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# The Federal Marriage Amendment: Now is the Time for Action

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**Tuesday, October 7, 2003**

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As Sorokin noted: "The reasons for this high evaluation of marriage are obvious. Marriage is a social evidence of the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and civic maturity of the individual. It involves the momentous transformation of a boy into a husband-father, and of a girl into a wife-mother with corresponding changes in their social position, privileges, and responsibilities. For a large majority of men and women, marriage is the most vital, the most intimate, and the most complete unification of body, mind, and spirit into one socially approved, indivisible 'we'."

Throughout human history, marriage has been understood as the indissoluble union of a man and a woman, exclusive of all others. Experiments in polygamy, group marriage, and cohabitation have proved disastrous throughout human experience. Marriage is the one necessary institution for the survival of civilization as we know it.

Of course, marriage has been understood as an essentially heterosexual union. The very idea that marriage could be redefined to include homosexual partnerships would be beyond the comprehension of most human beings throughout human experience. Only in recent years have western societies reached the point of moral dissolution that such a notion has become not only imaginable, but actually possible.

With homosexual marriage looming as a reality across our northern border in Canada, and with state courts in Massachusetts and New Jersey poised to rule on similar claims, we must now all recognize that the institution of marriage is gravely threatened. Marriage cannot be redefined to include homosexuality or homosexual unions. The very idea strikes at the heart of marriage as a coherent concept and will weaken and ultimately destroy this institution so central to human happiness and welfare.

Christians understand that marriage is not a human invention. The Bible reveals that God's intention in making human beings as male and female was that a man and woman should be united in the holy covenant of marriage. Within that covenant, the couple should receive all the goods and joys of marriage, along with the responsibilities of parenthood.

Marriage is a picture of covenantal faithfulness in miniature that points to the larger picture of God's covenantal faithfulness to His people. From Genesis to Revelation, Scripture provides abundant evidence of the centrality of marriage to human holiness and happiness.

As a matter of fact, the inherent sinfulness and deficiency of all other forms of sexual expression and relatedness is seen in the fact that all of these are essentially submarital. The Bible's condemnation of fornication, adultery,

homosexuality, and other sexual sins is directed towards the picture of marriage in order to demonstrate the sinfulness of those practices. Sexual perversions and illicit relationships are contrasted with the purity and holiness of marriage. The rejection of marriage is a clear sign of moral rebellion.

The modern secular worldview assumes that marriage is a human invention, the product of complex social and cultural evolution. According to this perspective, since marriage is an invented reality it can also be a transformed institution. Modern society is therefore free to make of marriage what we would want it to be, inviting the most incredible experiments in social engineering.

Those pushing for the legalization of homosexual marriage are demanding that society de-privilege heterosexual marriage and replace this stabilizing institution with a new structural form intended to normalize and give legal sanction to homosexuality. This is a breathtakingly arrogant leap of human moral rebellion.

Marriage is an institution given by God to all persons in creation. Therefore, marriage is not an issue of concern for Christians alone. Nevertheless, Christians have a special responsibility—an obligation to the institution of marriage—because we have received God’s revealed Word and are obligated to the totality of God’s revelation. Christians bear this special knowledge that marriage is about more than human happiness and our concern for marriage is rooted in far more than social conservatism.

Given the stakes in this matter, urgent action is needed. Though the Defense of Marriage Act [DOMA] was passed in 1996 and signed into law by President Bill Clinton, the Lawrence v. Texas decision by the U.S. Supreme Court this past June threatens the very underpinnings of that landmark legislation.

As Justice Antonin Scalia noted in his scathing dissent, the logic of the Lawrence decision would lead to a denial of constitutional legitimacy to the Defense of Marriage Act. This threat of action by the U.S. Supreme Court, added to the decisions expected from the courts in Massachusetts and New Jersey, demonstrates that something beyond a legislative remedy is needed.

The only lasting remedy for this situation is a constitutional amendment that would define marriage in clear and uncompromising terms, and would prevent any state from redefining marriage and thereby creating social chaos in the nation. Rep. Marilyn Musgrave (R-CO) has introduced House Joint Resolution 56, known as the “Federal Marriage Amendment” in the 108th Congress. The wording of this amendment is clear and concise: “Marriage in the United States shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman. Neither this constitution nor the constitution of any state, nor state or federal law, shall be construed to require that marital status or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon unmarried couples or groups.”

Once this constitutional amendment is in place, marriage will be defined within the Constitution itself, so that no court or legislature may redefine the institution. While this amendment will not resolve all the issues related to homosexuality in our culture, it will serve as a critical firewall in defense of civilization’s most basic unit.

At present, a clear majority of Americans support a definition of marriage similar to that found in the wording of the proposed Federal Marriage Amendment. A national poll conducted by the Wirthlin Organization and released on March 4, 2003, shows that a majority of Americans favor a constitutional amendment that would define marriage as the union of a marriage of a man and a woman. Among the important findings of this poll is the fact that overwhelming numbers of African-Americans and Hispanics support this amendment and want to preserve the institution of marriage from legal redefinition.

The passage of a constitutional amendment requires not only that the bill be approved by Congress, but also that the legislatures of 38 states ratify the proposed amendment. Clearly, the Federal Marriage Amendment has a long way to go before becoming the law of the land. It is equally clear that there is no time to waste.

Concerned Christians should contact members of Congress in order to insist that they become co-sponsors of this important legislation and give the Federal Marriage Amendment full support to passage. At the same time, we must be working at the local level and in state legislatures, preparing for the battles that will ensue state by state, until the required number of states will ratify the amendment.

As our founding fathers had planned, the process of amending the Constitution of the United States is cumbersome, expensive, and even daunting. The Federal Marriage Amendment demands the attention of every concerned Christian and will require that Christian pastors and leaders take responsibility for defining the issues and for arming Christians with the information needed to defend marriage in these times.

In the cultural chaos of postmodern America, virtually everything is up for grabs. Sexuality has become a cafeteria of earthly delights and human relationships have become the casual context of social innovation. At some point, our society will lose all moral reason and hope for recovery. The destruction of marriage must certainly serve as a luminous line in that path of destruction. The Federal Marriage Amendment demands our attention, our support, and our action.

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