FMA) which defines marriage as “only of the union of a man and a woman” is introduced into the House. The Alliance for Marriage has drafted the FMA to focus on stopping the courts from determining marital status or benefits. The FMA states, “Marriage in the United States shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman. Neither this constitution or the constitution of any state, no state or federal law, shall be construed to require that marital status

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<sup>5</sup> <<http://www.firstthings.com/ftissues/ft9704/articles/coolidge.html>> (accessed 15 April 2005).

<sup>6</sup> <<http://www.archives.cnn.com/1999/US/12/20/gay.marriage.01/>> (accessed 15 April 2005).

<sup>7</sup> <[http://www.grasshopperdesign.com/gay\\_marriage/news/vt4.htm](http://www.grasshopperdesign.com/gay_marriage/news/vt4.htm)> (accessed 15 April 2005).

or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon unmarried couples or groups.”<sup>8</sup>

May 21, 2002 – Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD) appeal a Massachusetts court ruling denying marriage to seven same-sex couples. On May 9, 2002, the court had ruled that having and raising children was central to the purpose of marriage.<sup>9</sup>

April 2003 – Homosexual rights groups and Democrats castigate Rick Santorum (Republican senator from Pennsylvania) for suggesting that a government condoning consensual homosexual relations would have to allow bigamy, polygamy, incest, and adultery. Conservative activists like Gary Bauer blast Republican leaders for not defending Santorum.<sup>10</sup>

May 2003 – A May Gallup poll indicates that a record 60 percent of Americans say that homosexual relations between consenting adults should be legal and that homosexuality is an acceptable way of life.<sup>11</sup>

June 10, 2003 – The highest Ontario court rules that the province’s legal definition of marriage (that it is between a man and a woman) violates homosexuals’ human rights enshrined in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The court of appeal in Ontario, Canada, changes the common law definition of marriage from “one man and one woman” to “two persons.” One week later, Prime Minister Jean Chretien announces that the government will allow the decision to stand. The practical effect will be the legalization of same-sex marriage across Canada. Many Canadians oppose legalizing same-sex marriage. A national survey poll taken in June finds that 54 percent of Canadians support same-sex marriages and 44 percent oppose them.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Sherlyn Henderson Blunt, “A Man and a Woman,” *Christianity Today*, December 2003, 23.

<sup>9</sup> <[http://www.glad.org/News\\_Room/press52-5-21-02.shtml](http://www.glad.org/News_Room/press52-5-21-02.shtml)> (accessed 15 April 2005).

<sup>10</sup> <<http://www.christianitytoday.com/global/>> (accessed 5 November 2004).

<sup>11</sup> <<http://www.goodnewsetc.com/014TS3.htm>> (accessed 15 April 2005).

<sup>12</sup> <<http://www.christianitytoday.com/global/>> (accessed 5 November 2004).

June 26, 2003 – The U.S. Supreme Court strikes down a Texas law that criminalizes homosexual sodomy in the *Lawrence and Garner v. Texas* decision. This ruling is considered to be a major victory for gay rights in the United States. The 6-3 decision by the court reverses the course from a ruling made seventeen years ago (*Bowers v. Hardwick*) that states could punish homosexuals for deviant sex. Legal analysts say the ruling enshrines for the first time a broad constitutional right to sexual privacy and its impact will reach beyond Texas to twelve other states with similar sodomy laws against the gay and lesbian community (Kansas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Alabama, Florida, Idaho, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Utah, and Virginia) and into mainstream America.<sup>13</sup>

Paul Smith, of the gay rights organization Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, argues before the court in March that Texas's statute violates the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment's Equal Protection Clause. Justice Anthony Kennedy writes for the court's majority: "The petitioners are entitled to respect for their private lives. The state cannot demean their existence or control their destiny by making their private sexual conduct a crime."<sup>14</sup> After the court announces its verdict, Lambda officials said that they will use the decision as a tool in future lawsuits concerning marriage. Ruth Harlow of the Lambda Legal Defense Fund says, "This is a giant leap forward to a day where we are no longer branded as criminals."<sup>15</sup>

United States Supreme Court justices in the minority criticize the decision: "Justice Antonin Scalia said the court 'has taken sides in the culture war.' Scalia—joined by Chief Justice William Rehnquist and Justice Clarence Thomas—said that the court 'has largely signed on to the so-called homosexual agenda.'"<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *Lawrence v. Texas*, <<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/>> (accessed 29 October 2004).

<sup>14</sup> "The Marriage Battle Begins," <<http://www.christianitytoday.com/global/>> (accessed 5 November 2004).

<sup>15</sup> "Bush Uncertain about Gay Marriage Ban," <<http://cnn.allpolitics/>> (accessed 5 November 2004).

<sup>16</sup> "Supreme Court Strikes Down Texas Sodomy Law," <<http://www.cnn.com/2003/LAW/06/26/scotus.sodomy/index.html>> (accessed 5 August 2005).

CNN legal analyst Jeffrey Toobin comments:

It really is an enormous decision in the history of the Supreme Court, because the right of privacy is something that really has been very much up in the air about whether it even exists. It's been a constant source of questioning at confirmation hearings; it started in the Supreme Court with decisions allowing married couples to buy birth control in Connecticut—that's really where the case began in the 1960s. The right of privacy was then extended, most famously, to abortion in *Roe v. Wade*.

In 1986, the Supreme Court in *Bowers v. Hardwick* said no, the right to privacy does not include the right to have sexual relations in the privacy of your own home. That was a 5-4 decision, bitterly contested at the time. It has now been overruled by this decision. The right to privacy marches on, even though, ironically, interestingly, this Supreme Court is in many respects more conservative than the one in 1986.

Homosexuality, private sexual conduct, has changed in its perception so much in these 17 years, that it is something that is simply accepted by this court as something the government can't regulate. It's a big, big decision in the history of the court.<sup>17</sup>

July 2003 – Matt Daniels, founder of the Alliance for Marriage in Springfield, Virginia, proposes a constitutional amendment to defend traditional marriage. He believes that it would be feasible since thirty-seven states have passed DOMA laws—including Texas. The amendment reads, “Marriage in the United States shall consist only of a man and a woman. Neither this Constitution nor the constitution of any state under state or federal law shall be construed to require that marital status or legal incidents therefore be conferred upon unmarried couples or groups.” This amendment says nothing about domestic partnerships and civil unions, which would be left to the states. U.S. Rep. Marilyn Musgrave secures ninety-six House cosponsors of the amendment within weeks of the *Lawrence* ruling. Another Gallup poll shows that support for legalizing homosexual relationships has slipped from 60 percent in May to 48 percent in July.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> “Toobin: Regulating Sex Acts and Marriage,” <<http://www.cnn.com/2003/LAW/06/26/toobin.ots>> (accessed 29 October 2004).

