



Notes For Life

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The push to redefine marriage completely obliterates the difference between male and female. Redefining marriage means that we must embrace a false idea — that male and female are the same — interchangeable even. This does not serve a child finding his or her God-given identity, and it ignores truth and science.

– Bruce Hausknecht and Jenny Tyree, CitizenLink

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A Note from Maggie



As a current subscriber, you know that each past issue of *Notes for Life* attempted to focus on and educate readers about a specific topic within the category of life issues. This issue, however, will focus on a topic that many would say slightly deviates from the category of “life.” I would argue that, as much as any other life topic we’ve addressed, this subject deserves our attention. This issue will explore the topic of “same-sex marriage.”

It seems as if it’s in the news almost daily: this female movie star “marries” that female movie star; reports of gay protesters outside city hall in San Francisco; and activist justices who attempt to do more than interpret the law. These are just some of the ways this topic has infiltrated the media. But what do we do when this topic infiltrates our personal lives?

What do we say when friends and family share the all-too-common opinion that, “It’s only fair to give homosexual couples equal rights. Besides, how does giving gays the right to marry affect me or my heterosexual marriage?”

Or perhaps you have family members that you love and care about involved in a homosexual relationship. How do you share your belief that our Lord prohibits homosexual behavior and created marriage for the procreation of children and to be a blessing to one man and one woman?

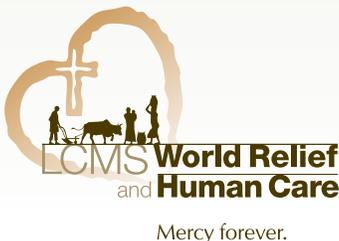
This is a topic that not only affects society around us, but the attempt to change the definition of marriage will also ultimately affect even our children through its influence on our culture. By redefining marriage from a blessing that ideally produces children and a stable society in which to rear them, into a “right” that results only from emotions and a personal need to justify a lifestyle, our entire culture suffers.

I encourage you to familiarize yourself with this topic and challenge yourself to formulate a thoughtful response to have handy when asked how you feel about this issue. You can begin by reading this issue of *Notes for Life*, which includes the wonderful interview with LCMS member, Christian author and educator Dr. Gene Edward Veith, and the article co-written by judicial analyst Bruce Hausknecht and marriage analyst Jenny Tyree.

Don’t forget that January is Respect Life month, with many special events and marches in support of life all around the country. Don’t miss LCMS Life Ministries on-site coverage from the national March for Life in Washington, D.C., on January 24, 2011 on our web page at www.lcms.org/life !

Blessings in the life and love of our Savior,

Maggie Karner
Director, Life and Health Ministries
LCMS World Relief and Human Care



Marriage and the Scriptures

By Dr. Gene Edward Veith

The Bible teaches clearly that homosexuality is a sin (Lev. 18:22, 24; Lev. 20:13; Rom. 1:26–27; 1 Tim. 1:9–10), but in today's world that's not a popular message. As Christians, we begin — and end — with the Scriptures when examining the true nature of marriage. As Dr. Gene Edward Veith explains, marriage is both a civil and a biblical institution, but our Christian understanding of marriage must be firmly rooted in God's Word, which lays out His plan for creation and redemption.



How does the Bible define marriage?

As a man and a woman being made “one flesh.” The Bible begins with a marriage (that of Adam and Eve, in the ongoing creation of the human race) and it ends with a marriage (that of Christ and the Church, in the redemption of the human race as fulfilled finally in His second coming). Thus, marriage expresses both God's created order and His plan of redemption.

How is marriage part of God's plan for creation?

God created “man” to be “male and female.” The two sexes come together to engender new life. God made all life so that it could “be fruitful and multiply.” For human beings, God did more: He created the family, so that the wife is a “helper” to her husband, and he sacrifices himself for her. Together, they can have children, raise them and care for them. A marriage creates a new family. This, in turn, is the basis for every society and culture. Marriage is, thus, an intrinsic part of creation, both of the natural order and of the social order.

How does the relationship between Christ and His bride, the church, come into play here?

The New Testament takes the mystery of marriage even further, saying that the one-flesh unity of a husband and wife is that of Christ and the Church. Wives are to submit to their husbands as the Church does to Christ, and husbands are to “give themselves up” for their wives, emulating Christ's sacrifice for the Church. Thus, the relationship of marriage is not one in which the husband lords it over or tyrannizes his wife, nor one in which the two struggle for power; rather, it is one in which both the husband and the wife deny themselves for the sake of the other. This is not always easy. It involves “bearing the cross.” But Christ, who is in marriage, takes up our cross into His.

What about the vocational aspect of marriage?

