

Same sex marriage - does it threaten the traditional definition of a family?

[Family](#), [Marriage](#)



SAME SEX MARRAIGE - DOES IT THREATEN THE TRADITIONAL DEFINITION OF A FAMILY Submitted by Rory Donaghy Today, marriage is the most essential of all human relations, and stands as the most validating aspect of commitment that two individuals can undergo. The fusing together of two lives, marriage is seen as a sacred bond who's history is as old as mankind itself. In the past twenty centuries, the church and religion evolved from small cults to the most powerful empire in existence. Throughout the Middle Ages and surviving through the Renaissance and Baroque periods, the church experienced century after century of absolute ideological domination. This undeniable yet continuous presence of unmatched power brought about hundreds and hundreds of years of social structure which now many consider to be ' natural law'. According to Christian beliefs, marriage is the holy union between a man and woman with the goal to reproduce offspring. The institution of marriage crosses realms from religion to the justice system, as the vow itself brings with it 38 laws between the two adhering individuals. (EGALE 2001). This, along with its social interpretation as the unity needed for a successful family upbringing, marriage can quite easily be considered the center of society and a right that all humans should one day hope to attain. Throughout modern evolution of democratic society, the ability for minorities to attain political recognition as individuals with rights similar to any other citizen has been an ongoing battle. Keep in mind that as recent as forty years ago the African American minority battled strenuously for the reformation of civil rights and its need to reach every American citizen. In the United States of America, up until 1967 interracial marriage was considered morally heinous as well as illegal, yet after four decades of

political acceptance, a couple differing in race is hardly considered abnormal. Similarly, in the past generation the gay and lesbian population, individuals whose sexual preference is towards that of their own gender, has been struggling for their civil rights, and in the dawn of a new millennium the constitutional confines of marriage have to be reconsidered. Due to its deep religious roots as well as its extremely dominant role in society, the road to political recognition is not an easy battle for supporters of same sex marriage. Acceptance of homosexual marriage varies quite strongly throughout the globe, and is currently permitted in Belgium, Denmark, Holland, Sweden and several Canadian province as well as the state of Massachusetts. Other versions of legal marriage, (accepting the union judicially although the religious morality still lacks) exist throughout several parts of Europe including Britain, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland Hungary and Spain (Galeano. 2004). However, in more places than not, marriage between two men or two women is considered decadent in nature and holds punishments including death and torture to those found culpable. In an attempt to strive for a concluding theory in this heated debate, both negative and positive spectrums will be taken into consideration as legitimacy of the following statement will be investigated; the institutional definition of marriage is not exempt from the process of evolution and modernization, yet must be recognized as something which must change in respect to the times. The United States of America is currently considered the world's economic powerhouse, often held responsible for globalization and modernization of global markets. One of America's most defining characteristics is its democratic form of government, a style they

disseminate throughout the global political sphere. In a sense, the U. S. A. could well be considered an extremely influential candidate for changing global outlook on any particular issue. Although democracy, in nature, defends equality and human rights within the country, there is a stronger, more heavily defining characteristic to the United States, that of religion. Since its 18th century colonial conception, the U. S. has been a country developed on the principle of Christian morals, and after over two hundred years of economic, social and political development, Christian morals (especially Evangelical) are as influential as ever within the Whitehouse. Homosexuality, witnessed simply as sexual perversion among religious institutions, in turn experiences extreme difficulties in attaining any social respect among many politicians. In 1972, U. S. President Richard Nixon expressed his beliefs on homosexuality quite blatantly amongst close colleagues: " You know what happened to the Greeks? Homosexuality destroyed them! Aristotle was a homo, we all know that. So was Socrates. You know what happened to the Romans? The last six emperors were fags" (Galeano. 2004). Identifying the key opposition to the same sex marriage movement is the first step in many towards achieving change, next is pinpointing the grounds for which hostility is based. The main argument amongst those who discredit the homosexual unity movement is the substantial breach of tradition which would occur if same sex marriage was to be legalized in the States (a country whose national history posed an up most respect for tradition). The proposition of gay marriage within the U. S. could substantially threaten religious, political and social traditions within the country causing negative outcry and possible destabilization (Clarke 2001).

Religiously there stands an extremely popular bias against same sex relations, as religious individuals judge the minority simply as a band of sexually deviant sinners who are going against the will of God and are destined for hell. A Baptist preacher from Kansas recently referred to Canada as a ' sperm bank for the Satan' (Anderssen 1999) due to the nation's decision to permit same sex marriage. The idea of marriage between one man and another in itself totally opposes the Christian definition of marriage. By considering the quest for same sex marriage nothing more than a hypocritical attempt, they make the assumption that lesbians and gays, in admitting their sexual preference, are in nature adopting the idea that " the point of coming out is not to get married and have children" (Tepperman and Blain, 2006). While the religious arguments surrounding marriage suffer strong biases, more relevant negativities can be imposed regarding the issue such as the possible social repercussions of such a change in constitution. Socially, the institution of marriage is the defining element in the creation of families and central in its sociological role. Thus, any extreme diversion from this role would create situations that seem atypical to many. If given the right to wed, gays and lesbians would realistically look to develop families either by adoption, or artificial insemination of some kind. The notion of homosexual parents raising children scares conservative socialites and political elite within the U. S., of whom many believe that homosexuality in itself, is the result of insufficient upbringing as well as the lack of mother or father figures in single parent homes. There is no physical proof that children of homosexual parents are more likely to experience alternative sexual preferences, yet there are some experiences that foreshadow possible flaws

