

Marriage: Not open to everyone

Megan Martinez
Commentary editor

The validity of gay marriage is a hot button issue that our government is expected to decide upon soon.

But when is ever legal for the government to get involved in an issue that is primarily a question of religious beliefs?

Marriage is defined as a union between one man and one woman by religious resources such as the Bible. But isn't there supposed to be a separation between church and state?

Denying homosexuals the freedom to marry is discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. It is illegal to discriminate against people based on color, just as it is wrong to discriminate against homosexuals based on sexual orientation.

By denying homosexual couples the right to marry, we deny them the benefits that straight couples enjoy. These are more than a thousand benefits that include adoption, property rights and health care.

It is argued that gay unions would degrade the sanctity of marriage. It is believed that if homosexuals marry, the next thing that will happen is people will try to marry animals and have multiple spouses.

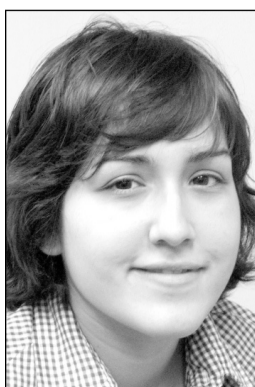
This is wrong. Saying that gay marriage would

cause degenerative chaos is unfounded. Their marriage is still between two human beings. This argument suggests that homosexuals are sub-humans, akin to animals. This is condescending and hateful.

Just because certain people are offended by two men, or two women, being married doesn't mean that it should be illegal. There are many unattractive straight couples who offend others, but it is still legal for them to marry.

It is argued that if God wanted the same gender to marry, then he would have made humans accordingly. Many states still have laws against sodomy, making homosexual sexual activity punishable.

This argument assumes that marriage is primarily for the procreation of children. If this is true, then why are those who don't want children or barren couples allowed to marry? Wouldn't a man and a woman need to prove that they could be suitable parents, not just allowing any man and woman to



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marry?

There wouldn't be as many abused and neglected children if procreation and a stable family unit were a requirement for marriage. It is arrogant to believe that a heterosexual couple could be better parents based on their sexual orientation.

Marriage is heralded as being a sacred institution that would be defiled by homosexuals. But what about straight people who get married and make a mockery out of the institution?

Why are these people allowed to marry and remarry when they are giving marriage a bad name? How can anyone know that two homosexuals are going to make a mockery of marriage?

Most importantly, if marriage is a religious issue, then why is the government trying to step in and regulate it? Church marriages are respected by the masses, so why are homosexual marriages only honored on a state to state basis, and most likely, not at all?

Discrimination has manifested itself in today's society in the issue of gay marriage. If the government is going to get involved in preventing gay marriage, then it needs to step up and regulate all types of marriage.

Either marriage should be open to everyone, and all married couples get the same rights, or marriage should only be a religious issue that receives no governmental benefits.

Is there enough 'Passion' for everyone?

A. B. Carroll
Contributing Writer

Imagine someone concerned with bringing souls to Jesus is standing outside of a building and is handing out "invitations" to heaven. But after he puts the invitation in your hand, he snatches it back.

What would make someone do such a terrible thing? Why would anyone take away the flier for the greatest eternal vacation package ever created and put you at risk of burning and frying for infinity?

Because you saw the wrong movie. Saturday night I was walking out of the Rave theatre with some friends, and a man put a church tract in my hand and asked if I had just seen the new "The Passion of the Christ" movie. I told him no, and he slipped back into my hand and took the tract out of my clutched fingers.

Because I had wasted good money on "Welcome to Mooseport," I was punished twice.

I couldn't believe what had just happened. Then, two minutes later, my suspicions were confirmed. As the audience for the "The Passion of the Christ" exited the theatre, I saw Mr. "Goodnews" stand by the door and put tracts in everyone's hands. I dived under the ropes to get in line with the "The Passion of the Christ" audience and, sure enough, he put a tract in my hand.

I again told him that I hadn't really seen that particular movie, and he took the tract from me a second time.

It seemed that the only way I was going to get into heaven that night was to see the "The Passion of the Christ" movie, but that would be impossible anytime soon since the movie is always sold out.

He should have been handing out literature to everybody. A lot of souls could have been saved that night, not just the 200 that came out to see "The Passion of the Christ."

The fact that Mr. "Goodnews" was capitalizing on the tear-stained faces that were streaming out of the theatre because he thought it would be easier to preach to someone whose emotions were in a whirlwind was wrong.

The people who weren't seeing "The Passion of the Christ" probably needed the pamphlets more than those who did see it.

Maybe Mr. "Goodnews" was trying to increase membership in his church by hitting the movie theatre instead of screaming at motorists at the intersection of Davis and Creighton Roads.

Who knows? Everyone deserves to get a shot at the big house in the sky. I ask in the future that if any person desires to stand in front of a movie theatre and try to round up more souls to bring before the big guy after seeing "The Passion of the Christ," that they not try to be selective in who gets an invitation.

Instead of only bringing only a few passes to the pearly gates, bring enough for everyone.



Courtesy of www.yahoo.com

James Caviezel portrays Jesus in the recent release, "The Passion of the Christ."

Gay marriage too much to hope for

Earl Newton
Staff Writer

First of all, let me thank all of the readers for the huge outpouring of opinions about recent articles I've written. I'll be sure to personally respond to both of you, and as they say in New York, "same to you, buddy!"