God calls us into marriage. Being a husband or a wife is, thus, a vocation. Luther taught that the family vocations are the most important and foundational of them all. God works through all vocations, and He is at work in marriage. He creates new human beings by means of husbands and wives, fathers and mothers. He also blesses, in countless ways, the husband through the wife and the wife through the husband. The purpose of every vocation is to love and serve the neighbor. In the vocation of marriage, we only have one neighbor whom we are to love and serve. The husband

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is to love and serve his wife; the wife is to love and serve her husband. Though we sin in and against marriage, wanting to be served rather than to serve, Christ — who is hidden in marriage — brings forgiveness and turns marriage into a place where we can live out our Christian faith, which bears fruit in love.

The definition of marriage has been in place since the beginning of the world, and yet in recent years, its meaning has shifted from being a stable union for procreation to being about love and, now, about civil rights. Can you comment on this shift and how we deal with it as Christians?

God does not call men to marry other men, or women to marry other women. Same-sex marriage violates creation, since two people of the same sex cannot have children. People of the same sex are not different enough to be joined as “one flesh.” It also violates redemption, since there cannot be two “Christs” or two “Churches” joining together. Same-sex marriage is impossible in its essence, despite what human beings or their governments might desire.

Some Christians think legalizing same-sex marriage is a civil issue, and it doesn’t have any effect on their personal beliefs or their personal marriages. How would you respond?

Luther insisted that marriage needs to be a civil issue. He actually challenged the church’s authority in marriage, which bound the institution in all kinds of elaborate rules. For Luther, marriage is at the basis of God’s earthly kingdom, and so, falls under primarily the jurisdiction of earthly rulers. His teachings about the two kingdoms, though, do not mean that “anything goes” in the secular realm, since God is king of both kingdoms. He rules His earthly kingdom through His created order, His moral law and human vocations. Earthly ideologies and governments that reject all three — as same-sex marriage does — cannot have validity. God gives His blessings in the earthly kingdom to nonbelievers as well as Christians. Nonbelievers, too, can get married, have children, live productive lives and contribute to the social order. It would be a grave mistake for Christians to turn marriage into something just for the Church, as if God did not give this gift to everyone.

Gene Edward Veith, Ph.D., is provost and professor of literature at Patrick Henry College, director of the Cranach Institute at Concordia Theological Seminary, and author of [The Spirituality of the Cross](#) (CPH, 2008).

Same-Sex Marriage and the World

By Bruce Hausknecht and Jenny Tyree

It’s tempting for Christians to ignore the news and rationalize that secular legal decisions like same-sex marriage can’t really matter to us personally. After all, why should we care about who gets a piece of paper that happens to be a marriage certificate, or what gay couples do in the privacy of their own homes?

As [CitizenLink](#) judicial analyst Bruce Hausknecht and marriage analyst Jenny Tyree show, legalizing gay marriage undermines the very fabric of society, and by extension, the family and God’s natural law. As members of the left- and right-hand kingdoms, we are called as Christians to challenge the evil in society, including that which the government helps sustain.



photo: isrockphoto_Miroslav Šárnicka

Why NOT gay marriage? (Isn’t marriage just a legal institution anyway?)

Marriage is often called a pre-legal institution because it preceded the human laws that recognize it. In fact, “human institution” is a better description of marriage because it has existed for thousands of years in every known civilization, regardless of religion and government system. Essentially, marriage brings the two halves of humanity, female and male, into a cooperative and sexual

relationship so that they can together raise the children born to them. By giving legal recognition to opposite-sex unions, the state gives children the best chance to be raised by their biological mom and dad. Gay marriage intentionally deprives a child of a mother or father.

Governments are not in the business of validating people's feelings of love for one another. Governments have chosen to recognize marriage because it is an asset to the state and — in the healthiest and most cost-effective ways we know — it raises the next generation of taxpayers and stand-up citizens.

How would the legalization of same-sex marriage change the institution of marriage (from a secular/societal standpoint)?

Proponents of same-sex marriage love to ask the question, “How will my same-sex marriage affect your heterosexual marriage?” And here's an answer. A redefinition of marriage in law requires the local school to teach that definition to my children and all children. (We've seen this happen in Massachusetts already.) So, if marriage is redefined to include same-sex couples, the local school will begin teaching my kindergartner that marriage can be a man and a woman, or it can be two women, or two men. This conflicts with the biblical view of marriage that I am trying to teach my child and, incidentally, my first amendment right to freedom of conscience and religion, and my fundamental constitutional right to raise my child in the way I deem best for him or her.

But even if I am not a person of faith, if I want to teach my child that marriage is a union based on biological fact of male and female complementarity, the state's redefinition of marriage infringes on my parental right to teach this biological truth to my child.