<sup>18</sup> “A Man and a Woman,” <<http://www.christianitytoday.com/global>> (accessed 5 November 2004).

November 18, 2003 – The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court rules 4-3 that the government can no longer deny marriage and marriage rights to same-sex couples. The Court rules the exclusion is unconstitutional under the liberty and equality provisions of the Massachusetts Constitution. This landmark ruling in *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health* won by GLAD (Gay & Lesbian Advocates and Defenders) is the first of its kind in this country by a state’s highest court. The judges state:

We construe civil marriage to mean the voluntary union of two persons as spouses, to the exclusion of all others. . . . Extending civil marriage to same-sex couples reinforces the importance of marriage to individuals and communities. That same-sex couples are willing to embrace marriage’s solemn obligations of exclusivity, mutual support, and commitment to one another is a testament to the enduring place of marriage in our laws and in the human spirit.<sup>19</sup>

The court gives the legislature 180 days to craft a way for gay couples to legally wed. It does not grant the fourteen plaintiffs marriage licenses. Gary Bauer of the Family Research Council says that the decision “was the most intolerant act of judicial tyranny in recent memory. Perhaps it is time for another Boston Tea Party. The heirs of Bunker Hill and Concord Bridge should not passively accept this decision by four robed individuals.” Focus on the Family founder James Dobson says, “This is a very sad day in the life of this country, and one that I believe invites the very judgment of God as we move arrogantly away from our moral underpinnings.” Robert Knight of Concerned Women for America’s Culture and Family Institute says, “To mandate marital recognition for non-marital relationships is to create a lie that will ensure coercion against people who stand for the truth. Christians are sure to be targets of persecution for their beliefs if ‘gay’ marriage is given legal backing.”<sup>20</sup>

January 2004 – The 11<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals unanimously rejects a legal challenge by five men who sued the Florida Department of Children and Family Services for the right to adopt. Flor-

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted in “Marriage in Massachusetts,” <[http://www.glad.org/marriage/massmarriage\\_faq.shtml](http://www.glad.org/marriage/massmarriage_faq.shtml)> (accessed 17 April 2005), 1.

<sup>20</sup> All quoted in “The End of Traditional Marriage?” <<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2003/146/32.0>> (accessed 5 November 2004).

ida is the only state to prohibit homosexual individuals and couples from adopting children. *Lofton v. Florida* is the first case in which a federal appeals court rules on homosexual adoption. The three-judge panel rules that there is no such right under Florida law. The decision is a victory against “judicial tyranny” exercised by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Lawrence v. Texas* and the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts in *Goodridge v. Massachusetts*. Alan Chambers of Exodus International in Orlando says, “The state of Florida has affirmed the fact that a child needs a two parent opposite-sex home as the optimal environment.”<sup>21</sup>

February 3, 2004 – The Massachusetts Supreme Court rules that only full, equal marriage rights for same-sex couples (rather than civil unions) will be constitutional. The court issues the opinion in response to a request from the state senate about whether Vermont-style civil unions which convey the state benefits of marriage (but not the title) will meet constitutional muster. “The history of our nation has demonstrated that separate is seldom, if ever, equal,” the four justices who ruled in favor of gay marriage write in the advisory opinion. A bill that allows for civil unions, but falls short of marriage, makes for “unconstitutional, inferior, and discriminatory status for same sex couples.”<sup>22</sup>

February 12, 2004 – San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom orders the county clerk to begin issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples. In an open challenge to California law, city authorities perform at least fifteen same-sex weddings and issue about a dozen more marriage licenses to same-sex couples. In a brief, opponents argue that only judges can declare California’s prohibition on same-sex marriages to be unconstitutional. Terry Thompson of the Alliance Defense Fund says, “Our position is very clear. This is a simple case of legal anarchy. The mayor can’t decide what is constitutional or what is unconstitutional. Only an appellate court judge can do that, and that is the substance of our brief.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Quoted in John W. Kennedy, “My Two Dads? Not in Florida,” <<http://www.christianitytoday.com/global>> (accessed 5 November 2004).

<sup>22</sup> <<http://news.findlaw.com/hdocs/docs/conlaw/maglmarrriage20304.html>> (accessed 5 November 2004).

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Harriet Chiang and Pamela Podger, “S.F. Set to Defend Same-Sex Marriages after Wild Weekend of Weddings, Judge Will Rule on Injunction,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (17 February 2004), <<http://sfgate>.

February 20, 2004 – California Superior Court Judge Ronald Quidachay does not issue an injunction to stop the marriages and does not announce who the presiding judge will be in the combined case. Quidachay rules after hearing arguments in a lawsuit filed by the Campaign for California Families and the Alliance Defense Fund, which contend that the city’s issuing of same-sex marriage licenses violates current state law. A separate suit filed by the Proposition 22 Legal Defense and Education Fund, will be considered at the same time along with a lawsuit filed by the city of San Francisco against the state of California. The city’s case challenges the state law that defines marriage as a union between a man and a woman only. Californians vote for Proposition 22 which defines marriage as between a man and a woman. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger declares the marriage licenses San Francisco has been issuing to same-sex couples to be illegal: “The marriage certificates submitted to the Department of Health Services by the city and county of San Francisco fail to meet legal standards.”<sup>24</sup>

February 24, 2004 – President Bush, decrying moves toward same-sex marriage in Massachusetts and San Francisco, calls on Congress to pass a constitutional amendment defining marriage as between a man and a woman:

If we’re to prevent the meaning of marriage from being changed forever, our nation must enact a constitutional amendment to protect marriage in America. Decisive and democratic action is needed because attempts to redefine marriage in a single state or city could have serious consequences throughout the country.

The Constitution says that “full faith and credit shall be given in each state to the public acts and records and judicial proceedings of every other state.”

Those who want to change the meaning of marriage will claim that this provision requires all states and cities to recognize same-sex marriages performed anywhere in America.

Congress attempted to address this problem in the Defense of Marriage Act by declaring that no state must accept another state’s definition of

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com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2004/02/17/MNGQQ523311.DTL> (accessed 17 April 2005).

<sup>24</sup> Quoted in “Judge Combines Same-Sex Marriage Cases,” <<http://cnn.law/>> (accessed 5 November 2004).

marriage. My administration will vigorously defend this act of Congress.

Yet there is no assurance that the Defense of Marriage Act will not itself be struck down by activist courts. In that event, every state would be forced to recognize any relationship that judges in Boston or officials in San Francisco choose to call a marriage.

Furthermore, even if the Defense of Marriage Act is upheld, the law does not protect marriage within any state or city.

For all these reasons, the defense of marriage requires a constitutional amendment. . . .

