

“As California goes, so goes the nation.”

Jessica Mueller, October 3, 2008

<http://reflectionsofaprincess.blogspot.com>

Beginning on September 24th many Christians and churches across California entered a season of 40 days of prayer and fasting. Why? Because these are desperate times.

THE ISSUE

On March 7, 2000, 61% of Californians voted that marriage is defined as between one man and one woman. However May 15, 2008 four activist judges overturned this vote deeming it in violation of the equal protection clause of the California Constitution. No one thought that this election year God would be moving the Church to take a stand for the truth in such a way. Now, Prop 8 is on the ballot. Prop 8 seeks to amend the California Constitution to include the phrase, “Only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California.”

There is much opposition to this proposal—from celebrities, mayors of major CA cities, the state's four largest newspapers, presidential nominee Barack Obama, U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, as well as equality and homosexual advocate groups. The time has come for the Church to unite, letting go of denominational barriers, to stand up for biblical truth in America. Where there is a moral issue, the Church has a moral obligation to represent the truth.

THE HEART & FOCUS OF THE CALL

During these 40 days, Christians are joining with TheCall in prayer and fasting for the Church and the nation. *“TheCall is committed to mobilizing people from all across America to gather together to petition God for His undeserved mercy for our nation in 12-hour solemn assemblies. [...] Our nation is in desperate need of revival and it will be only through the corporate body of Christ uniting in the place of prayer that we will find any hope in this hour.”*

RAMIFICATIONS OF A NO VOTE ON PROP 8

There is much at stake on the November ballot. The redefinition of marriage will not only affect California, as TheCall so poignantly puts it *“As California goes, so goes the nation.”* The redefining of marriage will have sweeping consequences. We have already seen this in countries and states that have redefined marriage. Pastors have been imprisoned for preaching their biblical views on homosexuality, Christian adoption agencies have shut their doors rather than compromise their beliefs, parents have been denied the right for parental notification to opt their child out when homosexual viewpoints are being taught in school, and the list goes on. This will not only affect California, but the whole country.

Here are five consequences if the vote fails, as noted by **WhatIsProp8.com**:

1. Children in public schools will have to be taught that same-sex marriage is just as good as traditional marriage.
2. Churches may be sued over their tax exempt status if they refuse to allow same-sex marriage ceremonies in their religious buildings open to the public.
3. Religious adoption agencies will be challenged by government agencies to give up their long-held right to place children only in homes with both a mother and a father.
4. Religions that sponsor private schools with married student housing may be required to provide housing for same-sex couples, even if counter to church doctrine, or risk lawsuits over tax exemptions and related benefits.
5. Ministers who preach against same-sex marriages may be sued for hate speech and risk

government fines.

WHAT THE CHURCH NEEDS TO KNOW TO RESPOND

First, the Church needs to boldly speak the truth. We must unashamedly stand for our convictions and truth as declared by God. It was set forth in the beginning, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh” (Gen. 2:24). God set apart marriage to be a holy union between one man and one woman. Even greater than the marriage of a man and a woman is what it points to—the marriage of Jesus Christ and the Church, His Bride (Ephesians 5:22-33; Hosea 2:19-20; Revelation 19:7-9).

This is a sanctifying relationship, one that is to be set apart as holy. Christ suffered and died, giving Himself up for the Church, “so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless” (Ephesians 5:26-27). The marriage relationship is to be kept pure between one man and one woman. It is not to be submitted to polygamy, homosexuality, or adultery.

Second, the Church must boldly speak the truth in love. We may have the truth. We may know the heart of the God of the universe on this matter, but if we don't speak and act in love then we are what 1 Corinthians 13 refers to as a “clanging gong or noisy cymbal”—our message is worthless (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). What does it mean, then, to speak the truth in love? It means to speak God's truth (Matthew 22:37-40; 1 John 5:3). When we are expressing the truth of God to anyone—no matter the topic at hand—we must do so in a humble, kind manner.

If Christians attempt to promote the biblical view of marriage while meaning angry, hostile, rude, and disgusted then their voice won't be heard, but their attitude will. And that attitude is nothing like Christ, “who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:6-8). Above all things, we must be Christ-like.

Third, the Church must repent of its own sin. Joe Dallas, founder of Genesis Counseling, said it best, “If there is compromised holiness within the church, the church's ability to impact the culture will be compromised.” Statistic after statistic have shown that there is no difference between the church and the world on the grounds on moral compromise (divorce, adultery, pornography, etc).

But let us not fool ourselves if we think these are the only sins the Church needs to repent. The world doesn't simply look at the divorce, adultery, and pornography of the Church, it sees those “lesser sins.” Bitterness, anger, slander, gossip, pride, fear, favoritism...do I need to go on? “We have acted very corruptly against You and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses” (Nehemiah 1:7). Before we can confront the sin of our nation, we must come face to face with our own sin.

Fourth, the Church must have a correct understanding of sin. One of the things that could hurt the Church the most in this issue is the attitude and misunderstanding of sin. All too often I've heard Christians comment about how disgusting, revolting, and unnatural homosexuality is. You can hear the disdain in their voice. The problem comes with this: to God there is no hierarchy of sin. To Him murder is no different than gossip, adultery is no different than envy, incest is no different than arrogance, and homosexuality is no different than being unloving (Romans 1:18-32).

All have sinned, all have fallen short of God's glory, all sin is punishable by death—that is the only standard (Romans 3:23; 6:23). There is no separation of sin to God. In His eyes, all sin is disgusting, revolting, and unnatural. That is why no sinner can (or will) inherit the kingdom of heaven—unless they have been washed anew by the blood of Jesus. No excuses will convince God otherwise. No behavior or life is good enough to get into heaven, only Jesus. We were once separated from Christ “having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ” (Ephesians 2:12-13). Let us not be proud in our redemption lest we forget what Jesus said, “Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little” (Luke 7:47). We are in grave danger if we think our sin is any lesser than the homosexual. We are all in need of redemption by the Magnificent Healer.

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

There are many ways to get involved even if you are not part of the Church in California. You can join us in prayer, repentance, and fasting. You can speak the truth on the biblical perspective of marriage in a loving, Christ-like manner. You can educate others on the issue and its ramifications. You can encourage others to pray, get involved, or vote.

RESOURCES

- TheCall – www.thecall.com
- I Protect Marriage – www.iprotectmarriage.com
- What is Prop 8? - <http://whatisprop8.com>
- Protect Marriage – www.protectmarriage.com
- Exodus International – www.exodus-international.org
- Responding to Pro-Gay Theology (Joe Dallas) – www.leaderu.com/jhs/dallas.html
- How Then Should We Respond? Developing an Effective Answer to the Gay Rights Movement (Joe Dallas) - [www.joedallas.com/resources/How Should We Then Respond-Article.pdf](http://www.joedallas.com/resources/How_Should_We_Then_Respond-Article.pdf)