

THE ESSENCE OF MARRIAGE IS WEDLOCK:

ELLIOTT THINKSHEETS

The metaphor-mad proposal of "same-sex 'marriage'"309 L.Eliz.Dr., Craigville, MA 02636  
Phone 508.775.8008  
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*Marriage not intending children you've heard of, but have you heard of marriage not intending wedlock? Since wedlock & marriage are synonyms, the latter would be as senseless as intending a partnership without a partnership.*

1 Here on Cape Cod, last weekend a Provincetown conference on same-sex marriage--a conference called in this national center of gay life to reinforce the present political push for same-sex marriage--ended in confusion over whether the word "marriage" should be dropped: "marriage" means "wed-lock," & a "lock" is "a means or device for fastening or restraining" (Web., on cross-ref. from "-lock" to "lock").

The problem? (1) Wedlock is to interlock sexual partners for the sake of their offspring, which same-sex "marriages" cannot have; & (2) In the legalization of their sexual dyads, homosexuals want legal rights (vis-a-vis taxes, legacies, etc.) without responsibilities: liberty without locks. Some of them even straight out said that to demand "marriage" without "wedlock" is a metaphorical ripoff or hijack. No "fastening or restraining" for them!

2 In any society, clergy function (among other ways) as **keepers of the metaphors**, & the religious institutions they are set in & over as **metaphorical repositories**. This is a stabilizing, conservative function of religion--esp. important in a destabilized time such as the end-of-the-century America, where choices (individual options) have overwhelmed bonds (social ties/duties/obligations). (In his LIFE CHANCES, Ralf Dahrendorf portrays the sickness of societies, esp. ours now, when choices/bonds get out of balance.)

3 When an Anglican bishop spoke of a "promiscuity gene," his excess of compassion & defect of science became a pub howler in Britain: to proclaim something genetic removes it from morals into medicine, from ethics into biology. On this model, one might speak--indeed many have--of a homosexual gene: if same-sex attraction is biological, only the ignorant could knock it. And how about an incest gene? And a pedophiliac gene? Or a violence gene?

We must choose. We cannot hold with both that **genetic determinism** & human dignity, for the latter requires moral gene-transcendence (responsibility for one's behavior no matter what one's genes). Even if homosexuality were proved to be "natural" (nature, not nurture), the human-dignity question would be unaffected: how is a human being to behave genitally (whatever one's makeup genetically)? In-your-face aggressive homo politics has persuaded the media & the educrats to push the idea that homosexuality is natural--therefore--equal. The public-school-teacher-training vid, "It's Elementary," claims your sexuality (sexual preference) is as natural as your skin color or ethnic background & so as morally neutral as being Jewish (12.96-1.97 Gateways Report). In late '96 & early '97, hot-lips homosex (both sexes) appeared on the tube for the first time, along with homo orgasm & (of course) same-sex marriages (for Disney/ABC involvement, see e.g. US NEWS & WORLD REPORT 20Jan97).

My approach--crediting the countervailing evidence of (1) nurture as more important than nature & (2) life-style conversions from homo to hetero (one to my personal knowledge only three days ago)--labels me (in the eyes of the politically correct pro-homo lobbies) a homophobic, antediluvian, hatemongering bigot. (Only a few years ago, I was only a homophobe: the more in-your-face the homo politics, the worse my image.)

4 On same-sex marriage & all other alleged equality-as-justice issues, the gay community's motivation & goal is **validation** of gay sex as normal: gay is OK. But there, not in biology, is the question: what behaviors does/should/shouldn't society reject by social sanction (*stigmatization*) &/or by legal sanction (*delegitimization*)? On individual freedom, societies can be too tight or too loose. The present conservative trend in America evidences that the populace considers USA '90s too loose, in need of a pat-term of restigmatizations. Dishonesty, in & beyond school, needs stronger stigmatization (ie, shaming devices, including phrases of disapproval). So also child abuse

(excessive physical/psychic force, pederasty, incest, "adult" entertainment available to children, [some would include, but not I] abortion), drug-pushing, church-&state-sponsored gambling, conscienceless capitalism (bottom-line myopia), unrestrained (environment-disdainful) "development," "fact"-myopic scientism (the tyranny of the scientific method as the only gate of knowledge), offenses against democratic dialog, offenses against educational processes (such as classroom disruption), incivility (disdainful behavior toward others), hate-acts (Parade 23Feb97: "We won't tolerate hate").