The union of a man and a woman is the most enduring human institution, honored and encouraged in all cultures and by every religious faith. Ages of experience have taught humanity that the commitment of a husband and wife to love and to serve one another promotes the welfare of children and the stability of society.

Marriage cannot be severed from its cultural, religious, and natural roots without weakening the good influence of society.<sup>25</sup>

In calling for a constitutional amendment, Bush does not express opposition to states allowing gays to enter civil unions, and he does not offer specific support for legislation introduced by Marilyn Musgrave, a Colorado Republican, whose bill would limit marriage to a union of a man and a woman. Bush says, "The amendment should fully protect marriage, while leaving the state legislatures free to make their own choices in defining legal arrangements other than marriage." Democratic presidential candidate Kerry responds, "While I believe marriage is between a man and a woman, for 200 years this has been a state issue. I oppose this election year effort to amend the Constitution in an area that each state can adequately address, and I will vote against such an amendment if it comes to the Senate floor."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> "Transcript of Bush Statement," <<http://www.cnn.com/2004/ALLPOLITICS/02/24/elec04.prez.bush.transcript/index.html>> (accessed 17 April 2005).

<sup>26</sup> Bush and Kerry, quoted in Wayne Washington, "Bush Seeks Marriage Amendment," <[http://www.boston.com/news/specials/gay\\_marriage/articles/2004/02/250bush\\_seeks\\_marriage\\_amendment](http://www.boston.com/news/specials/gay_marriage/articles/2004/02/250bush_seeks_marriage_amendment)> (accessed 5 November 2004).

March 11, 2004 – With local courts refusing to put an immediate stop to same-sex marriages, the State Supreme Court of California in Sacramento steps in with a ruling putting same-sex marriages on pause after State Attorney General Lockyer asks the high court to take up the case without lower court review. Marriage Equality California organizes a lunchtime rally in San Francisco's Union Square to call for equal rights.<sup>27</sup>

May 17, 2004 – Massachusetts begins issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples. Massachusetts becomes the first state in the nation to legalize same-sex marriage.<sup>28</sup>

June 3, 2004 – The General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, while deferring the decision to bless same-sex unions in formal marriage ceremonies, declares that longstanding homosexual relationships have already been sanctified.<sup>29</sup>

August 3, 2004 – A Washington King County Superior Court judge declares the state's Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) unconstitutional, but stays his decision so the issue can be decided by the state's Supreme Court. The judge rules that restricting the institution of marriage to opposite-sex couples "is not rationally related to any legitimate or compelling state interest." The ruling is stayed, pending an appeal to the state's supreme court.<sup>30</sup>

August 12, 2004 – California's Supreme Court voids the marriages of nearly 4000 homosexual couples who wed in San Francisco in the spring of 2004. The justices say that mayor Gavin Newsom did not have the authority to flout state marriage laws. Ruling unanimously, the court says local officials may not ignore laws with which they disagree. Justices sidestep the larger question on the constitutionality of civil marriage rights for gay couples. State law and a voter-approved ballot initiative both define marriage in California as between a man and a woman. The 5-2 deci-

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<sup>27</sup> "State Supreme Court Halts Same-Sex Marriages for Review," <<http://www.indybay.org/archives>> (accessed 5 November 2004).

<sup>28</sup> "Same Sex Couples Begin Marrying in Massachusetts," <<http://www.wtnh.com/global>> (accessed 17 April 2005).

<sup>29</sup> Edith Humphrey, "What God Hath Not Joined," <<http://www.christianitytoday.com/global>> (accessed 5 November 2004).

<sup>30</sup> Justin Freeman, "The State of the Marital Union," *Baptist Bulletin* (November 2004), 20.

sion by California's Supreme Court voids the marriages issued by Newsom beginning February 12 when Newsom issued the first certificate and March 11 when the court ordered a halt.<sup>31</sup>

November 2, 2004 – President Bush is reelected for a second term as president of the United States. Voters in eleven states approve constitutional amendments defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman. These eleven states are Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Utah, Oregon, and Ohio. Nationwide exit polls reveal that 22 percent of the voters cite “moral values” as the one issue that matters most when considering a vote for President. The other issues that concerned voters are the economy/jobs (20%), terrorism (19%), and Iraq (17%).<sup>32</sup>

November 30, 2004 – The Supreme Court declines to step into the nationwide debate over same-sex marriage, refusing to hear a challenge to the only state law that sanctions such unions. The court's decision leaves in place a ruling by the Massachusetts Supreme Court that the state's constitution requires officials to license same-sex marriages. About 3,000 homosexual couples have wed in Massachusetts since the state's high court legalized homosexual marriages.<sup>33</sup>

April 14, 2005 – The Oregon Supreme Court invalidates the “marriage” licenses of nearly 3,000 same-sex couples. The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners began issuing the licenses illegally on March 3, 2004, after deciding that limiting marriage to the union of one man and one woman was unconstitutional. “This is a tremendous victory for marriage, especially from a very liberal, activist court. This is the same court that in another case held that the state constitution protects obscenity,” comments Jan LaRue, Concerned Women for America's chief counsel.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Kevin Eckstrom, “Gay Marriage Roadblocks,” <<http://www.christianitytoday.com/global>> (accessed 5 November 2004).

<sup>32</sup> Collin Hansen, “Moral Values Carry Bush to Victory,” <<http://www.christianitytoday.com/global>> (accessed 5 November 2004).

<sup>33</sup> Richard Willing, “Justices Stay Out of Debate Over Gays,” *USA TODAY*, 30 November 2004, 1.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in <<http://www.christian-underground.com>> (accessed 15 April 2005).

## RELEVANT SCRIPTURE TEXTS

### The Creation of Adam and Eve (Genesis 1-2)

God created both man and woman in the image of God. Genesis 1:27 says, “So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” This verse shows that human sexuality (male and female) was created by God. The verse emphasizes creation and shows that God is the Creator of man and woman. The Hebrew verb for “create” (ברא) is used in three verses in this chapter (cf. Gen 1:1, 21). Here it is used three times in this verse. God is one in essence and yet three in person (the Trinity). The divine plurality expressed in 1:26 (“Let us make man in our image, and in our likeness”) is revealed in some way in his created image: male and female.

Image and likeness are essentially synonymous terms. Both indicate moral and spiritual qualities that God and man share (intellect, emotion, will, self-consciousness, God-consciousness, freedom, responsibility, speech, moral discernment). These distinguish humans from animals.

God created man and woman in different ways. Genesis 2 reveals that God first created Adam from the dust of the ground (2:7), and then God created Eve from a rib taken from Adam’s side (2:21-22). God did not create man and woman simultaneously. Adam was created before Eve. Paul will later argue from the order of creation that man is the head (leader) of the woman in marriage (cf. 1 Cor 11:3).

