

“Stand for Marriage”
Genesis 1:27; Genesis 2:24
March 2009

Most of you have seen ABC TV's Extreme Makeover: Home Edition where they tear down a house and rebuild it for a deserving family. It is so cool to follow the process and watch the family's reaction when Ty shouts: "Move that Bus!" The old dilapidated house has been demolished, and a beautiful new home has replaced it. What a heart-warming moment!

Unfortunately, there has been another Extreme Makeover happening to the American home. Homosexual activists and their allies have been very effective in promoting their extreme makeover of the American family and are pushing for recognition of same-sex relationships in our laws, schools, culture, and even in the church. They have been working overtime to tear down traditional marriage, redefine it, and replace it.

In Massachusetts, California, and Connecticut, black-robed judges have shouted: "Move that bus!" And the results have been shocking. We have witnessed the images of the so-called "Massachusetts marriages" and "San Francisco ceremonies" where two men or two women were "married" and kissed one another for the cameras. The threat to traditional marriage, to the well being of our children, and to our religious liberty from the advancing gay agenda is a real and present danger. Homosexual activists and their allies have been very effective in promoting their extreme makeover of the American family and are pushing for recognition of same-sex relationships in our laws, schools, and even in the church.

How should Christians respond? That is the subject of our time together, and the title of the message is "Stand for Marriage." Why should Christians in America, and specifically in West Virginia, stand for marriage as defined by this Book? Well I think the answer is a no-brainer, but let's consult the Scriptures, because they are the guide for faith, family, and freedom – everything in life. So as we think about taking a stand for marriage, the first thing we need to do is to re-establish the divine pattern for marriage from the word of God. The Bible establishes a fixed standard of righteousness, a fixed standard of moral absolutes, of right and wrong.

I. THE DIVINE PATTERN

What is the divine pattern, God's original intention for marriage and the home? Go back to Genesis, the book of beginnings. For example, Genesis 1:27: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." Aren't you glad God created Adam and Eve, man and woman? Thank God for the difference. In fact, the two genders were meant to complete each other physically, emotionally, and in every other way. Also, both genders are needed for a healthy home. As Dr. James Dobson notes, "More than ten thousand studies have concluded that kids do best when they are raised by mothers and fathers."¹

In Genesis 2:24, God further declares: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh." When you come to the teaching of Jesus in the NT, you find that Jesus endorsed this divine pattern. Quoting Genesis, Jesus asked Pharisees in Matt. 19:4: "Have you not read that at the beginning, the Creator made them male and female, and said: 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one

flesh?’ So they are no longer two but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let no man separate.” In both OT and NT, one man and one woman in a marriage covenant relationship for life is the divine pattern.

When a marriage follows God's design, it is good for everyone — men, women, children, the community, the country, and the world. Think about it. Every civilization in history is built upon the institution of marriage. It is the foundation. The welfare of children, the propagation of the faith, the wellbeing of society, and the orderliness of civilization are all dependent upon the stability of marriage according to the divine pattern. When this God-given pattern is undermined, the whole superstructure of society becomes unstable. Any deviation from the divine pattern invites disaster.

II. THE DECEPTIVE PERVERSION

Second, there is a deceptive perversion of the divine pattern. Hear me clearly: Any and all sexual sin outside of the marriage covenant relationship is a deceptive perversion of the divine pattern, but for the purposes of this message I want to focus on one sin. The Word of God, which does not err, is abundantly clear about homosexuality. Leviticus 18:22 says: “You are not to sleep with a man as with a woman; it is detestable.” Leviticus 20:13 says: “If a man sleeps with a man as with a woman, they have both committed an abomination...” Those are severe statements. Equally severe is God's own version of the Extreme Makeover of Sodom and Gomorrah, which were destroyed in a hail of fire and brimstone primarily because of this sin (Gen. 19). Yet while God detests it, He still loves those who are trapped in it, and even gave His Son as a sacrifice for their sin and our sin on the cross. Remember, the ground at the foot of the cross is level ground, and but for the grace of God, there go I.

Again, why is homosexuality a sin? Because it is a deceptive perversion, it is a deviation away from the divine pattern, the created order of God. Some say: “Well, that's Old Testament, but Jesus never said anything about homosexuality.” I would disagree. Jesus said in Matthew 5:17-18: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.”

