

Gay Liberation

By David Feddes

The gay liberation movement has come a long way. Not so long ago, if people of the same gender had sex together, they might be in big trouble with the law. But now there's little danger of prosecution. Gay people have the same rights as other citizens. In fact, some governments, don't merely allow gay sex. They're moving to grant it official approval and exalting it to the sacred status of marriage. Meanwhile, in the economic realm, many companies give the same benefits for gay partners as they give for husbands and wives. The median income of gay people is higher than the general population. Gays and lesbians have grown strong politically and economically.

Gays have also made great gains in the institutions that shape public opinion. Surveys find that among people in the news and entertainment media, only a tiny percentage see anything wrong with homosexuality, and the supporters use many different means to communicate this point of view. Movie studios that once avoided open references to homosexuality now feature gay themes in some of their highest profile films. In the realm of public education, many schools and universities train students to think of sex among gays and lesbians as normal, healthy behavior.

Gay people have also changed the mindset of some churches and seminaries and divinity schools. In the more progressive institutions, you won't hear gay and lesbian sex condemned as sin. In fact, the person preaching the sermon may be gay. A growing number of religious leaders are telling gays and lesbians to celebrate who they are and to relish their own sexual preferences as a gift from God.

No doubt about it: the gay liberation movement hasn't merely come out of the closet; it's moved into the court room, the board room, the news room, the school room, and even the seminary and sanctuary. For a lot of gay men and lesbian women, gay liberation has meant the freedom to express their sexuality openly instead of secretly, to be treated as persons and not just as perverts. They feel a newfound sense of power instead of helplessness, of boldness instead of fear, of solidarity and support instead of isolation. All of this sounds like good news for gays.

The Bible's Good News

The Bible also has good news for gays. In the Bible God shows that his love extends to gay people, and he shows gay people how they can flourish and live forever with him.

But the Bible's good news of gay liberation isn't like the recent gay liberation movement. The Bible says that homosexual coupling is sinful and unnatural. The Bible also says that through faith in Jesus, homosexual behavior can be forgiven, and homosexual people can live differently and enjoy eternal life with Jesus.

As a follower of Jesus, I'm not trying to make gay and lesbian sex a crime punishable by the government, any more than I'm trying to make gossip or greed or blasphemy a crime punishable by the government. God judges these things as sins, but that doesn't mean the government has to treat them as crimes. As a Christian pastor, my main aim for people involved in homosexual

behavior is not to turn government against them, but to turn them to Jesus Christ. Homosexuals don't need to be outlawed; they need to be saved, to be washed in Jesus' blood and transformed by his Spirit.

But now I'm getting into God's good news of gay liberation in a way that many homosexual people don't like to hear, and also in a way that some Christians tend to ignore. Some church people are so busy opposing gays in public policy that they don't actually bring the good news of the gospel to gay people, and they don't make any effort to understand or support fellow Christians who still struggle with homosexual urges.

Meanwhile, many gay and lesbian people don't want their sin to be forgiven; they want it to be affirmed and celebrated. They want the same status that government grants to married people, and they also want the blessing of the church. To make this happen, they lobby to overturn the moral teaching of whatever congregation or denomination they belong to.

Two-Front Battle

This means that in dealing with the whole matter of gay liberation, a Christian who is serious about the Bible's teaching and about ministry is facing a two-front battle. The first is bringing the good news, showing God's love and proclaiming the gospel of forgiveness and new life in Jesus to homosexual sinners. As fellow sinners, we Christians must relate to people humbly, gently, respectfully.

But given the polarization that's occurred and the attempt of homosexuals to define their behavior as normal and good, Christians face a second front in this battle. We need to battle a particular evil agenda. We need to stand against the organized movement that declares evil to be good. Many homosexuals don't seek forgiveness or new life; they seek blessing from church and support from the government.

And this means that Christians are in a very difficult position. On the one hand, Christians are to show love and bring good news to other people who happen to be gay or lesbian. At the same time, though, Christians need to stand against a certain agenda. It's very hard to be loving and bring the gospel on the one hand at the same time to be standing against an agenda that people are pushing. Even so, hard though it is, we must do both.

And if we must do only one or the other, then I suggest the most important is first bringing the good news, rather than to simply be an anti-gay person who is trying to stop their advances in society and in government. If Christians' only aim is to battle a homosexual agenda, but not have gospel concern and genuine love for people, we are going to do more harm than good. I believe we need to do both, but I want to start with simply bringing good news.

