

# Gay Marriage

by Denver Cheddie

After what I have written in the previous articles, it may come as a surprise that I do not oppose the legalization of gay marriage. I am not for it either. In fact, if I had to vote whether or not to legalize it, I would vote against it. But you will not find me marching with placards against gay marriage. I do not believe that is what God called Christians to do. Many Christians are militantly opposed to gay marriage and many conservative politicians pander to the Christian vote by taking a position against gay marriage. If they had their way, gay marriage would not be legal, but homosexuals would continue to live a gay lifestyle without the marriage certificate. What then would we have accomplished? And even if they are forced to stop practicing homosexuality, that does not mean they are saved. Fighting against gay marriage while homosexuals remain gay and proud is futile. It is a fight that even if we win, we lose. Yet so many Christians have been sidetracked into this battle.

Their main contention is that God instituted marriage as a heterosexual union – between a man and a woman – therefore gay marriage should not be tolerated. It is true that this is God’s ideal, but the sad fact is that western society including the church has departed from God’s ideal of marriage a long time ago. Jesus openly declared that if people divorce for reasons other than infidelity and remarry, then the remarriage is an adulterous union. But over 50% of marriages end in divorce, and the number one reason is not unfaithfulness. Statistics further show that this divorce rate is no different in the church than in the rest of society. Many churches are filled with divorced and remarried people, and the church

has no problem accepting them into fellowship and even into ministry. So why are we fighting for an ideal that we ourselves have forsaken? This is the classic double standard.

We must also distinguish between marriage as a divine union and marriage as a civil union. In a theocratic state, they are one and the same, but today they are not necessarily the same. I believe that there are many marriages that are legal, but not recognized by God. Just because something is legal does not mean that God accepts it. I believe that there are many remarried people (not all) whose remarriage is legal but adulterous in the eyes of God. I believe it is no different with gay marriage. Because society has accepted it does not mean that God has. As far as God is concerned, these gay couples are doing nothing different from what they were doing before, just with a certificate. Why are we fighting against the certificate?

Christians need to remember that unlike Old Testament Israel, modern societies are not theocratic. Ideally there should be a separation between church and state. Many of our laws have been influenced by religious traditions, but many are based on general civil rights. History has recorded numerous atrocities that have been performed by the church when it had too much political power. "Christians" have mercilessly murdered non-Christians for not converting. This is mind-boggling to the genuine Christian who has actually read the Bible. Jesus told us to expect persecution for our faith, He absolutely never told us to persecute others for theirs. The church is better off staying out of politics. It does not mean that a Christian cannot run for office, but he would be naïve to think he could legislate Christian beliefs. The church's job is not to

regulate how sinners sin, since we were not called to impose external righteousness on an unregenerated society.

In 1 Timothy 2, Paul instructed us to pray for governments and civil authorities for two reasons – God desires all to be saved, and also so that we may live peaceable lives. The bible gives us provision on how to handle ourselves during times of persecution. However, we should pray that we may live peaceably in society without persecution. If the church has freedom to practice its faith, then that is sufficient. We do not need to impose this faith on everyone else. Christians should be praying that our religious liberties remain intact, rather than campaigning for Christian laws regarding marriage. Any change we effect should come through prayer and the preaching of the gospel which is the power of God unto salvation, not the enactment of laws. Gay people will never be saved by externally imposing our demand for heterosexuality. The gospel of Jesus Christ must regenerate them first, then they can truly repent.

## **Equal Civil Rights for All**

The ideal society is one in which all people are equal. This means that Christians have the freedom to worship Christ and to preach the gospel, Moslems have the right to practice their faith (as long as they do not break any universal laws), atheists have the freedom to not believe in God and even denigrate those who do. Christians have the freedom to call homosexuality a sin, and gays have the freedom to call religious people narrow-minded bigots. Gays are allowed to marry, but there is no demand on Christian ministers to perform the ceremonies. In this society, sinners have the freedom to practice their sin providing they are not breaking any laws. If sinners do not have freedom to sin, then

salvation is meaningless. True salvation entails the internal reformation of a person such that even though they may sin, they do not wish to. It is only in this context of a truly free society can the gospel accomplish its work without external hindrance. If we force people to follow our “laws”, then our misguided focus would be reformation of society rather than salvation of souls.