Some say: “Well Christians don't restrict their diets like they did in the OT Law, why should we pay attention to restrictions against homosexuality.” It is true. We don't keep kosher. Why? Because Christ's death on the cross not only provided a way for sins to be forgiven, including the sin of homosexuality, but it also rendered obsolete the dietary, ceremonial, and sacrificial laws (see Hebrews 8:13). Yet the principles of the *moral* law remain in force. The moral law calls homosexuality an abomination. Jesus said: “I didn't come to change that.”

In fact, Jesus basically condemned homosexuality by affirming the divine pattern for marriage. In Matthew 19:4-6 and Mark 10:6-9, quoting from Genesis 1 and 2, Jesus said that marriage is between one man and one woman. So if Jesus said marriage is between one man and one woman, it follows logically that marriage cannot be between two men or two women. In affirming God's pattern for marriage, Jesus rejected the deceptive perversion of homosexuality. When you get into the letters of Paul (Romans 1:18, 26-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Timothy 1:10), Peter (2 Peter 2:6ff), and Jude (v. 7), there is even more confirmation. Homosexuality is a deceptive perversion.

III. THE DEFINITIVE PROBLEM

Third, there is a definitive problem. Homosexuals claim: "We were born this way; it is in our genes; God made us gay." They cite "gay gene" studies predominantly conducted by researchers who are homosexuals - studies that have been repudiated by credible research.² Yet these same biased and discredited studies have been widely publicized by the liberal media as true and factual. They essentially practice Joseph Goebel's Nazi philosophy of propaganda, which is basically this: tell a lie long enough and loud enough and eventually most mindless Americans will believe it.³

Hear me clearly: God did not make anyone homosexual. The Bible declares that the definitive problem is ours: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way..." (Isaiah 53:6). Every one of us has a sin nature that twists and perverts God-given desires not only toward homosexuality, but toward all sorts of sin, including sexual sins such as promiscuity, adultery, pedophilia, etc. Our sinful nature is the root of all manner of evil, but with God's help, we can choose not to give into those evil desires.

Dr. James Dobson says: "I am certain that homosexuality does not result from irresistible genetic influences, as some would have us believe."⁴ Scientifically speaking, there is no gay gene. Listen, I do not believe that God would place in your genetic code something that would destroy your immortal soul. Again, it is our sin nature and its perverted and twisted desires that people give into, just as the Bible says in Rom. 1:24-27. That's the definitive problem.

IV. THE DESTRUCTIVE PROGRAM

Fourth, there is a destructive program. While homosexuals only represent 2.9% of the total population, many have become very vocal, well organized, well funded, and highly motivated.⁵ They have used the political system, the media, movies, and even the schools to "mainstream" their lifestyle choices, and they have been extremely successful in advancing their agenda. Just consider how the attitudes have changed toward homosexuality from the previous generation.⁶

What are the goals of the radical homosexual agenda? They include universal acceptance of the gay and lesbian lifestyle, gaining special privileges and rights in the laws, "sensitivity training" of our children through public education, silencing critics in the clergy and Christian media, and securing the legal benefits of marriage and parenting for any two people of the same gender. By all accounts, homosexual activists have been marching from victory to victory in the entertainment arena, the educational arena, and the legal arena in advancing this agenda. Don't think so?

A. Entertainment Arena: Take a look at the entertainment arena. Does "Broke Back Mountain" ring a bell? What about "Will and Grace" and "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy?" What about the Logo network dedicated to gay friendly programming? Nearly every movie, nearly every television program advances rebellion against the divine pattern found in the word of God.

B. Education Arena: Take a look at the educational arena. What about books in the public school classroom such as Heather Has Two Mommies and Daddy's New Roommate? Several years ago, the conservative news magazine National Review laid out a litany of examples of homosexual indoctrination in New England public schools.