God loves homosexuals, but he does not love homosexual behavior. It is sinful and offensive to him. The Lord loves gay people in exactly the same way he loves sinners of every kind--with a love that forgives and rescues and transforms, not a love that merely tolerates and approves and endorses behavior of every kind. The Bible's teaching about sin, of which homosexuality is one of many varieties, has two main points: we need to be set free from it, and we can be set free

from it. If we refuse to repent of sin, we will end up in hell, but if we repent and trust Jesus, we will change and live forever.

Unnatural Abomination

The Bible is very clear that homosexual behavior is sinful. Leviticus 18:22 says, "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination."

Romans 1 speaks of the perversion that comes with sin. The passage talks about many kinds of sin, and one type is homosexuality.

Women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error... Though they know God's decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. (Romans 1:26-27)

The first step in the gospel's liberation of gays and lesbians is to show that they need to be set free in order to enter God's kingdom. God doesn't mince words about sexual immorality. Homosexual behavior is sinful, an abomination, unnatural. It's not a morally neutral feature of the way a person is, such as being left-handed or having a certain skin color. It's not just a harmless personal preference like preferring apples to bananas. Gay and lesbian sex is sinful. It's wrong. It is spiritually deadly.

The Bible speaks of the final punishment on sin, and on sexual sin and homosexual sin. "Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire" (Jude 1:7). This is referring to the men of Sodom. They sought to rape two angels who came to Sodom in the appearance of men. Now, obviously, rape of any kind--homosexual or heterosexual--is wrong. Another wrong thing about Sodom was "unnatural desire" or as the original language puts it, "strange flesh." There is a punishment of eternal fire reserved for that kind of sin if there's no repentance, just as eternal fire is the punishment for every other kind of sin if someone refuses to repent and is not cleansed by Jesus' blood. So this is a very serious matter, and we're not doing anybody any favors by denying it.

Washed, sanctified, justified

Here's another key Bible passage:

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

The fact that homosexual behavior is sinful doesn't make it somehow worse than all other sins. This passage mentions homosexual behavior as one among many types of sinful activity. It's not in a category by itself. In God's eyes, a homosexual act is no more sinful than uttering a swear word or getting drunk or being greedy or self-centered or having sex with a person of the opposite sex whom you haven't married. All these things--and many others--appear in the Bible's lists of sins right along with the sin of homosexuality. These are all sins that send people to hell if there is no repentance and cleansing. These are all sins that can be forgiven only at the cost of Jesus' blood.

Whether or not we're homosexual, we've all got sins that are equally offensive to God, so we shouldn't think we're superior to homosexuals if that doesn't happen to be our particular sin. We should not treat homosexuality as worse than all other sins, but neither should we approve or practice gay sex. The Bible insists that homosexual behavior is indeed sinful, and at the same time the Bible insists that homosexuals can be forgiven and renewed and adopted by God as his sons and daughters, just like other saved sinners.

A gay or lesbian person who repents and seeks God's forgiveness on the basis of Jesus' blood is loved by God just as much as anyone else, and he or she is just as much a part of the church as any other repentant sinner. This teaching of the Bible is a rebuke to those who hate and despise gays and consider them beyond redemption, and at the same time it challenges the politically correct notion that homosexual behavior is just fine, that it doesn't need to be forgiven at all, but only approved.

What about scientific studies?

Someone might object, "What about scientific studies that show that people are born gay? Doesn't that prove that it's just natural and okay?" Well, to start with, never say that the Word of God is less trustworthy than the findings of scientific studies.

Also, ask yourself, "Who is doing the scientific studies?" Many of the studies that allegedly prove that homosexuality is entirely genetic or inborn are studies done by homosexual researchers. They are motivated to prove that there's nothing wrong with them. One of them said that he was very eager to show that it's inborn, which would show that "it's not a fault, and it's not your fault." He said he would give up his work as a scientist if he wasn't able to prove that. So he knew what he wanted to prove before he started the study. And this is the case with many other researches as well. So again, as a general guideline, don't place scientific study pursued by fallen people with an agenda above what is revealed in the written word of God, the Bible.

One kind of study has been done among identical twins. And it's been found that less than 50% of people with a gay, identical twin are gay themselves. Now, the research has found that if you have an identical twin who is gay or homosexual, you're more likely to be homosexual yourself than people in the general population. But there can be other factors, of course: if you're an identical twin, you're most likely brought up in the same household with many of the same influences. So genetics aren't the only factor involved. In fact, if less than 50% were gay, even if they had a gay, identical twin, it absolutely proves that genetics aren't everything, because

identical twins are identical genetically. That means there would have to be a 100% correlation if being gay were completely determined genetically. If twin studies are meant to prove that genetics determine everything about homosexuality, those studies actually prove the opposite.

