

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE - WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT?

One state after another is dealing with the same-sex marriage question. Is it legal? Is it constitutional? Should it be protected or banned? Debate rages about marriage and family law in general and about homosexuality in particular.

All right, let's talk about homosexuality. While we're at it let's talk about definitions of marriage and the concept of family.

Difficult subjects, all. Subjects that many politicians would rather avoid – and talk show hosts thrive on. Subjects that increasingly concern our courts and our media.

Does the government belong in the bedroom? Must an act of congress validate an act of passion? Should the federal budget dictate a pregnant woman's decision? If we lived in a theocratic society, all three answers would be Yes. In a secular society, all three should be No.

When is an action moral but not legal? Or legal but not moral? Does civil law have the right to judge morality? Does the legislature have the right to impeach a president on moral grounds? And does the state have an obligation to honor a union that the majority of its citizens consider immoral – particularly when that “honor” involves tax credits, public registry and records, employee benefits, social security payments, etc.? Again, the purely secular answer to these questions differs almost diametrically from the religious answer.

Population trends revealed by census data show a slow but definite change in American lifestyles. Family units shrink – fewer children, more one-parent households, more childless couples, more unmarried adults either living alone or together. So it seems that regardless of whether we want to answer the ought-to questions based on the Bible or the newspaper, reality tells us that family life as we know it is slowly dissolving.

Do you believe with the Book of Leviticus that “thou shalt not lie with man as with woman; it is an abomination?” Or do you believe that two homosexuals should be married and have the status of a family? What about two lesbians? Three? Four?

Do you believe that a woman and her pony should be able to marry legally and also be a family? Or a man and his sheep?

Do you believe that a brother and sister should be legally married? What about a father and daughter?

What about a teacher and a 12-year-old student?

Think about your answer, because we all act from our conditioning. Gut reactions are one thing; justice might be another.

At the risk of offending everyone who reads this far, I will state that from where I sit it makes no difference how we answer. The bill that gets defeated this year could pass a year or two down the road, and very little will change. The disease called a “divine punishment” last year, is this year’s favorite charity. All the parades and protests, all the Constitutional amendments and court decisions are nothing but signposts. Those same signposts lined the Appian Way and the Acropolis and the path to the Pyramids. They are the signposts to social decay.

Behavior is not the issue. Deviant behavior was always a fact of human life; otherwise why would religion warn against it? The issue is social acceptance. Once a society accepts deviant behavior as being equally valid with natural/conventional behavior, that society is on its way down.

Is the direction reversible? Short of Messianic intervention, who knows? One certainty, however: redirection is worth trying.

The civilizations of the ancient world – Egypt, Greece, Rome – glowed for centuries before they scrapped their family mores and got extinguished by Barbarian invaders who didn’t have those problems. American civilization is just over 200 years old. A few brilliant cosmic moments. Can we save it?