Adam was not complete without Eve. The Lord God said, “It is not good that man should be alone” (Gen 2:18). This is the first “not good” mentioned in the Bible. After God created the woman he would look on all of his creation and say that it was “very good” (Gen 1:31). God evaluated man’s condition, but he also rectified it. God said, “I will make him a helper comparable to him.” The word for “helper” (עזר) is not a demeaning term. It is used to describe God in Psalm 33:20 and Psalm 70:5. It means that one supports the other in doing the will of God (Deut 33:7; Ps 33:20). It means that the woman supplies what the man lacks. The word “suitable” means that they both would have the same nature. What he lacks she supplies and what she lacks he supplies. They would be opposites in some way that would meet the needs of the other.

The Lord God made man aware of his being incomplete by bringing the animals to him. God brought the animals to Adam on day six (Friday) to see what Adam would name them. Adam did not name every individual animal. He apparently gave names to the different kinds God brought before him. Naming the animals showed that Adam had dominion over the animals. In doing this task he was exercising his authority over them. The man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air, and all the beasts of the field. The fact that Adam did this in one day shows the superiority of Adam's intellect. As he named the animals Adam realized that there was a male and female of each species. He also realized that there was no suitable helper for him. God had revealed to him his need for a helper.

Moses describes for us here how God created the first woman to be Adam's helper in the service of God (2:21-23). God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam. God did not need any anesthetics. He just put Adam to sleep. Then the Divine Doctor performed an operation on the side of Adam. He took a rib from the side of Adam, and from that rib he formed the woman.

God's provision of a wife for Adam is a concrete example of God's knowing what is good for man.<sup>35</sup> Companionship replaced isolation. God then performed the first wedding. He brought Eve to Adam in the garden in Eden. The first wedding took place in a beautiful garden. Like a father escorting his daughter, God brought Eve to Adam. Adam's statement in Genesis 2:23 shows his vow of commitment to her (bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh) as well as his authority over her as he names her woman.

Genesis 2:24 gives God's definition of marriage: "For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This definition is repeated in the NT in Matthew 19:5 and in Ephesians 5:31. Marriage is a covenant relationship between a man and a woman that includes their physical union. Sexual relations alone do not constitute a marriage. Marriage involves a man leaving his parents, being joined to a woman as his wife, and then consummating their relationship by having sexual intercourse. The Hebrew word for

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<sup>35</sup> The saying, "God created Adam and Eve and not Adam and Steve" is true. God created Eve to be Adam's wife. God created a woman, not a man, to be Adam's helper. God did not make another man from Adam to be his spouse.

“joined” or “cleave” (דבק) suggests the making of a sacred covenant. This is the same term used of Israel’s maintaining her covenant relationship with Yahweh (Deut 4:4; 10:20). God is the witness of marriage vows when women are made wives “by covenant” (Mal 2:14). Marriage is a “one flesh” relationship. Sexual union reinforces and reenacts the marital covenant. Adam knew his wife sexually and she conceived a son (Gen 4:1). The procreation mandate given to Adam and Eve to “be fruitful and multiply” (Gen 1:28) suggests that marriage was designed for only a man and a woman since they alone can produce children.

### **Homosexuality as the Sin of Sodom (Genesis 19:1-11)**

Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground. And he said, “Here now, my lords, please turn in to your servant’s house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go your way.” And they said, “No, but we will spend the night in the open square.” But he insisted strongly; so they turned in to him and entered his house. Then he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread and they ate. Now before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house. And they called to Lot and said to him, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them.” So Lot went out to them through the doorway, shut the door behind him, and said, “Please, my brethren, do not do so wickedly! See now, I have two daughters who have not known a man; please, let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them as you wish; only do nothing to these men, since this is the reason they have come under the shadow of my roof.” And they said, “Stand back.” Then they said, “This one came in to stay, and he keeps acting as a judge; now we will deal worse with you than with them.” So they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near to break down the door. But the men reached out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. And they struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they became weary trying to find the door.

#### *Pro-Homosexual Interpretation of Genesis 19:1-11*

What were the men of Sodom seeking when they demanded that Lot bring the two men out of his house so that they might

know them? D. Sherwin Bailey seeks to justify homosexuality from the OT in his book *Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition*. Bailey believes that much of Christian prejudice against homosexuality is a result of a misunderstanding the story in Genesis 19. He argues that the men of Sodom were anxious to interrogate the strangers to find out if they were spies. Therefore, he argues that the story does not refer to homosexuality at all. Bailey argues that the demand of the men of Sodom to know the strangers meant nothing more than their desire to get acquainted with them.

Bailey writes:

The Biblical story demonstrates the seriousness with which these early Eastern people took the important customs of Oriental hospitality. It appears that, if necessary, they would even allow their own daughters to undergo abuse in order to protect guests. The sexual aspect of the story is simply the vehicle in which the subject of demanded hospitality is conveyed. It is clearly interpreted in Ezekiel 16:49, "Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, surfeit of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy."<sup>36</sup>

Bailey believes that the sin of Sodom was a lack of hospitality. He believes that the Hebrew word for *know* (יָדָע) in Genesis 19:5 should be translated "to get acquainted with." Bailey uses an argument from statistics to try to argue for his definition of the word *know*. The Hebrew word for *know* (יָדָע) is found 943 times in the OT. It is used only twelve times to refer to sexual relations, always of a heterosexual kind. If homosexual relations had been in view then Bailey believes that the Hebrew word יָדָע would have been used. This word is used fifty times in the OT and is used of sexual relations. It is used of incest, bestiality, and homosexuality in Leviticus 20:11-13, 18, 20 and Deuteronomy 27:20-23. It denotes rape in Genesis 34:2 and Deuteronomy 22:25. In Genesis 19:33 the term is used to denote Lot's daughters' seduction of their father in the cave. It is used in Deuteronomy 35:22 of Reuben's seduction of Bilhah, Jacob's concubine.

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<sup>36</sup> D. Sherwin Bailey, *Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition* (London: Longmans, 1955), 4.

*Evangelical Interpretation of Genesis 19:1-11*

Statistics can never determine the meaning of a word. The meaning of a word must be determined by how the author uses the word in its context. The context must decide which meaning is preferred. The men of Sodom surrounded Lot's house and demanded that he bring out the two angels whom they thought were men: "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may *know* them." (Gen 19:5). The word "know" (יָדַע) in Genesis 19:5 carries a sexual connotation.<sup>37</sup> Lot understood their wicked intentions. That is why he said, "Please, my brethren, do not do so wickedly." Getting acquainted with someone is not a wicked action. But homosexual gang rape would be a wicked action. Lot shows that Sodom had influenced his morals as he offered his two virgin daughters to the Sodomites. Lot said, "See now, I have two daughters who have not *known* a man; please, let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them as you wish; only do nothing to these men, since this is the reason they have come under the shadow of my roof." Notice that he said that his two daughters had "not known a man." The sexual understanding of יָדַע in Genesis 19:5 is supported by the same sexual understanding of the term as it is used in the immediate context in Genesis 19:8. Lot's daughters were virgins: they had not had sexual relations with any man.

