

The Wooddale Church position on the subject of marriage was best articulated by our Pastor Emeritus, Leith Anderson, in an article he wrote titled *Who Defines "Marriage?"* This article was published in the March 13-14, 2004 weekend edition of what was then called the Wooddale *Church News*.

Article published in Wooddale *Church News*
March 13-14, 2004

Who Defines "Marriage?"

Human history in every culture has defined marriage as the enduring and intimate relationship of a man and a woman. This definition has established the primary expression of a family. True, different cultures and chapters of history have encouraged and endorsed varying expressions of marriage but nothing like those in our generation who are proposing a redefinition. From newspaper headlines to acts of civil disobedience there is a movement gaining momentum to legalize marriage as a relationship between persons of the same gender.

The issues are many and complex. Christians have historically insisted that sexual relationships outside of marriage are immoral and unacceptable whether they are heterosexual or homosexual. Those who seek same gender marriage are seeking to legitimize sexual behavior forbidden in the Bible. One of the repeated arguments is for tolerance and the granting of the same civil rights to everyone.

Without tackling the political and legal issues, let's go to the most basic question of all – who defines marriage? As Christians, we turn to the Bible as our authority. Quoting God in Genesis 2:24 Jesus said, "Haven't you read, that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female, 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 man not separate" (Matthew 19:4-6).

Changing the definition of marriage does not change what God has said marriage is to be. Just because someone faces west and calls the sun on the horizon a "sunrise" does not change what it is. A sunset is a sunset no matter what it is called.

How should we as Christians respond to those who are trying to un-biblically redefine marriage?

- *Positively*—let us lift up and live out Christian marriage in our own relationships.
- *Prayerfully*—our first and most potent resource is to ask God to defend, uphold and strengthen marriages in America.
- *Politically*—we are privileged to exercise our rights as citizens to influence our country because "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). Individual letters and phone calls are often more influential than public demonstrations, although you may choose to attend a public rally.
- *Personally*—we must always exhibit the love of Jesus Christ to all others in our attitudes and behavior.
- *Patiently*—our generation is facing a long process of moral conflict, judicial disagreement and political haggling. Romans 12:12 gives wise spiritual advice that we "be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer."

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