Now the problem with this ideal society is that it can be described as being in a state of unstable equilibrium. There will always be factions attempting to impose their will on the rest of society. Gay people have long felt persecuted and alienated by having to adhere to heterosexual marriage laws which they feel are based on past religious influence. The problem is that once they get their equality, they are not going to stop there. They will then try to destroy everyone who opposes them. Even if everyone has freedom, there will inevitably be conflicts between religious freedom and gay rights. Western society can be described as a liberal or progressive culture that is quickly becoming hostile to conservative Christianity. There have been numerous cases where Christians have suffered the backlash of this culture.

## **Examples of Persecution by Gay Activists**

Bethany Paquette, of British Columbia, Canada, was denied a job at Amaruk Wilderness Corp because she attended Trinity Western University, a school that does not admit gay students. In their rejection letter, they openly stated that they are not a Christian organization and consider Christianity to have destroyed their way of life. They claim to embrace diversity, but they openly discriminate against someone for

having attended a Christian university, even though she was in no way responsible for the school's policies.

Blaine Adamson, owner of Hands on Original T-shirt printing company refused to print shirts for a Gay Pride rally in 2012. He was sued by the LGBT movement for discriminating against them on the basis of sexual orientation. They could have just gone to a different printer, but they insisted on being vindictive. The Lexington-Fayette Urban County Human Rights Commission found him guilty and ordered that his 30 employees undergo diversity training. Thankfully the Fayette County Circuit Court upheld his appeal and overturned the ridiculous decision by the Commission. In this case the distinguishing point is that he refused service because of the message they had required him to print, and not because of the sexual orientation of the requesters. This case ended well for the Christian, but he still had to go through a lot of legal trouble because of the vindictiveness of the LGBT movement.

Various bakeries however did not fare as well. There are numerous cases where bakery owners refused to bake cakes for gay weddings and were sued for violating gay rights. Sweet Cakes by Melissa based in Portland, Oregon was ordered to pay \$135,000 in compensation to the gay couple in question. The ruling would have been different for churches or religious schools, but not for businesses. In other words, religious belief cannot be a factor in denying business services. It seems that in the event of a clash, gay rights trump religious freedom. One wonders if a church had requested a cake with an anti-gay inscription from a pro-gay bakery, if the latter would be forced to provide services.

Atlanta fire chief, Kevin Cochran was fired for publishing a book in which he expressed his view that homosexuality is a sin. He was accused of discriminating against homosexuals. The most common view is that freedom of speech does not protect you from the consequences of that speech, in other words he was free to publish his opinions but his employers were also free to fire him for it. Fair enough. But I can assure you that if a gay person is fired for saying anything negative about Christians, that would create a major media scandal.

A University of the West Indies (UWI) professor Brendan Bain was fired for pointing out that HIV is more prevalent among homosexual men than heterosexual men while providing medical testimony in a court case.<sup>33</sup> LGBT sympathetic groups lobbied for his dismissal, to which UWI obliged. They claimed that his statements represented a conflict of interest. What conflict of interest you ask? If Professor Bain has gay students, then he might discriminate against them. They could not even cite a case where he actually discriminated against any student on any basis. What makes this even more incredible is that male homosexuality is not even legal in Jamaica. It seems that the LGBT movement despises the idea that we can disagree without discriminating. So what if an openly gay professor has Christian students, should he/she be fired? One blogger summed it up perfectly, “I do not believe in discriminating against gays but why are they discriminating against straight?”

The double standards among gay advocates are astounding. There was an incident where a Christian man was fired from his job for posting the following comments on his company’s website, “homosexuality leads to death, heterosexuality leads to life.” Now that is an incredibly stupid thing to do, since a company’s website is no place for those comments.

Predictably he was lambasted by the readers of the Huffington Post. Two days later, the same periodical reported that someone was kicked off a plane because he cursed the Texas governor for not supporting gay marriage. The most common comment among the readers was that he should sue the airline, even though this was fundamentally no different from the previous case. Gay advocates are not interested in fairness and equality, they want domination over their enemies.

It is clear that gay rights and religious freedom will clash. Religious fundamentalists will call homosexuality a sin, and gay advocates will accuse them of being intolerant and discriminating. It needs to be made clear what exactly constitutes abuse of free speech. When does free speech become discrimination? What constitutes intolerance and when does it become illegal? Will there be a time when churches will be forced to adopt a liberal position concerning homosexuality in order to maintain their tax free exemption status? Can we lose our job for posting pro-heterosexuality comments on Facebook? And if so, would our employers be prosecuted by law for discriminating against us? These are questions Christians should demand answers to.

