

June 2009

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Friends Don't Let Friends Do Those Things

"And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh." --Jude 22, 23

President Obama earlier this month proclaimed June as "*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride Month*." Although not the first president to ask America to be proud of her growing gay community—Bill Clinton did that in 1999 and 2000—he is the first to call bisexuals and transgender forward for national recognition and appreciation.

Bob Stith, a spokesman for the Southern Baptist Taskforce on Ministry to Homosexuals says "It is one thing to be loving and tolerant. It is something else altogether to encourage pride in what God clearly says is sin." Stith adds, "The bottom line is that if God defines something as sin, we do no one any favors by attempting to blur those lines. Nor will we be doing future generations any favors by obliterating barriers God has put up for our protection."¹

As far as encouraging the nation to embrace its "homosexual heritage," evangelicals are having none of it. But as to what response is necessary, appropriate, or even required of the Church, the brethren are much more a hung jury. A debate is shaping up concerning the efficacy of further discourse on same-sex "marriage benefits" now that the "barn door" is open. It is argued there might be a better time or more urgent issue on which to take a "last stand." At the least, evangelicals are loath to appear intolerant or lacking compassion for souls in sexual bondage. Following are concerns we hear, and our responses:

Why now the "marriage" concerns after decades of escalating divorce rates?

ANSWER: First, the premise of the question is flawed. It assumes the Church failed to defend marriage and moral purity at some point in time. But that is not true. The Church and many para-church organizations like *Focus on the Family* and *Families Northwest* have long stood against the relentless advance of deal-breakers like "no-fault divorce," subsidized abortion and welfare checks for "single" teenage mothers. Their efforts to strengthen the family in the face of often belligerent government agencies have been quite remarkable. Likewise for hundreds of Bible-based marriage and family counseling services and the enormously effective *Marriage Encounter* weekends launched by the Catholic Church and emulated widely among Protestant churches for more than three decades.

Familial reconciliation has also been at the heart of the resurgent men's movement exemplified by *Promise Keepers* which draws men by the tens-of-thousands to sports stadiums around the country. Jean-clad attendees hear testimonies from men whose marriages collapsed under the weight of pornography, adultery, or money matters, but were divinely reconstructed by the only ONE who consecrates matrimony.

But doesn't a "marriage" debate make the Church look petty and intolerant?

ANSWER: Without a doubt. What's new under the sun? God loves the world, but the world is at war with Him. What would persuade us to think God's work advances atop a

wave of cultural popularity or approval? Besides, it is Jesus who says marriage is worth defending. He says, “What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

Why the focus on certain sins? Isn't sin, sin?

ANSWER: Yes it is. Sin will be reckoned with on “that Day.” But certain sin evoked special mention from Jesus—such as causing little ones to stumble (Mt 18:6). Some sin appears to warrant different levels of millennial if not eternal punishment (Lk 12:46, 47) and one particular sin is so egregious in the sight of the Lord that no provision for pardon even exists (Mt 12:31).

Sin also imposes varying levels of consequences (due penalties) in the here and now. A man who brings home paper clips from the office will probably not serve time in prison, but a man who murders his boss most likely will. Both transgress the law as in “DON'T STEAL and DON'T MURDER, but one is more immediately threatening to a community than the other (for now).

The Church is warned to be on high alert regarding sexual sins. The Apostle Paul says that “Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. The *Believer's Bible Commentary* says, “Just as in the physical act there is a union of two into one, so when a person believes on the Lord Jesus Christ and is joined to Him, the believer and Christ become so united that they can henceforth be spoken of as one spirit. This is the most perfect merging of two persons that is possible...therefore those who are thus joined to the Lord should never tolerate any type of union that would be in conflict with this spiritual wedlock.”

But why elevate sodomy above other sexual sins?

ANSWER: Because the Bible does. Homosexuality is revealed as extremely contagious—capable of ensnaring a tribe, a city or a nation. Paul warns that when TRUTH is exchanged for a lie, God eventually throws His hands in the air and gives a people over to a reprobate mind, to debase their bodies and themselves. Broad acceptance of homosexuality and other sins against one's own body are indicative of a stage IV invasion of a culture. It's not just a bad sign. It's a death rattle.

But how can Christians talk about sin if they hope to share God's grace?

ANSWER: The same way Jesus did. Jesus made no concession to sin. Curiously, He spoke more about the horrors of hell than all the other Bible authors put together. Evidently, we cannot fully appreciate the enormity of salvation without first recognizing our guilt coupled by a desire to avoid banishment to a place of never-ending anguish and torment. But Jesus offers pardon for sin and bright hope for tomorrow. God's grace is very, very, GOOD NEWS!

At the moment, America is blind to the insidious nature of sexual sins because confusion has entered the Church. It is one thing for Barack Obama to say good is evil and evil is good, but quite another for the Church to stand down. In his first Inaugural to both houses of Congress George Washington cautioned that “...*the propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right which Heaven itself has ordained...*”

Rev. Bill Bates who pastors in Centralia sent this poignant thought for the day: “In my reading this morning (1Sam 11:1-12), I had a thought about our *R-71* dilemma. The people were told that to be spared by a treaty, they must have their right eye gouged out so as to bring disgrace upon Israel. Interestingly, the leaders said, “let us pray about this for seven days.” Uh, pray about having my eye gouged out? Shouldn't it be a ‘no-brainer?’ The opposition is attempting to limit our vision. Will the cost of not entering be greater than entering with the possibility of losing?”²

A good question, Pastor. We'll get back to you on that.

Rick Forcier

¹ [Gay Pride Month Not Going Over Well With Evangelicals](#), David Brody, CBN News Channel Blogs, 6/2/2009

² Rev. Bill Bates, Senior Pastor, *Destiny Christian Center*, Centralia, WA