Some studies have tried to identify a "gay gene." Researchers have located certain genes in the human DNA code that have a correlation with whether a person is homosexual or not. However, they also find that many people who have the supposedly "gay gene" aren't homosexual, and others who are homosexual don't have that particular gene at all. Genetic studies find some correlation, but it's obviously not decisive in and of itself. If there is a genetic component, it is not the whole story.

Let's not overlook the obvious about genes. Male chromosomes are XY. Female chromosomes are XX. We know that with absolute clarity. Let's also not overlook the obvious about anatomy. Male organs match female organs and result in reproduction. This is as plain as can be. So in researching more obscure and difficult things, let's not overlook what is extremely obvious.

Having said all that, I would not be persuaded that homosexuality is okay even if it were something that you're born with. Homosexual orientation may be at least partly inherited—but our sin nature is inherited. The Bible teaches that we inherit a sin nature going all the way back to Adam and Eve. Just because something is inherited and we're born with a certain tendency, does not mean it's right. There are people who are born with a tendency towards greater anger and rage. There are people who are born with a greater disposition toward alcoholism. But in such cases, it's your duty to refrain from drinking, it's your duty if you were born with a greater disposition toward rage to refrain from fits of rage. Even if you're born with a sin nature, that doesn't mean it's not sinful; it means it's something that you're going to have to fight against and find a way to be saved from.

Personal experience

Many homosexual people think they were born homosexual, that it's an essential part of who they are. They're convinced of that, not so much because of scientific research but because of their own experience. They know that there's more to their condition than a conscious choice they've made. They didn't just wake up one day and decide to become a homosexual. It goes much deeper than that. When they think back, they can't remember ever being attracted to someone of the opposite sex. Their romantic and erotic feelings have been directed toward people of the same sex for as long as they can remember.

When they first discovered these urges, they may have felt ashamed of them and wished they weren't there and tried to change. But they found out that it's not that simple. Those feelings wouldn't go away. Eventually, when they acted on those feelings and had sexual encounters with others of the same sex, it didn't seem unnatural. It felt like something they'd always wanted. Whether their desires came from genetics or something that happened in their early years, or a mixture of several things—they felt those desires for as long as they can remember. It's not just something they've freely chose. It's feels like who they are.

So if you're somebody who feels this way, what are you supposed to do? Well, before anything else, you first need to take God at his Word. If he says it's wrong to be sexually intimate with a person of the same gender, then it's wrong. If Jesus says he can set you free, then he can. That's the place to begin: to know and believe God's Word. So ignore the polarized politics, ignore the mixed results of research, ignore your own preferences, ignore gay bashers who say the you're garbage, ignore gay flatterers who say you're just fine, and accept God's truth when when he says that you need to be liberated and that you can be liberated.

Liberation from sin

The Bible is not simplistic or naive or unrealistic when it talks about sin and about liberation from it. God knows that homosexual behavior, like all other sin, is much more than just something you choose to do at a given moment. The Bible doesn't treat sin as something you can freely turn off and on at will. Sin certainly involves the will, but it goes much deeper. The Bible teaches that ever since the fall of Adam and Eve, people have been born sinful. All people are born with sinful tendencies, though the particular tendencies may vary from person to person.

In that sense, it may well be true that some people are born with a tendency to be gay. But that doesn't mean it's okay to act on that tendency. There's an inborn aspect to sin, and also an addictive aspect. There's a sense in which sin controls us with a grip that's beyond our power to change. Jesus says, "Everyone who sins is a slave to sin" (John 8:34). Sin is a power that grips and controls us. The inborn and addictive aspects of sin make it impossible to change yourself simply through an act of will power. This is true for sinners in general, and it is true of homosexual sinners.

But the good news of Jesus Christ is that you don't have to depend purely on your own will power in order to become a new person. Homosexual sin, like all other sin, separates us from God and from eternal life with him, but that's not the end of the story. God refused to leave us in our sin. He sent his own Son, and the condemnation we deserve was heaped on the back of Jesus Christ as he hung on the cross, suffering the punishment of hell to pay for our sins. Jesus has opened the way to forgiveness for all who repent and believe in him and seek a new way of life. His Spirit gives us power to fight against our sinful tendencies.

Now, let's say you're somebody who wants to follow Jesus but you still have homosexual desires to deal with. What then? Well, some homosexuals who become Christians find that their orientation changes and they desire someone of the opposite sex and end up in a happy heterosexual marriage. For others, however, their old urges remain with them as long as they live, even though they are Christians. What does freedom in Christ mean then? It means this: you have the freedom to deny your old self in order to follow Jesus. In Jesus you have a new self, a new identity to live up to.