And, this gets to the core of the push to redefine marriage: It completely obliterates the difference between male and female. Redefining marriage means that we must embrace a false idea — that male and female are the same — interchangeable even. This does not serve a child finding his or her God-given identity, and it ignores truth and science.

How is legalizing gay marriage different from, say, legalizing interracial marriage?

The two laws are very different. First of all, the laws that prohibited interracial marriage were very wrong. They were written to perpetuate racism — to promote one race over another — and they kept men and women apart. The ban on these laws resulted in bringing men and women together. The legal recognition of gay marriage would have a very different effect because it would change fundamentally how marriage is defined.

A little historical perspective is useful here, since the arguments coming from same-sex marriage proponents comparing interracial marriage laws to man/woman marriage restrictions are way overblown. Bans on interracial marriage were not widespread in America at its founding. According to Wikipedia, only six of the original 13 colonies had such laws. By the time of the famous 1967 Supreme Court decision in *Loving v. Virginia* holding such laws unconstitutional, only 16 states still attempted to enforce them.

Here's the distinction between the two types of laws that makes all the difference: The push for same-sex marriage would redefine an essential component of marriage — the sexual differences and complementarity of the spouses — whereas skin color does not inhibit the sexual compatibility of a man and a woman.

Some Christians think legalizing same-sex marriage is a civil issue, and it doesn't have any effect on their personal beliefs or their personal marriages. How would you respond?

Same-Sex Marriage: Resources in print and on the Web

- LCMS Life Ministries Life Library. More than 200 articles on topics including two kingdoms, vocation and Christian ethics are at your fingertips via our new online Life Library. Many articles are lay friendly, while theological papers offer more in-depth study. All are free and easily downloadable. Visit www.lcms.org/?14380.
- Lutherans for Life. www.lutheransforlife.org
- LCMS Life Ministries' special projects coordinator Ed Szeto blogs about life issues at <http://speaking4life.com>.
- CitizenLink, a Focus on the Family affiliate, is a family advocacy organization that helps you become actively involved in social policy issues relevant to families. www.citizenlink.com.
- “Same-Sex Marriage Challenges and Responses” is an article from Stand to Reason, an organization that trains Christians to think clearly about their faith and defend their values: www.str.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=6553.
- “Christian Perspective: Homosexuality” is an individual or small-group Bible study from Concordia Publishing House that provides insight on homosexuality. www.cph.org/p-1281-christian-perspective-homosexuality.aspx?SearchTerm=202586WEB.

Consider that if same-sex marriage is legal and you are a Christian or a Muslim with an orthodox view of marriage — that it should be maintained between a man and a woman — your belief is at odds with that of the state. If you speak your belief, or teach the biblical view of marriage, your views may be considered antagonistic to the law and to those couples in a same-sex marriage.

Furthermore, it is unlikely that your views would be supported by educational or social authorities. It could become illegal to produce social science that says that children do best with biological, married parents — which is true. But if our laws define marriage as any two adults who choose to marry, then that idea of family structure is, in effect, promoted by the state.

How can Christians fight for the traditional definition of marriage?

Christians should first be concerned with the health and strength of their own marriage and supporting the marriages of family and friends. Promote and encourage biblical teaching and education through your local church. Teens in church should be taught that marriage is a good goal, the traits of a good marriage, and the traits in the opposite sex that will make a good marriage partner.

In the policy arena, the public square, Christians should know why marriage is important socially, as well as biblically, and be prepared “in season and out of season” to defend it.

Christians should be able to share with others that children thrive when raised in a home with both a mother and a father. There’s no better family structure for a child’s health, well-being and future success. Marriage is cost-effective: Taxpayers pick up the bulk of the costs required to care for children whose parents never marry or divorce. Both men and women enjoy better health, on average, and make more money than do their single peers.

In short, marriage is efficient, cost-effective, protective of women and children, and a socially responsible choice that has served civilizations for thousands of years. We really have nothing to replace it if it is redefined into meaninglessness. Future generations are best served by adults sacrificing some of their own self-interest for the eternal rewards of strong marriage and thriving family.

How can we communicate our viewpoint in a loving way to those who are pro-gay marriage?

This is a great question, and the bottom line is to lead with love as you speak the truth. As representatives of Christ, love and respect for every human being made in the image of God should be evident in words, actions and tone of voice. After that, make no apology for speaking the truth. The truth is that we have marriage for a reason — it serves the purposes of humanity — that children are conceived heterosexually (with two genders: male and female), and that it is the responsibility of the man and woman who make the baby to stay together to raise the baby.