In one elementary school, a transsexual was invited into a 1st grade class to give details of his operation.⁷ In another elementary school, children were assigned to play gays in a school skit. Two girls were to hold hands and pretend to be lesbians. One boy's line was: "It's natural to be attracted to the same sex."⁸ One 9th grade High School health textbook teaches: "Testing your ability to function sexually and give pleasure to another person may be less threatening in the early teens with people of your own sex... You may come to the conclusion that growing up means rejecting the values of your parents."⁹ A Lexington, Massachusetts school "treated" their second graders to a book entitled *King and King*, which is a colorful 29-page children's book in which a prince searches for a wife, only in the end to choose another prince. The story ends with the two princes "marrying" and living "happily ever after." On the last page, the princes -- now kings -- even share a kiss.¹⁰ This was read to 7 year olds!

The strategy behind the Destructive Program of the homosexual activists and their allies is obvious. Writing in the leading homosexual magazine, *The Advocate*, lesbian author Patricia Nell Warren, said this: "It is the first fact of civilization; whoever captures the kids owns the future."¹¹

C. Legal Arena: While as many as 2 out of 3 Americas are opposed to "gay marriage,"¹² homosexual activists and their allies have looked to the Courts to further their destructive program. Take a look at their successes in the legal arena. In 2003, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the nation's remaining Sodomy laws. In 2004, the Massachusetts high court legalized same-sex "marriage." In 2008, the California and Connecticut courts followed suit. Fortunately, the people of California were able to pass a Marriage Amendment, but even the clear vote of the people last November is being challenged by the court. Now several states are considering legalizing same-sex "marriage" by a vote in their legislatures. But we have to admit that homosexual activists and their allies have gained many victories in the entertainment, educational, and legal arenas.

OK, let's just ask the question: Why not same-sex "marriage?" What damage could be done by the courts allowing two consenting adults of the same gender to join in a relationship and sanction it as "marriage?" We already know the answer to that question. Take a look at the Scandinavian countries that embraced de-facto gay marriage back in the '90s. The vast majority of couples there are choosing to simply live together instead of getting married, figuring that if marriage means *anything* then marriage means *nothing*. In Norway, there are reports of upwards of 60-80 percent of firstborn children conceived out of wedlock.¹³ The results of the Scandinavian experiment have been devastating. Do we really want that for America? For West Virginia?

Some might, say: "Well as long as I don't go to the movies, don't watch TV, don't send my kids to public schools, and make sure life revolves around the church, my family should be OK." Listen, homosexual activists won't stop at recognition, their aim is domination. Speaking of Scandinavia, Swedish Pastor Åke Green was arrested for preaching a biblical message on homosexuality.¹⁴ Apparently, a homosexual activist monitoring his message turned him in, and Sweden's hate crimes law was applied to Pastor Green's sermon, which was regarded as hate speech.

Thankfully, the Alliance Defense Fund, one of our sister organizations, came over and helped successfully defend him, but that's where Hate Crimes laws lead – to the silencing of the pulpit and of Christians. Our U.S. Congress has voted for Hate Crimes legislation, and thankfully President Bush vetoed it, but based on what we know about President Obama, he will sign it. It is a part of the

legislative priorities listed under “civil rights” on whitehouse.gov. And we may eventually see pastors under attack all across America for simply preaching biblical truth about the sin of homosexuality and the hope of escape from that destructive lifestyle.

So homosexual behavior has not only come out of the closet and into the classrooms, into the Congress, into the Courts, but it is now coming into our churches and Christian organizations demanding special recognition and rights. Where homosexual activists win legal approval, whether by court action or legislation, they often deny our full rights as Christians. Why? Because a homosexual’s so-called “civil rights” and a Christian’s freedom of conscience and speech opposing homosexuality are mutually exclusive. Something has to give.

There is a destructive program. And the same forces are at work in West Virginia. Homosexual activists and their allies have been clamoring for same-sex “marriage.” Same-sex “marriage” is closer than you think in West Virginia. And if it were declared “constitutional” by judges or voted into law by legislators, same-sex “marriage” would adversely affect the time-honored institution of marriage, your child’s education, our religious freedom, and the very foundation of our culture. Unless “we the people” get involved, the destructive program will eventually become a reality, and when they shout: “Move that Bus!”, the results will be devastating.