You were taught to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:22-24)

All of us have a lifelong struggle against deceitful desires, desires that seem natural, that seem healthy, and yet they're part of that old self. We know this because the Bible says it's sinful. So we keep putting off that old self and we keep putting on our new self in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Christ the blessings of the new self far outweigh the struggles and sacrifices of denying the old self. In Christ we have the resources we need to live the new life. We have the Holy Spirit, we have the power of prayer, we have the support of fellow Christians, and where it's necessary, there are also specialized Christian ministries and support groups for former gays and lesbians. For any of us to live the Christian life, we need a deepening relationship with God, we need loving and caring relationships with other people who encourage us and hold us accountable, and we need to be realistic about the difficulty of the struggle.

It's not always easy, but nothing worthwhile ever is. If you're a homosexual person who has been born again, you may still be tempted; you may still have many of the old urges that were part of your old self; and when you do, you'll have to deny yourself. It's no sin to be tempted; the sin is giving in to temptation. Christ gives you the freedom to say "No" to temptation, and if at some point you do stumble and fall, the gospel gives you the freedom to trust God's forgiveness and to let the Holy Spirit pick you up again and continue the battle, rather than simply giving up and giving in to your old way of life.

So again, in this two front battle, the first thing is to understand the good news and to bring this good news to homosexual people to show God's love and proclaim the gospel of forgiveness and new life in Christ, to homosexual sinners. And all of us Christians, as fellow sinners must relate to people humbly and gently and respectfully.

Now for the second aspect of the battle: there is an evil agenda that has to be opposed. As Christians, we stand against an organized movement that declares evil to be good. Many homosexuals aren't seeking forgiveness or new life; they're just seeking blessing from the church and support from the government. As Christians we cannot give blessing and support to sin.

Understanding the times

We must understand the times that we're living in. We need to understand that gay activism is well funded, well organized, well connected, and has a lot of political clout. It's also well organized within some church groups pushing that agenda.

Another thing to understand about our times is something very curious. At just the time when homosexuality among men was clearly fatal, killing thousands, homosexuality gained in support, and people began to think it was normal and healthy. AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) was originally called GRID (Gay Related Immune Deficiency). I remember in the early days of this terrible disease seeing an educational pamphlet from the government. The pamphlet talked about the danger of AIDS--but it did not mention homosexuality! At a time when more than 90% of the people dying of AIDS were homosexual men, the educators would not mention that fact. It sounds like Romans 1 all over again. "Although they know such things bring death, they not only keep on doing them, but praise those who do them."

Another thing we need to observe is that the sexual revolution not just a gay problem. Heterosexuals for a lot of years have been acting like homosexuals in a lot of ways. They've been minimizing the gender differences between male and female. In many marriages, people got sterilized, so their union was no more fertile than a homosexual marriage. And they had sex outside of marriage and shacked up or became promiscuous. The times we live in are very depraved sexually, including many who are not homosexual at all.

Another fact about our times: many church leaders who support homosexuality are universalists. They believe that nobody goes to hell, that every path leads to God, that nothing you do is eternally fatal. You need to understand this underlying universalism because when people affirm same-sex unions and say, "There's no danger, no harm," just remember: these people believe there's no eternal harm in anything. They're not very concerned about sin leading to hell because they assume everybody will end up enjoying eternal life.

One more sobering fact in understanding the times: Churches blessed homosexual unions before government did. Sometimes religious people complain that secularism has done so much damage. The fact is that there were church groups that were blessing homosexual unions before the government did.

Gay marriage?

Whenever a government or court offers a ruling in favor of same-sex marriage, homosexual people celebrate. But not many actually get married. Most want official government support for homosexual marriage because they think it sends a message that it's good to be gay. But when it comes to actually living their lives, few care to tie themselves down to another person. All want the aura of prestige and normality that comes with saying that homosexuals are just as eligible for marriage as heterosexuals, but far fewer want to promise the monogamy and life-long faithfulness that are the ideal of traditional marriage.

A Dutch study of committed gay partnerships found that these committed partnerships lasted an average of two years, and that even in these committed partnerships, more than 95% had other sexual partners during those two years. The average was eight other partners per year. So in a committed partnership, there were 16 different sexual partners in that average two-year period that the committed partnership lasted. Sound like marriage to you?