That doesn't go for you, Mom.

Today, I want to continue my new tradition of "topics likely to start fights in the parking lot." As always, I am not speaking about parking. I am not that brave.

No, I'm discussing homosexual marriage.

WAIT! Don't throw down your paper in disgust, my conservative friends. Hear me out before you decide.

My basic problem with the whole issue is that I have NO problem with the whole issue. How people decide to organize themselves into a family structure has never really concerned me.

If it did, I think I'd be organizing a "Save the Mountain People!" drive to rescue all those "Deliverance"-type folks who roam in the wooded hills, prowling around for Ned Beatty-type folks.

But let's consider it. Homosexual marriage. Probably won't happen.

Why? Not because homosexuals can't form lasting bonds of love and trust (a similar argument was used in the '60s for interracial marriages). It's because "marriage" is a religious concept that the state has adopted (emphasis on the "religious").

What I suggest is the same idea that author C.S.

Lewis suggested decades ago. That is that the state of marriage should be divided into two separate units: a religious covenant and a civil union.

The problem with this is twofold:

(1) Current proposals for civil unions are (and I'm using scientific terms here) "A-1 nutso." Hardly any of the rights and protections granted to married couples are given to "civilly united" homosexual couples. It's the worst kind of segregation: separate and unequal. ("Go to your corner and don't come out till you are straight!")

(2) It's not right to force religions to accept homosexual marriage. How can you make a religion accept something? A belief is a belief, and it violates freedom of religion to tamper with it. It's like saying Koshers meals are discriminatory against pork.

So let's make both sides happy. Let's make legal unions a necessity for all insurance and legal purposes, and keep marriage in the religious realm.

I realize that many people would call this a destruction of our moral code and the downfall of society. Well, when a homosexual couple tries to have sex (or worse, file a joint income tax!) on your



Earl Newton
Commentary

lawn, you have a right to complain. It's a free country, and that means for everyone.

I also realize this doesn't seem fair to homosexuals, because many are deeply religious and would resent being excluded from the official covenant of marriage. Well, that's a problem to take up with your religious leaders, not the president.

In the end, both sides will have to give a little if this debate is going to be resolved. And it has to be resolved, because there's a third group that's really being hurt by this debate: Politicians!

This is an election year, people. It's not fair to make all the sponges in Washington dry out, and stand up for something. We haven't trained them for that.

In short, marriage is a religious contract at heart, and it would be wrong to force any religion to accept anything. America was founded on the idea of religious freedom, and it would be shame to lose that ideal so soon.

At the same time, America was founded on the right to pursue happiness. I cannot find any reason why two caring adults should not be allowed to pursue happiness together, with all the protection the law allows. It has nothing to do with sex and everything to do with love.

Looking at it that way, I can't see how anyone can argue.

Now let's allow all those poor politicians get back to doing what they do best — working to raise the age of retirement to three days after you're dead.

Comments/questions? Send them to NewtonsLaw@southernronin.com.

Nominations for Nobel Peace Prize absurd

U-Wire
University of Pittsburgh

PITTSBURGH — Nominations for the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize have drawn to a close.

Among the nominees for the prize, to be awarded in October, include President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, for their efforts in the Iraq war.

They join such nominees as Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler and former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic, and could join winners such as Palestinian president Yasser Arafat and former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

What, exactly, are the criteria for being nominated for or awarded the Peace Prize?

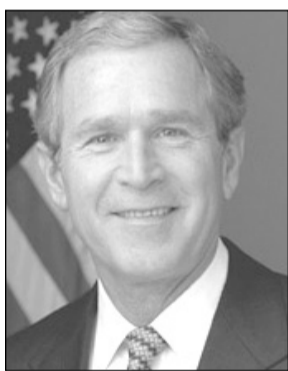
Bush and Blair were nominated

by Jan Simonsen, a member of Norway's Parliament, who said that getting rid of Saddam Hussein made the world a safer place.

It's unarguable that Hussein was a crazed dictator and that deposing him was important. However, it was an action that required violence and loss of life. It was an action that took, in a word, war.

Isn't "war" the opposite of "peace?"

How can two architects of war — regardless of whether said war was just or not, regardless of the true motives for going in — be nominat-



President Bush

ed for the highest peace prize in the land?

Some excellent examples of humanity have been awarded the prize in years past. Tenzin Gyatso, 14th Dalai Lama, won the prize. Nelson Mandela, president of the African National Congress and anti-apartheid crusader, won the prize. The

organization Doctors Without Borders won the prize.

These winners have in common a desire for peace, a value for human life and fairness above any political or partisan goals. It seems that these should be the deciding criteria in

being awarded a peace prize — not achievement of a goal that may or may not eventually lead to a hard-fought "peace," complete with great loss of human life.

These winners also share another common characteristic. The prize itself probably meant little to them — they are the kind of people who would gladly toil in obscurity to achieve their noble goals. Their actions were the true rewards for these humble, peaceful people. Don't be surprised to see the Bush camp touting the nomination in re-election advertising.

It is unlikely that Bush or Blair will take the honor — both are too steeped in controversy.

Bush has led hundreds of American troops and Iraqi soldiers and civilians to their deaths — hardly peaceful.

VOYAGER

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