Lot's offer of his two daughters to the wicked Sodomites was morally reprehensible. Though the text does not explicitly condemn Lot's words, we know from other scripture that sexual immorality (which includes the gang rape of women) would be sinful conduct.

Possibly Lot had accepted the values clarification of his day and thought that however wrong rape of women would be, homosexual rape of his guests would be even worse. Lot's offer was simply what he thought to be the lesser of two evils. The angels prevented this gang rape of Lot's daughters as they blinded the men of Sodom at Lot's door.

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<sup>37</sup> The word "know" (יָדַע) is used in Gen 4:1 to refer to a sexual relationship between Adam and Eve: "Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain." The proof that the word "know" refers to sexual relations is that Eve conceived a child (Cain) as a result of Adam's knowing her.

Another evidence that the word “know” (יָדָע) refers to sexual relations is found in the book of Judges. The word “know” (יָדָע) is used to describe the gang rape of a concubine by some perverted men of Gibeah in Judges 19:25: “So the man took his concubine and brought her out to them. And they *knew* her and abused her all night until morning; and when the day began to break, they let her go.” The men of Gibeah were not just getting acquainted with this woman. They raped and physically abused her to the point that she died.

Jude verse seven gives a commentary on the sin of Sodom: “As Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” This verse proclaims that the twin sin cities of Sodom and Gomorrah as well as the other cities around them (the cities of the plain) gave themselves over to sexual immorality. The Greek word ἐκπορνεύσασαι means to “indulge in illicit sexual relations/debauchery.”<sup>38</sup> Jude also says that they had “gone after strange flesh” (ἀπελθουσαι ὀπίσω σαρκὸς ἑτέρας). The word translated “strange” (ἕτερος) means “dissimilar in kind or class from all other entities; another; different.”<sup>39</sup> It could imply that the Sodomites were engaged in homosexuality and bestiality.

### **Homosexuality and the Mosaic Law (Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13)**

The next major statement in the OT about homosexuality comes in the Holiness Code in Leviticus. God wanted his people Israel to be separate from the immoral and idolatrous practices of her neighbors. God condemns homosexual practices. Leviticus 18:22 says, “You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination.” Leviticus 20:13 adds the death penalty for practicing homosexuality: “If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them.”

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<sup>38</sup> *BDAG*, 309.

<sup>39</sup> *BDAG*, 399.

*Pro-Homosexual Interpretation  
of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13*

Homosexuals have tried to evade the clear meaning of these texts in two ways. First, they have dismissed them on cultural grounds. They believe that homosexuality was prohibited not because it was morally wrong, but because it was associated with temple prostitution in the surrounding nations. Ralph Blair writes:

That the very pronounced Old Testament judgment against a man's having sexual relations with another man is included in the priestly Holiness Code of Leviticus (18:22 and 20:13) is significant because the concern of the priests was one of ritual purity. It was not the moral preaching of the prophets. From this priestly point of view, it is clear that above all else, Israel was to be uncontaminated by her pagan neighbors. In all things, she was to remain a separate pure vessel unto the Lord. At this time, male prostitutes in the temples of the Canaanites, Babylonians, and other neighboring peoples, were common features of the pagan rites. There, it is understandable that this "homosexuality" connected with the worship of false gods would certainly color Israel's perspective on any and all homosexual activity.<sup>40</sup>

*An Evangelical Critique*

Blair assumes that ritual purity and moral preaching are always distinct. Blair and others who follow his line of thinking believe that texts in Leviticus are not really speaking against homosexuality as such, but only warning Israel about the practice of a Canaanite cult. To hold Blair's viewpoint, one would have to conclude that adultery was not morally wrong (Lev 18:20), child sacrifice had no moral implications (Lev 18:21), and nothing is inherently evil about bestiality (Lev 18:23). The point is that ceremonial purity and moral purity do coincide. These prohibitions are given in the Holiness Code because God's design for sex is that it is for a husband and wife only (cf. Gen 2:24). All homosexual activity is sinful, especially those practices associated with idolatry.

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<sup>40</sup> Ralph Blair, *An Evangelical Look at Homosexuality* (Chicago: Moody, 1963), 3.

*Pro-Homosexual Interpretation  
of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13*

Homosexuals have also tried to circumvent this teaching by stating that these commands are part of the ceremonial aspects of the law which are transitory. They would argue that Christians are not bound by the commands of Leviticus today and that they should not be bound by the prohibition against homosexuality. Letha Scanzoni and Virginia Mollenkott write, "Consistency and fairness would seem to dictate that if the Israelite Holiness Code is to be invoked against twentieth century homosexuals, it should likewise be invoked against such common practices as eating rare steak, wearing mixed fabrics, and having marital intercourse during the menstrual period."<sup>41</sup>

Blair follows suit in arguing that the OT Law must be thrown out when seeking a guide on the issue of homosexuality:

It is interesting how lightly evangelicals have taken over proscriptions found in the same Old Testament Code, e.g., rules against the eating of rabbit (Lev 11:26), oysters, clams, shrimp, and lobster (Lev 11:10ff), and rare steaks (Lev 17:10). Evangelicals do not picket or try to close down seafood restaurants nor do we keep kosher kitchens. We do not always order steaks "well-done." We eat pork and ham. The wearing of clothes made from interwoven linen and wool (Deut 22:11) does not seem to bother us at all. Evangelicals do not say, in accordance with these same laws of cultic purification (Lev 20:13), that those who practice homosexual activity should be executed as prescribed. Evangelicals do not demand the death penalty for the Jeane Dixons of this world (Lev 20:27), nor do we "cut off" from among the people, as is demanded by this same Code, those who have intercourse with women during menstruation (Lev 20:18) and those who marry women who have been divorced (Lev 21:14). Evangelicals do not keep out of the pulpit those who are visually handicapped or lame or those with a limb too long (Lev 21:18ff).<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Letha Scanzoni and Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, *Is the Homosexual My Neighbor? Another Christian View* (San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1978), 60-61.

<sup>42</sup> Blair, *Evangelical Look at Homosexuality*, 3.