Some activists fear that official approval of gay marriage won't be inclusive enough. It might exclude bisexuals, who might want both male and female partners. It might exclude transgender people, who at one time want to consider themselves a man and at a different time want to consider themselves a woman. Gay marriage kind of locks them in to committing to one gender or the other. Some activists think it's discriminatory to have gay marriage that leaves out bisexuals and transgenders. Gay marriage might also exclude legalized homosexual polygamy: somebody who wants to tie the knot with seven partners and be married to seven people at one time. In short, some gay activists feel that gay marriage is dangerous because it will tie gays into some of the same things that have characterized heterosexual marriage.

One gay editor in Canada said: “I’d be for marriage if I thought gay people would challenge and change the institution and not buy into the traditional meaning of ‘till death do us part’ and monogamy forever.” So if marriage had none of the things that make marriage what it is, he’d be in favor of it! If marriage is not between a man and a woman, if marriage is not a commitment to be sexually faithful to one person, and if marriage is not meant to last a lifetime, then this gay editor would be in favor of marriage and of gay marriage. Of course, then marriage would not really be marriage at all. But that’s the conundrum that many people find themselves in. They support gay marriage, allegedly, but they don’t like marriage itself because they don’t want to be sexually faithful. They don’t want a relationship to last for life.

Some who support government-approved gay marriage argue that it will encourage more monogamy and faithfulness among homosexuals. But gay marriage won’t make homosexuals more monogamous and faithful; it will just make marriage itself less monogamous and less faithful. To really understand what’s going on with the movement toward gay marriage, we need to see how it fits into the bigger picture of the sexual revolution. We would never have reached a point where gay marriage could be considered if heterosexuals had not been so busy trashing marriage.

Author David Frum writes:

If you think of coupledness as a partnership that may or may not involve children, or if you have become accustomed to the idea that the children in a home will often have a biological relationship with one adult but not necessarily the other, then you will not find same-sex marriage a very exotic idea; indeed, you will be ready to believe that prejudice and hatred are the only possible reasons that somebody might oppose same-sex marriage.

To oppose same-sex marriage effectively, you have to believe that marriage is more than a contract between two consenting adults, more than a claim on employers and the government for economic benefits. You have to believe that children need mothers and fathers, their own mothers and fathers. You have to believe that unmarried cohabitation is wrong, even when heterosexuals do it. Lose those beliefs and the case for marriage has been lost.

Those who oppose gay marriage are right to do so, but we must all realize that we didn’t reach this point overnight. The sins and failings of heterosexuals—the anti-child attitudes and millions of abortions, the epidemic of single-parent situations, the view of sex as a personal privilege and undeniable right disconnected from personal commitment or public obligation—these things provide the setting in which same-sex marriage doesn’t sound all that different from what’s happening among many heterosexuals. The approval of same-sex marriage would simply be the final seal on a society’s acceptance of the sexual revolution and its rejection of genuine marriage. It would be wrong to blame homosexuals for all of this. Gay marriage might do further damage to whatever remains of traditional respect for marriage, but most of the damage has already been done by heterosexuals themselves. Society already went a long way down the wrong path before we got to this point.

But now that we’re at this crucial juncture, what should we do? Should we just plunge further ahead until we reach the point of no return? No, the demand for gay marriage should serve as a

wakeup call. It should alert us to how far marriage has already fallen and how urgent it is for us to turn around, to repent, and go back to marriage as God designed it and as Jesus defined it.

Government's stance

When it comes to government policy, many say that morality can't be legislated. But government legislates sexual morality when it outlaws polygamy, when it outlaws bestiality, when it outlaws rape, when it outlaws molesting children, when it outlaws child pornography. The question is not whether government should legislate morality but how much. In countries that once had a Christian consensus, there were laws against pornography, fornication, adultery, groundless divorce, and homosexual coupling because these things were known to be wrong and harmful. In recent times these laws have been relaxed. How many other laws will be relaxed remains to be seen.

When government deals with a behavior, there are at least four possibilities, four different approaches.

1. Prohibit and punish (e.g. theft, murder)
2. Permit but penalize (e.g. "sin taxes" on cigarettes, alcohol)
3. Privatize without penalizing or promoting (e.g. heresy, swearing, gossip, rage)
4. Promote and privilege (favor some things by teaching in school curriculum, tax breaks, subsidies)

The first approach is to prohibit and punish. There's a law against the behavior, and there are punishments if you're a thief or murderer. So one thing government does is take certain behaviors and say, "This is not allowed, and you will be punished if you do it."

Another way that government can deal with a behavior is to permit it but penalize it by a "sin tax" or some other penalty. For example, government doesn't outlaw cigarette smoking; it just hikes the taxes on cigarettes to the moon. It doesn't outlaw alcohol consumption, but it taxes alcohol heavily. It doesn't outlaw gambling, but it gets huge tax revenue from legalized gambling businesses. Sometimes the government is compromising or in cahoots because it's making money from the very thing that it's permitting and then penalizing.