## **How Should Christians Respond?**

The examples above are not the result of gay marriage per se, but a progressive culture that despises conservative Christianity. They have no problem with liberal churches who openly welcome and even ordain gay persons. So the force of society is pushing churches to abandon their conservative views on homosexuality and adopt a more liberal position. Many churches have already capitulated and many more will. But we should not find any of this surprising. The bible does tell us to expect a

great falling away (2 Thessalonians 2:3). Under the strain of persecution, we can expect more and more of those who label themselves Christians to succumb to pressure and default to the liberal side. The bible however does not change. As long as we can maintain freedom to worship and to preach the gospel, that is sufficient. We may be denigrated as being non-intellectual and backward, but so be it. We may be denied jobs and we may even lose jobs that we have. We are called to maintain our faith in spite of all of these things.

Christians should pray. Pray for the political powers that we may live peaceable lives with the freedom to worship and practice our faith. Pray for those who persecute us, including homosexuals. Pray for their conviction of sin and salvation. That will accomplish more than campaigning.

Preach the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation. The gospel may result in individual souls being saved. But do not expect to reform society. The direction of society's decline will not change. Our job is not to save the ship from sinking, but merely to rescue the perishing. We should not be sidetracked into campaigning and marching. This serves no useful purpose.

Don't compromise our faith. There is tremendous pressure by society for us to do that. But do not be intimidated. They that endure to the end shall be saved.

At the same time we should be wise and sensible. Don't be like the Christian who posted antigay comments on his company's website and lost his job. A company's website is no place for those kinds of remarks.

Further, what was he possibly trying to accomplish? That is not what Christianity requires us to do.

Be discerning. Many “churches” have adopted a more liberal position regarding homosexuality. They might as well take the mark of the beast. Recognize that just because a building is called a church, it does not mean the Holy Spirit goes there. Just because someone is called an ordained minister, it does not mean that he preaches the true gospel, or is even a genuine Christian.

How do I know that conservative Christians have the right interpretation of the bible as opposed to the liberal Christians? It is very easy. John 15:19 assures us that if we were of the world, the world would love us. But because we are not of this world, it hates us. The world has fallen in love with the liberal church. Liberals are even united with atheists on gay issues. The conservative church is more hated than it has ever been. Raising children in this generation requires skillful biblical parenting. We cannot reliably depend on the television to do this job for us. There are many TV shows that espouse the culture in which we live – gay marriage and all. We have a choice whether or not to expose our children to them. Eventually children will ask us about gay marriage and homosexuality, and we must be well informed, strong in our faith and wise in our responses. But many of us have raised children in a plural society, with many religions and cults. We need to approach this issue no differently.

There are many mega-churches that handle millions of dollars. Instead of spending this money on expensive houses, luxury cars and private jets, why not fund research by Christian scientists in gay science? That field of

research is dominated by secular scientists with tremendous amounts of funding from LGBT sympathizers, and is desperately in need of balance.

Finally Christians should be excited about the times in which we live. It is in such hostile cultures that we really get to see who are the genuine bible believing Christians and who are just nominal Christians – those who merely call themselves Christians and tick off the Christian checkbox when filling out a form.

## **Conclusion**

The bible conclusively categorizes homosexuality as a sin. At best, science shows that homosexuality is strongly environmental and weakly genetic. Even if gay marriage is legal, it does not mean that God will honor it. Nevertheless western society has openly embraced these alternative lifestyles. There is tremendous pressure on the conservative church today because of its position on homosexuality. In stark contrast, there is a Hollywood love affair between the world and the liberal church.

It appears that some gay persons wish to be religious, but they want it on their terms. Christianity requires that we come to God on His terms. Many homosexuals feel condemned because of their condition and their belief that they cannot change. Why would God condemn us if He knows we cannot change? Well that same question could be asked by anyone who has ever come to Christ. All men are depraved and cannot save themselves, yet under condemnation.

This is why Jesus died. Through his blood, we can be forgiven for our sinful acts, and cleansed from our sinful conditions. The solution is not to redefine sin and righteousness, but to confess our sin to Him.

Christianity is sometimes a walk of suffering. God may require things of us that seem unreasonable and humanly impossible. But God gives strength in our weakness. Through Him, we can overcome any sin and endure any trial.

If you are a homosexual struggling with religious convictions, you have two choices. You can go to a church that accepts you just as you are without demanding repentance. But you decide whether you are being true to God's word. Or you can come to God on His terms. You actually do have a choice.

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