We’ve talked about the divine pattern, its deceptive perversion, the definitive problem, and the destructive program, the propaganda and the agenda that is being pushed on our society and on our state, but what can we do about it?

V. THE DETERMINED PLAN

We need a determined plan of action. In light of the Extreme Home Makeover that is taking place, what can we do, what should we do, what must we do?

Here are several action steps we can determine to take:

Action Step 1: Pray: We need to *pray* for God's mercy on a nation that is speeding toward Sodom, and hurtling toward Gomorrah. Pray that God's Spirit will revive a church that is worldly. Pray that God would be pleased to send a mighty sweeping revival.

But I remind you that the promises of 2 Chronicles 7:14 depend on God's people humbling themselves, seeking the face of God in prayer, and turning from sin to biblical righteousness. But it all begins with prayer. Remember what Abraham did when God told him that He was about to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah? He interceded with God for his nephew Lot and his family. And because of his intercession, judgment was delayed and Lot was delivered. Just as Abraham interceded, we need to plead with God that He might stay His hand of judgment.

See the future of America does not lie in the hands of the politicians in the Houses of Congress or the State House, the president in the White House, or the judges in the Court House, it lies with the people in God’s House - Christians who get on their knees, pray and seek God's face. Old Abraham did something the Sodomite Government wasn't able to do. He got hold of God. The need of the hour is not just enthusiasm, not just activism, but we must begin with intercession. Step number one: Pray.

Action Step 2: Practice: We need to *practice* the biblical principles for a healthy marriage as a positive witness. We need to follow the principles laid out by Paul in Ephesians 5, and of Peter in 1 Peter 3, and other passages, and build our marriages and homes on the foundation of God's word. Don't skip this one. Getting a hearing in the culture depends on our credibility. When the divorce rate among professing Christians is essentially the same as that of the world, we have little credibility with which to call the world to repentance, even if they are trying to redefine the family. Christian marriages ought to be the model for a watching world. Step number 2: Practice the biblical principles for a healthy marriage.

Action Step 3: Participate: We need to *participate* in our "government of the people, by the people, and for the people" as Abraham Lincoln described it. Now some might say: "I don't think Christians should get involved in politics." Let me ask you a question: Who created government in the first place?

Rom. 13:1-7 tells us plainly and unmistakably that God ordained the institution of government. Since God created the institution of government, would He want His people to stay out of it? No. If Christians don't "render to Caesar" (Matt. 22:21) and don't function as "salt and light" (Matt. 5:13-16) in the arena of government, then we disobey the commands of Christ and allow Satan to prevail by default. So we need to participate in the political process and impact our government as stinging salt and shining light. Here are some specific things Citizen Christians can and should do.

- **Contact your Legislators NOW:** Your local legislators need to hear from many individuals in their own districts. No organization speaking for you will have the same impact. Use email, telephone, personal visits, postcards or letters.
- **Urge them to Support the Marriage Protection Amendment Bill:** There is no need for a lengthy discussion or argument. No need for a sermon or Bible study. Just simply urge your representative and your senator to vote YES on a Marriage Protection Amendment. Make a simple request, like: "***Please support traditional marriage as a union of a man and a woman by supporting the Marriage Protection bill.***" Or "***Please resist any efforts to change the definition of marriage in West Virginia. Vote YES on the Marriage Protection bill.***"

- **Pass on the Contact Information to your Friends:**

Senate President's Office: 304-357-3210

Speaker of the House: 304-340-3210

- **Stay Informed on the Issues:** For other moral issues being debated in the state of West Virginia, visit www.FamilyPolicyWV.com. For national issues, visit www.FRC.org.

So Step 1 – Pray for God to intervene. Step 2 – Practice biblical principles for a healthy marriage. Step 3 – Participate as salt and light in our government and in our culture.

Action Step 4: Proclaim: We need to *graciously proclaim* the promise found in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11: "Do you not know that the unjust will not inherit God's kingdom? Do not be deceived: no sexually immoral people, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, homosexuals, thieves, greedy people, drunkards, revilers, or swindlers will inherit God's kingdom. Some of you were like this..." Notice that it is past

tense, and what comes next speaks of God's amazing grace: "But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." That is Good News!