A third thing government can do is to privatize something and keep its nose out of the matter. It doesn't penalize it; it doesn't promote it; it just lets people do what they want. The government doesn't tell you that you have to buy a red car or that you're not allowed to buy a red car; it's up to you. Government imposes no penalty and offers no incentive or benefit. It just leaves the decision entirely up to free, private choice. Governments that emphasize religious freedom try to avoid making any laws favoring or opposing heresy, swearing, gossip, or rage.

The fourth approach government can take is to promote and to privilege a behavior. In government-controlled schools, part of the curriculum encourages certain kinds of behavior because the government wants to promote that. Government might want to promote home ownership, so it gives tax breaks for mortgage interest. Government wants to promote ethanol as an alternate fuel, so it gives financial subsidies to the ethanol industry. In these cases, it's

promoting and privileging something. It's not just allowing it; it's helping to pay for it and trying to get people to adopt it.

Those are four different ways that government can deal with something. In government's relation to homosexuality, there's been a progression from prohibiting, to permitting, to privatizing, to promoting in

curriculum and other ways.

No government can punish every form of sin. It criminalizes only those things that are considered most harmful to public order and wellbeing. Still, even if a government doesn't criminalize or punish many sins, it is still a huge step to go from prohibiting and punishing, to permitting, to privatizing, to promoting and privileging it. At one time homosexuality was punished. Then it was permitted and privatized. Now it is being promoted and exalted to the same level of value and importance as marriage. This is a colossal blunder. It is one thing to tolerate sins committed in private; it is quite another to make a particular sin an honored, subsidized part of the public fabric.

The truth is, the government cannot really approve gay marriage, because there is no such thing. The word *marriage* means the union of a man and a woman who promise to remain faithful to each other for life. It is not discrimination to say this. It is simply definition. Would it be discrimination to say that a brother and sister are siblings and not spouses? Would it be discrimination to say that my brother's son is my nephew and not my husband? Would it be discrimination to say that a group of first-year college students moving into a campus apartment are roommates and not newlyweds? No, that's not discrimination; it's just accurate use of words. The word *marriage* means the union of husband and wife. It would be nonsense to apply the word *marriage* to a brother-sister relationship or a nephew-uncle relationship or a college roommate relationship, and it would be silly to demand that the government regard such relationships the way it regards marriage. Likewise, it is nonsense to apply the word *marriage* to a same-sex pairing and to demand that the government regard those non-marital relationships the way it regards marriage.

Courts can try to create a new institution from nothing, they can try to redefine words, reinterpret constitutions, and reshape society, but real marriage will always be between a man and a woman. Marriage existed long before judges and courts. Saying that a dog is a cat won't make it meow, and mating two people of the same sex won't make it a marriage, no matter what any judge says. It's less foolish to say that a nine-person Little League team is the same as a nine-person Supreme Court than it is to say that a two-person same-sex relationship is the same as a husband-and-wife marriage.

Contradictory arguments

As the gay movement gained ground over the years, some contradictory arguments have been used. Gays who demand, "Keep the government out of our bedroom," should not demand, "Have the government license and support what we do in our bedroom." Gays who say, "What we're doing is nobody else's business," shouldn't go on to say, "What we're doing is so important to

the public good and the future of the society that it should have the same public standing and government approval as marriage.” On the one hand, the message was, "Stay out of it." On the other hand, the message was, "Get into it and support it and promote it and

subsidize it." Even when people say they don't want the government and church to interfere with their sexual activities, the fact is that sinners always want the approval of a king and a priest: they always want the government and the church to bless whatever it is they're doing. And that's why the gay agenda was not satisfied with "Let's privatize it so we can be left alone." They want it to be approved and blessed and promoted by church and state.

Why single out homosexual unions for special treatment and not declare other relationships to be marriages? Should government declare marriage status for all uncle and nephews who go fishing together? Should government declare marriage status for all grandparents and grandchildren who hug each other? Should government declare marriage status for all students on college campuses who room together for a few years? Should government declare every close friendship a marriage? Of course not. So why declare a same-sex friendship to be marriage if the only difference is adding sinful sex?

The simple fact is that marriage is uniquely important in raising up the next generation of citizens. That's why good government has a special interest in supporting marriage. It is not just biblical teaching but observable fact that children flourish best in families headed by a father and mother committed to each other in lifelong marriage. Society blesses marriage because marriage blesses society. The future of society depends on the future of the family. It does not depend so directly on other types of relationships, and it certainly doesn't depend on relationships that are sinful.