*Evangelical Response about the Mosaic Law  
and the Law of Christ*

These statements expose a great ignorance of how the law fits into the total scheme of the Scriptures. When taken to their logical conclusion, these assertions make it possible to say that sex with animals or engaging in incest is permissible for today simply because homosexuality is included with these two prohibitions. It would have been easier for these writers to say that Christ has done away with the entire law (Rom 10:4). The Ten Commandments are included in this termination (2 Cor 3:7-11). Jesus Christ is now our high priest. This shows that a radical change has occurred (Heb 7:11), and the law has been superseded (Heb 7:11). Saying that the Law has ended, however, does not mean that God no longer has any laws or codes for his people. This does not mean that there are no moral precepts to follow. There are prohibitions against homosexuality recorded in the NT. This new covenant is called the “law of the Spirit” (Rom 8:2), the “law of Christ” (Gal 6:2), and “the royal law” (Jas 2:8). Nine of the Ten Commandments are repeated in the NT. The only law that is not repeated is “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” Sabbath observance was the sign of the Mosaic covenant. As a unit, the NT code is new, but not all the commands in the NT are new. There is overlap, deletion, and addition. Some of the commands found in the OT Mosaic code have been reincorporated into the law of Christ.

If this be true, then this throws light on the statements made by those who would justify homosexuality from a biblical standpoint. The laws concerning a kosher diet, punishment by stoning, and wearing mixed fabrics have been abrogated. However, the condemnation of homosexual behavior is repeated in the NT code (Rom 1:26-27; 1 Cor 6:9-11; 1 Tim 1:9-10). The Old and New Testaments agree and do not contradict one another. It is always wrong to murder, rape, and steal. It is always wrong for persons to have sexual relations with members of the same-sex. God always condemns homosexuality and lesbianism both in the past dispensation of the law and in the present dispensation of grace. God has dealt with people in different ways at different times, but his standard of righteousness has never changed.

## **The Condemnation of Homosexuality in the NT**

### *Romans 1:24-28*

The NT condemns homosexuality as well. In Romans 1:18 Paul writes that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. The wrath of God is seen in that God gives sinful men over to their depraved lusts. Romans 1:24 says, “Therefore, God gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves.” Romans 1:26-27 reads, “For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.”

Romans 1:28 says, “And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting.”

### **Pro-Homosexual Interpretation of Romans 1**

Homosexuals make much of the word “natural” (φυσικῆν) in Romans 1:26. They believe that there is a distinction within homosexuality. They believe that homosexuality is of two kinds: (1) Inversion refers to a condition of constitutional homosexuality. This condition is an unalterable sexual preference for members of the same-sex. This is tied to the belief that a person is born a homosexual. (2) Perversion is the activity of a homosexual person against one’s constitution or sexual preference and orientation. They believe that Paul in Romans 1 is condemning homosexuality that grows out of perversion, not inversion. According to homosexuals, if homosexual activity is the result of one’s constitutional preference, it is both unalterable and permissible. This type of homosexuality is according to, and not contrary to, one’s nature. Homosexuals believe that it is only perversion (homosexual activity that is contrary to one’s constitutional sexual orientation) that is condemned. So they would believe that this text condemns a homo-

sexual who has sex with a woman or a lesbian who has sex with a man.<sup>43</sup>

### **Evangelical Interpretation of Romans 1:24-28**

Paul's argument in Romans 1:24-28 is that homosexual behavior is against God's intention for human sexual activity that is plainly seen in nature. God condemns men who leave the natural relationship of having sexual relationships with women (in marriage) to having sexual relationships with men (outside of marriage). God is not condoning inversion. God condemns all homosexuality as perversion.

The Greek verb translated "gave them up" (παρέδωκεν) describes a judicial act of God in which he judges sinful man for their rejection of his general revelation by giving them up to their sinful depraved lusts which include homosexuality and lesbianism. It is not that God withdrew from the wicked the restraining force of his providence and common grace, but that he positively gave men over to the judgment of "more intensified and aggravated cultivation of the lusts of their own hearts with the result that they reap for themselves a correspondingly greater toll of retributive vengeance."<sup>44</sup> The use of this verb in both this epistle (Rom 4:25; 6:17; 8:32) and in the other Pauline epistles (cf. 1 Cor 5:5; 1 Tim 1:20) supports this view. This interpretation also harmonizes with the use of the word in Acts 7:42 where Stephen says that God gave Israel up to worship the stars because of their apostasy in the days of Moses. The same verb is used in Ephesians 4:19. This text shows that sinful people give themselves up to sexual sins: "who, being past feeling, have *given themselves over* to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." This verse tells us that God does not force sinners to sin. Sinners choose to give themselves over to sexual sins, and God holds them accountable for their sinful actions.

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<sup>43</sup> John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago: U of Chicago, 1980), 107-17; Virginia Mollenkott and Letha Scanzoni, *Is the Homosexual My Neighbor?* 61-66.

<sup>44</sup> John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans: The English Text with Introduction Exposition and Notes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 1:44-45.

Greg Bahnsen, in *Homosexuality: A Biblical View*, writes:

Because man's sexual identity is defined by God, because his orientation is ordained by God, and because his sexual activity is circumscribed within a heterosexual marriage context, homosexuality cannot be viewed merely as a variant sexual preference or accidental variation within creation (akin to left-handedness). It is not a third natural sex or alternative sexual orientation in God's diverse world. Instead, it represents a choice, in some sense, to set one's desires and satisfy one's physical drives in a way contrary to God's appointment and creation. There is no natural homosexuality, for homosexuality is precisely a perversion of nature (understood as God's design for human relations). Homosexuals are made, not born; their disorder is developed contrary to their God-given identity, learned in opposition to the created order; pursued in defiance of the marriage ordinance.<sup>45</sup>

### *1 Corinthians 6:9-11*

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor 6:9-11)

## **Pro-Homosexual Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 6:9-11**

Homosexuals interpret these verses in a different way. They believe that "homosexuals" (*μαλακοί*) means "self indulgent," and "sodomites" (*ἀρσενικοῦται*) refers to a male homosexual prostitute. They believe that the text is condemning self-indulgence and homosexual prostitution. But they do not believe that these terms include a constitutional homosexual in a committed and loving relationship with another homosexual. Blair writes:

In his catalog of vices in which homosexual behavior is listed, it should be noted that it is included with what the apostle regarded as certain heterosexual sins such as adultery, fornication, Epicurean over-indulgence, and general abuse of the body. For perspective, note

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<sup>45</sup> Greg Bahnsen, *Homosexuality: A Biblical View* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 30.

should be taken of Paul's equally weighty inclusion of this passage of drunkards and repeated censure of the greedy, the grasping, and those who steal. Here are simply other examples of sinful abuse, since, for example, Paul advocated alcoholic temperance but not necessarily abstinence. He recommends to young Timothy that he drink some wine for his health (1 Tim 5:23). Elsewhere, Paul urges wholehearted enthusiasm in all that one undertakes, but that does not mean the abuse of over indulgence, greed, or coveting in the process (1 Cor 10:31). One should not assume uncritically that there is in the Corinthian passage a proof text against all homosexuality or even all homosexual acts. Of course, homosexual behavior can be perverted and sinfully exploitive, just as heterosexual activity can be—or any activity can be—but this is not the same as rejecting either sexual orientation or specific acts as sinful as such.<sup>46</sup>