Hear me – outside of prayer, the most important thing we can do as believers is to proclaim the Good News. It is ironic that those who are in the homosexual lifestyle struggle with all their might to achieve freedom from the so-called shackles of biblical morality and traditional institutions, and yet Jesus tells us that those who commit sin are "slaves to sin" (John 8:34). In trying to find freedom, they find themselves as slaves. See the Scripture teaches that genuine fulfillment and true freedom can only be experienced when we live in harmony with God's pattern. And Jesus also says: "If you hold to my teaching (that's God's pattern), you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:31-32). And He adds: "If the Son sets you free, you are free indeed" (John 8:36).

Listen, only Jesus can break the strongholds of sin and offer freedom and forgiveness and hope. For when we turn from our sins and turn to Christ, He will change our desires, He will change our passions, and He will change everything about us. Second Corinthians 5:17 says: "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; old things have passed away, and look, new things have come." And that is the promise of God we need to share with everybody, everywhere, regardless of their sin. You can be a new person in Christ Jesus!

So let us live and preach that message of the transforming power of the grace and love of God in Christ Jesus! Let's stand alongside these poor misguided and lost people trapped in Satan's snare! Let's love them out of that sinful and destructive lifestyle! Let's lead them to Jesus who can set them free! For whom the Son sets free is free indeed!

But let's also exercise our rights as Christian citizens! Speak loud and clear on the biblical and time-honored definition of marriage! Let's tell our legislators to Vote YES on a Marriage Protection Amendment! Listen, we can make the difference. Together, Christians all across West Virginia can let their voices be heard. Together, we can defend the definition of traditional marriage. Together, let's stand for God's plan for marriage! Because our future depends on it. And all of God's people said: Amen!

-END

A pastor for 20 years and a pioneer leader in the values voter movement, Dr. Kenyn Cureton, former Vice President for Convention Relations for the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, currently serves as Vice President for Church Ministries with the Family Research Council in Washington, DC.

¹ James Dobson, *Marriage Under Fire: Why We Must Win This Battle*, (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2004), 54 and endnote 49 on page 120.

² The media often cites the highly touted and yet fatally flawed and biased studies of Simon LeVay, *The Sexual Brain* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993) and Dean Hamer, *The Science of Desire* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), which were proven to be bogus by independent studies done by researchers at Yale, MIT, Columbia, Washington University School of Medicine, et al.

³ See the admission of this tactic by homosexual activists Marshall Kirk and Hunter Madsen, *After the Ball: How America Will Conquer its Fear and Hatred of Gays in the 90s* (New York: Plume/Doubleday, 1989/90), 161 et passim.

⁴ James Dobson, *Complete Marriage and Family Home Reference Guide*, (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2000), 402. See also <http://www.troubledwith.com/LoveandSex/A000001001.cfm?topic=love%20and%20sex%3A%20homosexuality>.

⁵ According to a May 2008 Hunter College report, funded by the pro-homosexual Human Rights Campaign, only 2.9% of those polled identified themselves as gay, lesbian or bi-sexual. See the full report at the following web address:

http://www.hrc.org/documents/Hunter_College_Report.pdf.

⁶ Alissa J. Rubin, "Public More Accepting of Gays, Poll Finds," *Los Angeles Times*, June 18, 2000.

⁷ Michael Chiusano and Isabel Lyman, "Parents' Rights: Educators have been waging a covert war on parents - who are starting to fight back." *National Review*, September 30, 1996.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Michael Foust, "Massachusetts 2nd-grade teacher reads class 'gay marriage' book; administrator backs her," *Baptist Press* April 20, 2006. See the article online at <http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?ID=23077>.

¹¹ Patricia Nell Warren, "Future Shock", *The Advocate*, October 3, 1995, 80, as quoted by Paul E. Rondeau, "Selling Homosexuality to America", *Regent University Law Review*, Vol. 14, No. 2, Spring 2002, at p. 470.

¹² Fred Bayles, "Gay Marriage Ban Advances," *USA Today*, 30 March, 2004, p A1.

¹³ Stanley Kurtz, "Death of Marriage in Scandinavia," *Boston Globe*, March 10, 2004, A23.

¹⁴ See the website: www.akegreen.com.