False prophets

In the meantime, whatever the government does, the church must keep proclaiming the Word of God. Sad to say, some apostate churches and pastors have raced ahead of government in rejecting biblical standards for marriage. For decades some church leaders denied Jesus' virgin birth and bodily resurrection and denied salvation through him alone; and now, having denied the core facts of Christian truth, they also deny Christian sexual morality. Any church that does such things is no more a church than a same-sex partnership is a marriage.

Jesus said, "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves (Matthew 7:15). Jude wrote, "They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord" (Jude 1:4). There are people who have all the titles and all the degrees and the high positions of church leaders but who are false prophets and godless.

Secular humanism and apostate theological liberalism are the driving forces behind the sexual revolution. We need to understand our times and understand the apostate churches' role in this. Just as government endorsement of homosexual marriage would be unthinkable if heterosexuals had not first made such a mess of marriage, so government endorsement of homosexuality would have not have happened if churches had not led the way to perdition. It's

common to say that religion shouldn't influence politics, but the truth is that religion always influences politics, and bad religion produces bad politics. The religions of secular humanism and apostate theological liberalism are the driving forces behind the sexual revolution and the political movement toward same-sex marriage.

Faithful churches

Those who value a healthy nation and civilization need political courage to resist the latest onslaught and strengthen the crumbling foundations of our society. But political action, though important, is not enough. Government is a product of culture, and culture is largely a product of church and family (or lack thereof). This means that we don't just need amendments or laws to defend the family. We need revival in our churches, rebirth in our relationship to God, and renewal in marriage and family life.

If society rejects Christian influence, the church must still teach God's Word. Government need not punish every sin, but God will punish sin with hell if there is no repentance and trust in Christ. Churches must warn of God's wrath against sin, even if it's not something government must punish. Churches must call openly gay couples to repent and excommunicate them if they don't. Churches must not bless them or officiate their weddings or make them leaders in the church. Instead, the church must say, "You're not allowed to take part in the Lord's Supper, until you repent of your homosexual behavior and stop it."

This does not mean that every person who has gay urges and has slipped should be excommunicated immediately. People who repent of something and continue to strive against it are to be encouraged, not excommunicated. But someone who openly lives in sin and wickedness, declares it to be good, and encourages others to do the same, must not be allowed to infect and poison the church of Jesus Christ. Churches that are making unrepentant homosexuals into leaders instead of warning them that they have no part in the kingdom of God if they continue on their present path--such churches are not serving their people well.

Ministry to homosexuals

Now, let me remind you of what I said earlier: as Christians we are called to minister to homosexuals, not just to resist a societal agenda. What does such ministry involve? One thing we can't do is simply approve of sexual sin. It is not right or loving to treat homosexual behavior as normal and pleasing to God. But there are a number of things Christians can and should do in ministering to gay and lesbian people and other who struggle with sexual tendencies that are contrary to God's will.

- Love, pray, care and befriend homosexual people and show them the way of Christ.
- Don't single out homosexual sin as worse than other sins.
- Recognize that all sin involves inborn or ingrained tendencies. So it's usually not enough to say, "Stop it! Behave better!"

- Bring the resources of the gospel of forgiveness. Emphasize that Jesus' blood removes guilt, and the Spirit's power transforms life.
- In some cases, orientation and desires can miraculously change, and they are able to marry a person of the opposite sex. In many other cases, they might never be able to be romantically or physically attracted to the opposite sex. For such people, following Jesus requires them to remain single for life and abstain from sexual relations. That's a hard path. But it's the path God calls us to if we're not able to be married to someone of the opposite sex.
- Teach godly self denial and self control: denying the old self and living in accord with the new self that is ours in Christ Jesus.
- Support Christians who still struggle. A genuine believer might still be tempted and commit sin, including homosexual sin. When that happens and they repent, other Christians must show compassion, lift them up again, assure them of Christ's forgiveness, and encourage them that they can continue on the path of Christ, and know that God will be faithful to them.

That's our two front battle:

1. **Bring good news:** Show God's love and proclaim the gospel of forgiveness and new life in Christ to homosexual sinners. As fellow sinners, we must relate to people humbly, gently, and respectfully.
2. **Battle evil agenda:** Stand against an organized movement that declares evil to be good. Many homosexuals don't seek forgiveness or new life. They seek blessing from church and support from government.

Christians must have a heart of love to bring good news, and at the same time have the firmness to resist wickedness. It is a tremendously difficult task to be loving and, at the same time, vigilant and firm. But by God's grace, that is our calling as individual Christians, and it is our calling as leaders in the church of Jesus Christ.

