

American Decency Association

PO Box 202, Fremont, MI 49412 231-924-4050 www.americandecency.org

Encouraging Christians to guard their hearts

April 2013

The Challenge of Same-sex Unions

by Albert Mohler



In the world but not of the world? From the very beginning, the church has faced the challenge of responding to external events, trends, ideologies, and controversies. By definition, the church does not get to choose these challenges, but they have been thrust upon Christians by the world. The question always comes down to this: What now?

That question seems especially urgent in light of the emergence of same-sex unions and marriage in the United States and the world over. How must the church answer this challenge?

To answer that question, we need to think about the speed of the moral revolution that has pushed this question to the forefront of our culture. In less than

a generation, homosexuality has gone from being almost universally condemned to being almost fully normalized in the larger society.

We are facing a true moral inversion — a system of moral understandings turned upside down. Where homosexuality was even recently condemned by the society, now it is considered a sin to believe that homosexuality is wrong in any way. A new sexual morality has replaced the old, and those who hold to the old morality are considered morally deficient. The new moral authorities have one central demand for the church: get with the new program.

This puts the true church, committed to the authority of God's Word, in a very difficult cultural position. Put simply, we cannot join the larger culture in normalizing homosexuality and restructuring society to match this new morality. Recognizing same-sex unions and legalizing same-sex marriage is central to this project.

Liberal churches and de-

nominations are joining the project, some more quickly and eagerly than others. The cultural pressure is formidable, and only churches that are truly committed to Scripture will withstand the pressure to accommodate themselves and their message to the new morality.

What, then, is the true church to do? First, we must stand without compromise on the authority of the Bible and the principles of sexual conduct and morality that God has revealed so clearly in His Word. The Bible's sexual morality is grounded in the creation of humanity in God's image; we are created as male and female and given the gift of sex within the marriage covenant — and only within the marriage covenant between one man and one woman for as long they both shall live.

The easiest way to summarize the Bible's teaching on sexuality is to begin with God's blessing of sex only within the marriage covenant between a man

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The Challenge of Same-Sex Unions

PROTECT
Marriage



[Continued from page 1]

and a woman. Then, just remember that sex outside of that covenant relationship, whatever its form or expression, is explicitly forbidden. Christians know that these prohibitions are for our good and that rejecting them is tantamount to a moral rebellion against God Himself. We also know that the Bible forbids all same-sex sexual acts and behaviors. Thus, we know that homosexuality is a sin, that blessing it in any way is also sin, and that normalizing sin cannot lead to human happiness.

Second, we must realize what is at stake. Marriage is first and foremost a public institution. It has always been so. Throughout history, societies have granted special recognition and privileges to mar-

riage because it is the central organizing institution of human culture. Marriage regulates relationships, sexuality, human reproduction, lineage, kinship, and family structure. But marriage has also performed another crucial function — it has regulated morality.

This is why the challenge of same-sex unions is so urgent and important. Redefining marriage is never simply about marriage. It leads to the redefinition of reproduction and parenthood, produces a legal revolution with vast consequences, replaces an old social order with something completely new, and forces the adoption of a new morality. This last point is especially important. Marriage teaches morality by its very centrality to the culture. With a new concept of marriage comes a new morality, enforced by incredible social pressure and, eventually, legal threats.

Third, we must act quickly to teach Christians the truth about marriage and God's plan for sexuality in all its fullness and beauty. We must develop pastoral approaches that are faithful to Scripture and arm this

generation of believers to withstand the cultural pressure and respond in ways that are truly Christian.

Last, and most important, this challenge must drive us to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Christians must be the first to understand this challenge in light of the gospel. After all, we know spiritual rebellion when we see it, for we ourselves were rebels before God's grace conquered us. We know what moral confusion means because without the light of God's Word, we are just as confused.

There is no rescue from the self-deception of sin except for the salvation that is ours in Jesus Christ. While doing everything else required of us in this challenge, the faithful church must center its energies on the one thing that we know we must do above all else — preach, teach, and live the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[Taken from Ligonier Ministries, *Tabletalk* devotional, April 2012]

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