in same sex families. Discrimination amongst children is a common part of a youth's social life, and this often immature sense of discrimination is directly based on differences between children. Now at the time the vows are made, marriage is a covenant that deeply affects the two individuals in question, no one else. However, if these two decide to engage in creating a family, the children raised in these homes are now raised on a different playing field as their social colleagues, classmates and teammates. It is distinguished that social discrepancy amongst children can be as cruel as it is traumatizing, and as a result the life of any possible offspring from this homosexual unity must be taken into consideration, even if the individuals themselves don't exist at the time. Another downside considered among same sex relationships is lack of balance amongst partners. In heterosexual relationships, men are clearly witnessed as the more promiscuous of the genders. If two men are allowed to marry, then arguably the chances for their relations to end due to affair is exceedingly higher, than that of heterosexual relations who already experience soaring divorce rates. As well as promiscuity, abuse rates, an offense often regarded as a male dominated dilemma, along with the doubling up of testosterone within a unity is seen as a relationship that is more likely to undergo problems associated with spousal abuse. The negative connotations associated with gay marriage within the United States are quite apparent. Through religious ideology, social structure and political conservatism the United States of America has been holding out on the increasing trends of homosexual civil rights, more specifically the institution of marriage. On the opposite side of the spectrum, and in many instances the opposite side of the U. S. / Canadian border, the popular mainstream has

an entirely different view on the idea of same sex marriage. Canada is considered a liberal democracy whose national character differs strongly from that of its southern neighbour. Instead of a religiously based moral history, Canada seems to define itself on the importance of civil liberties and high qualities of life for citizens, underlined by policies such as free healthcare, where equality stands persistent, regardless of one's financial situation. This unconditional respect for its people is a key reason classifying Canada as a highly sought after nation, who is repeatedly shown acclaim on international levels for its open-minded domestic policy. This policy, as of 2003, includes the permitting of marriages between same-sex couples within the borders of Canada. The introduction of gay marriage within Canada can be traced back to three centuries to 1977 when a Unitarian Universalist priest married two men in Winnipeg. (Nelson 2002). Although the wedding ceremony was successful the rights of the two men were not recognized as that of a heterosexual couple. Despite discrepancies with legality matters, this early introduction to alternative marriages in Canada somewhat paved the way in the sense that same sex marriage was not viewed as a disgustingly immoral act, but instead as an act of individual freewill. Political interest regarding sexuality amongst its citizens was deemed as non existent as early as 1969 when Pierre Trudeau assured the country that " the state has no place in the bedrooms of the nation." (Kinsman, 1996). With this Canada took a sharp turn, steering away from the homophobic ideology that plagues Christian outlook on marriage reform, and showed a more neutral position from the Canadian authorities. When addressing positive aspects of the institution of gay and lesbian marriages, the lack of potential harm to

society plays a major role in its defense mechanism. Although it may undermine religious constitution of marriage, the benefits it produces, both socially and legally, will drastically change the course of many peoples' lives. This lack of any particular harm is an indication that an individual's decision to marry a member of the same sex is solely a matter of personal opinion. Many of those who support same sex marriages frequently find themselves trying to justify their opinion, while counter arguing numerous accusations against homosexual marriage reform. Many of these counter-arguments not only exemplify credibility but also provide detailed answers to often bias statements. The more popular of these bias statements include the argument that gay parents will be more likely to raise gay children or that in a gay or lesbian parented home children are lacking connection to both gender perspectives. When in reality, both these arguments are quite erroneous. Defending the notion of homosexual parents being more likely to raise homosexual children, studies have been conducted (Patterson, 1997, 2001; Blanks, 1995) concluding " no significant difference between children of same sex parents as opposed to heterosexual couples." Any legitimacy in the argument of incoherent gender perspectives is quickly compromised once the number of American families devastated by divorce is taken into account, leaving millions of children with no mother or father on a consistent basis. Joining the homosexual community itself, there are many organizations who are consistently trying to raise the bar for homosexual rights. The International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA), the idea of which was born in 1991 but applications were not passed until 1993. Other Non-Government Organizations (NGO's) such as the Gay and Lesbian Human

Rights Commission which worked internationally to improve standards and hope to ensure some sort of protection over gay people in many parts of the world where this is punishable by death. (Sanders, 1996). It is important for international recognition to take form in the nearing future, and get used to seeing same sex couples in love. Conclusive aspects shedding positive light on homosexuality and its strive for international marriage recognition is the realization that life is about finding destiny, attaining happiness, and falling in love, none of which should be based on as small an issue as sexual preference. To balance the church's loathing for gays, the argument can always be turned around; if gays are such scum, such disgusting, perverse sinners, then why did God chose to make them that way? When contrasting homosexual relations within North America we see a widely separated belief system within the United States, where religious persecutions by the church has held a tight grip on how the population reacted to homosexual marriage reforms, as opposed to Canada where we managed to stay open minded about peoples sexual preferences, and have allowed them the same rights as any other member of society. In personal opinion, I fully support same sex marriage, as I do black civil rights and women's rights. Every minority should be given an opportunity to be generally accepted by the masses, regardless of public scrutiny during the moment. My feelings on the religious condemning of gay acts a wake up call that religion was created thousands of years ago, and needs to respect the needs of evolution. In today's society there are far too many horrific injustices plaguing our world, and impairing humankind, for our leaders to waste time and money trying to oppose the sexual evolution. In time studies will be able to quantitatively back

arguments regarding gay parental family outcome, but until that time comes, we must realize that ' human behaviour is not as simple as those who believe in ' natural order' suggest". Let them fall in love and run away.

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