Bruce Hausknecht, J.D. is an attorney in charge of research and analysis of legal and judicial issues related to Christians and the family for CitizenLink, a Focus on the Family affiliate. Hausknecht regularly provides legal analysis and commentary for top media outlets including the Washington Post, the Associated Press, and The Wall Street Journal.

Jenny Tyree is the marriage analyst for Focus on the Family Action. She has been involved in statewide campaign efforts to pass marriage amendments and follows the latest legislation, research and cultural trends about marriage, divorce and cohabitation and their effects on families.

In the News

Malaysia Pregnancy Center Update

By Ed Szeto, Special Projects Coordinator for LCMS Life Ministries

Illegal abortion and baby dumping continue to be an issue of concern in Malaysia. In August, members of the ruling government advocated the death penalty for men and women who choose abortion and baby dumping. Rather than supporting such a law, letters to the editor in several newspapers supported education, care and counseling for those who were facing an unplanned pregnancy.

Meanwhile, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia (ELCM) officially announced the work of the Women’s Care and

Rt. Rev. Dr. Solomon Rajah, Bishop of the the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia, Tamara Anderson, executive director of Pregnancy Resource Center in Salt Lake City, Utah, and Ed Szeto, special projects coordinator for LCMS Life Ministries, stand in front of the Women's Care and Counseling Centre in Malaysia.



Counseling Centre (WCCC) to the community in late August. But even before that, the WCCC received its first client, a 14-year-old girl named Jennifer. In July, when Jennifer was 16 weeks pregnant as a result of rape, her mother wanted her to get an illegal abortion. Instead, Jennifer sought assistance from Zion Lutheran Church in Kuala Lumpur, which directed her to the WCCC in Port Klang.

After counseling Jennifer and her mother, Pastor Sritharan and the center's director Elizabeth accompanied them to Grace Community Services (an outreach of Grace Assembly Ministries). Grace Community Services provides medical assistance and counseling for unwed mothers and women with unplanned pregnancies through shepherding homes. This is one example of how the WCCC, working with a network of church ministries, can help women in unplanned pregnancies choose life.

The next step in our continuing support of the WCCC is to provide training on the theological foundation for our work together in a life ministry and on the practical aspects of operating a pregnancy center. In December, I will be joined by Tamara Anderson, executive director of Pregnancy Resource Center in Salt Lake City, Utah, on a trip to Malaysia to visit with the managing committee, staff and volunteers. The Pregnancy Resource Center in Utah has adopted the Women's Care and Counseling Centre as a sister ministry to provide assistance when possible.

To continue your support of the ELCM's efforts to reduce illegal abortions and baby dumping in Malaysia, send donations to LCMS World Relief and Human Care and designate the funds for the Malaysia pregnancy center.

Prop 8 in Effect until December (If Not Longer)

New York—Proposition 8, a California constitutional amendment that defines marriage as between a man and a woman, was found unconstitutional on Aug. 4 by Judge Vaughn Walker. However, an appeals court granted an extension on Prop. 8 until Dec. 6 to allow time to review Walker's decision. Read the full story: <http://blogs.wsj.com/law/2010/08/17/its-official-prop-8-in-effect-until-december-if-not-longer/>

Adult Stem Cell Research Far Ahead of Embryonic

New York—A few months ago, Dr. Thomas Einhorn was treating a patient with a broken ankle that wouldn't heal, even with multiple surgeries. So he sought help from the man's own body. Four months later, the ankle was healed. Einhorn, chairman of orthopedic surgery at Boston University Medical Center, credits "adult" stem cells in the marrow injection. He tried it because of published research from France. Read the full story: www.starcitynews.com/research-adult-stem-cells-more-advanced/427

Geron: Betting the Farm on Embryonic Stem Cells

Washington—The future may be dim for academic researchers working with human embryonic stem cells after a U.S. court ruling on federal funding for stem cell research. But for California-based Geron Corp., the field is wide open. Geron has used private funding for its stem cell research for more than a decade and is preparing to test embryonic stem cells in people for the first time after getting a go-ahead from the FDA in July. Read the full story: www.msnbc.msn.com/id/38856330/

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From Our Readers

We want to hear from you! If you’ve got ideas for future issues, comments, feedback on articles you’ve read in *Notes for Life*, or news and life outreach stories from your part of the world, please let us know. Write to lifeministries@speaking4life.com with your stories, and be sure to include your name, city and state.

Coming Up

Life and Death Decisions: Practical Ethics for the Christian – What is a living will? When is it OK to refuse medical treatment? What does “Always to care, never to kill” *really* mean? Our next newsletter will take a practical look at how to make life decisions as a Christian. Not a subscriber? Don’t miss the next issue! [Subscribe now](#) to receive this free quarterly e-mail newsletter.

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