5 Metaphorizing a reality weakens the reality: "God" treated as an ungendered metaphor weakens the biblical God-idea, & "marriage" extended from hetero to homo weakens the historic marriage-idea. Homos may room together at Oberlin College, so unmarried heteros are pressing the administration to extend the same privilege to them.

6 Pastor-scholar James L. Haddix (All Souls Congregational Church, Bangor ME) published (Jan.97) a well-researched & well-argued sermon series titled "Christian Marriage: A Sermon Series including a discussion of the current debate on Same Sex unions" (a debate current in the United Church of Christ). He documents the shabby scholarship purporting to give biblical support to normalizing homosexuality (eg, Walter Wink [93ff], Jn. Boswell's CHRISTIANITY, SOCIAL TOLERANCE, AND HOMOSEXUALITY [49], Robin Scrogg's THE NEW TESTAMENT AND HOMOSEXUALITY [49]) providing allegedly strong but actually flimsy support for successive General Synod directives & national-office publications. (81: "Synod is neither representative of the churches nor carried out on a human scale. It is a propaganda rally and a captive tool of an ideological elite within the church." Yet by 1986, "the UCC had already moved far down the road to forcing its churches to accept its pronouncements....Issues of homosexuality and same gender marriage are certainly at the heart of the UCC's present institutional life," many abandoning the authority of Scripture (favored by Wolfhart Pannenberg, REVELATION AND HOMOSEXUAL EXPERIENCE, 37) in favor of the Bible as merely a "'foundational document'" (79). Pannenberg, *ibid*: "Those who urge the church to change the norm of its teaching on this matter must know that they are promoting schism. If a church were to let itself be pushed to the point where it ceased to treat homosexual activity as a departure from the biblical norm, and recognized homosexual unions as...equivalent to marriage, such a church would stand no longer on biblical ground but against the unequivocal witness of Scripture. A church that took this step would cease to be the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church."

But (80): "I believe that the defining niche for the UCC, said our President [Paul Sherry], will be that we will be known as a church for gays and lesbians and for ethnics. [Fn.:] I am a member of the Historical Council [of the UCC] and was sitting at President Sherry's immediate left hand when he made this remark....The UCC in its current theological poverty and ideological captivity, is moving toward a sad and isolated sectarianism."

7 When the Bible is no longer authoritative but only "foundational" (ie, the launching pad), religiomoral thinking on any subject is on a Bible-unguided **trajectory**, moving ever farther from Scripture's solar system. When, further, the launching pad is not level (ie, the biblical scholarship sound), the trajectory is amiss from the start. UCC publications on sexuality (as well as on worship, THE NEW CENTURY HYMNAL being less biblical than the BOOK OF WORSHIP) illustrate this sad truth. The 1977 "The UCC Preliminary Study on Human Sexuality" (Haddix.43ff: "puerile," & "clearly intended to relativize and trivialize the Bible"). The study became the official UCC position, & dialog was discouraged. In the culture, consciousness-raising segued into the "rights" explosion, so (since UCC mirrors developments in the secular culture) one could not be surprised at the 3 Nov 96 UCBHM Director's "Resolution on Equal Marriage *Rights* [italics mine] for Same Gender Couples," nor a ditto document 13 days later by the Directorate of the UCC Office for Church in Society (Haddix.35,53ff). The rights of gays, yes: what about the rights of society & of tradition (a hermeneutics of consent [Peter Stuhlmacher] & of trust [Abraham, Ro.4] having priority over a hermeneutics of suspicion)?....Haddix has extensive appendixes, including Max L. Stackhouse's splendid "Thirty-eight Theses on Christian Social Ethics and Sexuality with Particular Reference to Issues Posed by Gay and Lesbian Advocates in Church-Related Institutions."