## **Evangelical Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 6:9-11**

Paul lists in these verses the people who will be excluded from the kingdom of God. These sinners continue their sinful practices and are characterized by their specific sins. The terms homosexuals and sodomites refer to those who are involved in committing acts of homosexuality. The term “homosexuals” (μαλακοὶ) in 1 Corinthians 6:9 literally means “soft; or effeminate; it refers to those who are passive in a same sex relationship. It refers to those men and boys who are sodomized by other males in such a relationship”<sup>47</sup> The NKJV term “sodomites” (ἀρσένικοιται) in 1 Corinthians 6:9 is a compound word (ἀρσεν = male and κοίτη = bed) referring to a man who engages in sexual activity with a person of the same-sex.<sup>48</sup> The KJV says that they are “abusers of themselves with mankind” (1 Cor 6:9) and those that “defile themselves with mankind” (1 Tim 1:10). They are called “sodomites” because the city of Sodom was known for its homosexuality (Gen 18:20; 19:4-5). Homosexuals and sodomites (those whose lifestyle is characterized by practicing homosexuality) will not inherit the kingdom of God.

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<sup>46</sup> Blair, *Evangelical Look at Homosexuality*, 6.

<sup>47</sup> *BDAG*, 613. The word is used to describe soft clothes worn by kings, but not by John the Baptist (Matt 11:8; Luke 7:25).

<sup>48</sup> *BDAG*, 135.

## RESULTS OF CULTURAL ACCEPTANCE OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

Why should we be concerned about same-sex marriage? Here are some possible consequences of the cultural acceptance of same-sex marriage.

### 1. Cultural acceptance of same-sex marriage may lead to fewer monogamous marriages and the loss of the traditional American family.

The former moderator of the Metropolitan Community Church, a homosexual denomination, said, "Monogamy is not a word the gay community uses." Troy Perry told the *Dallas Morning News*, "We talk about fidelity. That means you live in a loving, caring, honest relationship with your partner. Because we can't marry, we have people with widely varying opinions as to what that means. Some would say that committed couples could have multiple sexual partners as long as there's no deception."<sup>49</sup> A recent study in the Netherlands, where same-sex marriage is legal, shows the accuracy of that statement. Researchers found that homosexual men have an average of eight partners per year outside their "monogamous" relationships.<sup>50</sup>

Michael Medved writes:

There would be no typical American family and that's the problem. Once you've established the idea that marriage has nothing to do with kids, that it involves any sort of expression of consensual affection and that it should be defined not through external norms but through the feelings of individuals, there is no basis for any sort of limitation. It seems hard to suggest that society can push for monogamy or premarital abstinence if it has surrendered to passions and emotions to encourage and validate same sex marriage. The underlying gay agenda is to use the power of government to tell the world that sex between two men or two women is beautiful and wholesome, and to use the force of government to stifle and suppress all of us who refuse to accept that proposition. In that way, this agenda is meant to erase the lingering

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<sup>49</sup> Quoted in Robert Benne and Gerald McDermott, "Speaking Out: Why Gay Marriage Would Be Harmful," <<http://www.christianitytoday.com/global>> (accessed 5 November 2004).

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

guilt, unease and frustration that most gay people continue to feel about their lives.<sup>51</sup>

## **2. Cultural acceptance of same-sex marriage may lead to the acceptance of other immoral relationships such as group marriage.**

Professor Martha Ertman of the University of Utah wants to render the distinction between traditional marriage and group marriage morally neutral. University of Michigan law professor David Chambers wrote that he expects same-sex marriage will lead government to be “more receptive to marital units of three or more.”<sup>52</sup>

## **3. Cultural acceptance of same-sex marriage will hurt children.**

Research clearly demonstrates that family structure matters for children, and the family structure that helps the most is a family headed by two biological parents in a low-conflict marriage. While same-sex marriage would encourage adoption of children by homosexual couples, some lesbian couples want to have children through anonymous sperm donations, which means some children will be created purposely without knowledge of one of their biological parents. Research has shown that children raised by homosexuals were more dissatisfied with their own genders, suffer a greater rate of molestation within the family, and have homosexual experiences more often.<sup>53</sup> Teens would be encouraged to embrace a “death-style” which suffers high rates of suicide, depression, HIV, drug abuse, and STDs including AIDS.

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<sup>51</sup> Quoted in Bryan Malley, “Why Gay Marriage Will Hurt America,” *New Man* (September-October 2004), 23-24.

<sup>52</sup> Quoted in Benne and McDermott, “Speaking Out,” 2.

<sup>53</sup> <<http://www.youth.org/loco/PERSONProject/Resources/Organizing/Resources/counseling.html>> (accessed 15 April 2005).

#### **4. Cultural acceptance of same-sex marriage will lead to more pro-homosexual programs in the public schools that will encourage teens to embrace the homosexual lifestyle as normal.**

GLSEN (The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network) targets children for recruitment into the homosexual lifestyle as well as cross-dressing and sex-change operations. GLSEN gets into schools by claiming that homosexual and transgender students need to feel safe and encouraged and that these teens need a support group because of high rates of suicide among them. When this tactic fails, GLSEN then threatens legal action against school districts that refuse to allow these recruitment clubs on campus. The American Civil Liberties Union has volunteered to serve as the enforcement arm of GLSEN to impose a homosexual agenda on the nation's public schools. A lawsuit was won in the Morgan Hill, California, school district. During the 2004-2005 school year, the school was forced to provide pro-homosexual sensitivity training for all school officials and to indoctrinate all ninth graders to develop positive attitudes about homosexuality. TVC's report, "A Gender Identity Disorder Goes Mainstream," explains the political agenda behind the growing transgender movement. More recently, homosexual activists have started pushing the idea that genital deformities found in hermaphrodite newborns are actually evidence of a third sex—not a birth defect. It is likely this theme will soon be appearing in the writings of such groups as GLSEN.<sup>54</sup>

Glen Lavy, senior counsel for the Alliance Defense Fund, says, "In most schools we are already seeing the gay agenda. It will surely get worse if homosexual marriage becomes more accepted."<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> <<http://glsen.traditionalvalues.org>> (accessed 15 April 2005).

<sup>55</sup> Quoted in Bryan Malley and Ken Walker, "U.S. of Gay?" *New Man* (September-October 2004), 28.