Gay Liberation

Slide Contents

By David Feddes

Two-front battle

1. **Bringing good news:** Show God's love and proclaim the gospel of forgiveness and new life in Christ to homosexual sinners. As fellow sinners, we must relate to people humbly, gently, and respectfully.
2. **Battling evil agenda:** Stand against an organized movement that declares evil to be good. Many homosexuals don't seek forgiveness or new life. They seek blessing from church and support from government.

Unnatural abomination

You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an **abomination**. (Leviticus 18:22)

Women exchanged natural relations for those that are **contrary to nature**; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing **shameless acts** with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error... Though they know God's decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. (Romans 1:26-27)

Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire. (Jude 1:7; see Genesis 19)

Washed, sanctified, justified

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

What about scientific studies?

- Identical twin studies: less than 50% with gay identical twin are gay themselves
- "Gay gene" studies: some correlation, but not decisive of itself.
- Don't overlook the obvious about genes: males are XY, females are XX.
- Don't overlook the obvious about anatomy: male and female organs match.
- Homosexuality may be partly inherited, just as our sin nature is inherited.

Putting off the old self, putting on the new self

You were taught to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:22-24)

Two-front battle

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Understanding the times

- Gay activism is well funded and organized
- Homosexuality gained support even as thousands of gay men were dying of AIDS.
- Heterosexuals acting like homosexuals: minimized gender differences, got sterilized, had sex without marriage.
- Many church supporters of homosexuality are universalists: nobody goes to hell.
- Churches blessed homosexual unions before government did.

Gay marriage?

- Dutch study of gay "committed partnerships"
 - *Lasted an average of two years
 - *More than 95 percent had other sexual partners during those two years.
 - *Average was eight other partners per year.

Some activists fear that official approval of gay marriage will not be inclusive enough.

- *Might exclude bisexuals and transgenders
- *Might exclude legalized polygamy

Gay editor's view of marriage

- "I'd be for marriage if I thought gay people would challenge and change the institution and not buy into the traditional meaning of 'till death do us part' and monogamy forever."
- If marriage had none of the things that make marriage what it is, he'd be all for it!
 1. NOT between a man and a woman
 2. NOT a commitment to be sexually faithful to one person
 3. NOT meant to last a lifetime

What is a healthy home?

David Frum: If you think of coupledness as a partnership that may or may not involve children, or if you have become accustomed to the idea that the children in a home will often have a biological relationship with one adult but not necessarily the other, then you will not find same-sex marriage a very exotic idea; indeed, you will be ready to believe that prejudice and hatred are the only possible reasons that somebody might oppose same-sex marriage.

Not just consenting adults

David Frum: To oppose same-sex marriage effectively, you have to believe that marriage is more than a contract between two consenting adults, more than a claim on employers and the government for economic benefits. You have to believe that children need mothers and fathers,

their own mothers and fathers. You have to believe that unmarried cohabitation is wrong, even when heterosexuals do it. Lose those beliefs and the case for marriage has been lost.

Government's stance: four possibilities

1. Prohibit and punish (e.g. theft, murder)
2. Permit but penalize (e.g. "sin taxes" on cigarettes and alcohol)
3. Privatize without penalizing or promoting (e.g. heresy, swearing, gossip, rage)
4. Promote and privilege (favor some things by teaching in school curriculum, tax breaks, subsidies)

Contradictory arguments

- Gays who demand, "Keep the government out of our bedroom," should not demand, "Have the government license and support what we do in our bedroom."
- Gays who say, "What we're doing is nobody else's business," shouldn't go on to say, "What we're doing is so important to the public good and the future of the society that it should have the same public standing and government approval as marriage."
- Sinners want king and priest to bless them.

False prophets

- Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. (Matthew 7:15)
- They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord. (Jude 4)
- Secular humanism and apostate theological liberalism are the driving forces behind the sexual revolution.

Churches standing firm

- If society rejects Christian influence, the church must still teach God's Word.
- Government need not punish every sin, but God will punish sin with hell if there is no repentance and trust in Christ. Churches must warn of God's wrath against sin, even if it's not something government must punish.
- Churches must excommunicate gay couples, not bless them or make them leaders.

Ministry to homosexuals

- It is not right or loving to treat homosexual behavior as normal and pleasing to God.
- Love, pray, and care.
- Don't single out homosexual sin as worse.
- Sin involves inborn or ingrained tendencies.
- Emphasize that Jesus' blood removes guilt, and the Spirit's power transforms life.
- Change orientation, or abstain from sex.
- Teach godly self denial and self control.
- Support Christians who still struggle.

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