## **5. Cultural acceptance of same-sex marriage could lead to the loss of free speech in America and the arrest and imprisonment of Christians who speak out against homosexuality.**

Could a hate speech law passed recently in Canada eventually influence free speech here in America? On April 28, 2004, senators in Canada voted 59-11 to pass Bill C-250, which adds sexual orientation to a law that makes it illegal to incite hatred against identifiable groups based on color, race, religion and ethnicity. Those found guilty face a maximum of two years in jail. Christians in Canada are concerned that this new law could limit their ability to speak out against the homosexual lifestyle. A sermon denouncing homosexuality as “sinful” could be viewed as hate speech under some interpretations of this law: “We are deeply concerned about the chilling effect this legislation may have. We as a religious community want to ensure that the purpose of prohibiting hate speech does not criminalize the legitimate expression of religious belief, the resulting views of morality, nor the religious texts.”<sup>56</sup>

On October 10, 2004, a group of eleven Christians were preaching God’s word to a crowd of people attending the Philadelphia OutFest and displaying banners with biblical messages. After a confrontation with a group called the Pink Angels, described by protesters as a “militant mob of homosexuals,” the Christians were arrested and spent a night in jail. Eight charges were filed: criminal conspiracy, possession of instruments of crime, reckless endangerment of another person, ethnic intimidation, riot, failure to disperse, disorderly conduct, and obstructing highways. None of the Pink Angels were cited or arrested. After a preliminary hearing in December, Judge William Austin Meehan ordered four of the Christians to stand trial on three felony and five misdemeanor charges. If convicted, each could have received a maximum of forty-seven years in prison. On February 17, 2005, Judge Pamela Dembe of the Philadelphia County Court of Common Pleas dismissed the charges, saying that she found no basis whatsoever for any of them. Dembe said, “We are one of the very few countries that protects unpopular speech. ... And that means that Nazis can March [*sic*] in Skokie, Ill. ... That means the Ku Klux Klan can

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<sup>56</sup> Quoted in Kip Burke, “Is Free Speech in Danger?” *New Man* (September-October 2004), 33.

march where they wish to. We cannot stifle speech because we don't want to hear it, or we don't want to hear it now."<sup>57</sup>

## **A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE**

### **1. Pray for our president, congressmen, and senators to stand for truth and righteousness.**

1 Timothy 2:1-4 says, "Therefore, I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior."

Christians need to pray regularly for their government officials that they will stand for truth and righteousness. They need to pray that American government officials will recognize that they are accountable not only to the people for their decisions, but also to God (Rom 13:1-5). Christians need to pray that they will make decisions that will protect religious freedom of speech.

### **2. Oppose same-sex marriage and civil unions of homosexuals in the legal process.**

In a *USA Today* editorial Robert Knight writes,

Now that voters have made it clear they strongly oppose gay marriage, civil unions are being touted as a compromise. But they are just gay marriage by another name.

That's why nearly a dozen states have enacted constitutional marriage amendments that also bar civil unions. They don't want government endorsing homosexuality.

It's one thing for people to form their own bonds; it's another to use the law to force acceptance on everyone else. The law protects marriage because it is irreplaceable. Homosexuals, like anyone else, are free to bequeath property, issue power of attorney, enter contracts and obtain medical access without creating a counterfeit of marriage.

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<sup>57</sup> "Judge Drops All Charges against Philly Christians," <[http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE\\_ID=42905](http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=42905)> (accessed 10 August 2005).

Homosexual behavior is immoral and unhealthy, particularly for men. It's wrong, not compassionate, to create incentives for people to remain trapped in self destructive behavior. There is no credible evidence that anyone is "born gay," and many people have overcome homosexuality.

More children will be at risk. If the government says the sexes are interchangeable, children will be placed in motherless or fatherless homes by design. Marriage will no longer be the gold standard. Children will get the message that homosexual sex is normal, and that anyone who thinks otherwise is a bigot. That's already happening in Vermont.

In addition, business owners will be forced to support something that violates their conscience. California law now punishes devout Christian, Jewish and Muslim business owners, not to mention pro-family atheists, by denying them state contracts and threatening legal action if they won't recognize homosexual relationships. Even Jesse Jackson has observed that this is not a civil rights issue such as race.

Some homosexual activists admit that "civil unions" are only a steppingstone.

Human Rights Campaign President Cheryl Jacques, says, "Civil Unions are not the solution. Even if civil unions provided all the same legal protections of marriage—which they don't—they would still be a separate and unequal system."

Some supporters of gay marriage envision a day when traditional rules of matrimony are tossed out, and groups of people may share custody of children.

Civil unions are a Trojan horse for gay marriage—and more.<sup>58</sup>

Christians should contact their representatives and senators and let them know their views on this issue. Christians should also run for political office and take a stand for righteousness.

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<sup>58</sup> Knight, Robert. "A Counterfeit Compromise," *USA Today*, 7 November 2004, 14A, <<http://www.usatoday.com/printedition/news/20041108/oppose08.art.htm>> (accessed 10 August 2005).

### **3. Confront homosexuals in love with their need to repent of sin and receive Christ.**

We must preach the gospel to all people and that includes homosexuals. There is hope for the homosexual! In 1 Corinthians 6:9 the apostle Paul writes that homosexuals and sodomites will not inherit the kingdom of God. God calls the homosexual to repent of his sin and receive Christ as Savior. Change will not be easy for the homosexual who trusts in Christ. The same could be said for unbelieving men and women involved in heterosexual immorality. But God is able to change the homosexual. Paul wrote to the Corinthians that “such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.” (1 Cor 6:11). Some homosexuals from Corinth were converted to Christ and they were no longer living sinful lifestyles. God hates sin (in this case—homosexuality), but he also loves the sinner. The Lord Jesus Christ died for the sin of homosexuality and all other sins. Jesus died for all homosexuals. And it is his desire for them to be saved. First Timothy 2:3-4 describes God as “God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

### **4. Show courage in the pulpit by preaching from God’s word against homosexuality.**

It is important for pastors to preach courageously against homosexuality from the Bible. If evangelical pastors don’t speak out against homosexuality, who will? Christians look to their pastors to be moral leaders in their churches and in the community. Failure to speak out now may lead to a day when it will become a hate crime to even preach the word of God from the pulpit.

### **5. Preach on biblical marriage and provide biblical premarital and marital counseling.**

Pastors need to take the responsibility for shepherding married couples in their churches and couples who are anticipating marriage. Pastors should regularly preach on biblical marriage and provide biblical premarital and marital counseling. Pastors should speak out against cohabitation and sex outside of the commitment of marriage between a man and woman. They should encourage

their young people to make commitments for sexual purity. They should also encourage couples to go on marriage retreats.

### **CONCLUSION**

Why be concerned about same-sex marriage? Failure to stand up for traditional marriage could lead to devastating consequences for our nation and for our children and their children. Christians may be persecuted, pastors may be put in prison, and freedom of speech may be limited. Can we afford to be complacent?