

WHEN CHRIST AND CULTURE COLLIDE

(The Case for Equipping Capable Defenders of the Faith)

by

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Just last week, I was informed of the home-going of one of our faithful prayer warriors, Bernice Gardner, who lived in Topeka, KS. Bernice was a personal friend whom I had known for 54 years. She was 95, and, along with my Mom and Dad, Bob and Pearl Nicholas who went to be with the Lord in 2000 and 2005, prayed for me, my family, my ministries and especially for Shasta Bible College and Graduate School. Bernice's mind was incredible. She was a gifted, highly effective and much loved public school math teacher, who was comfortable teaching complex subjects like Calculus and Trigonometry. She was also an astute student of politics, and as a Biblically knowledgeable conservative, she viewed life through the prism of Scriptural precepts and was increasingly concerned over the moral, educational and spiritual decline in America. She was seldom fooled by the machinations of so-called "progressive" (liberal) politicians, and her Midwestern values coupled with plain common sense enabled her to see through the "spin" and mount a Biblical and logical defense.

As I penned a tribute to Bernice along with a letter of condolence to her family, I was impressed anew with the need for today's Christian college-age students to be as aware and insightful as Bernice. They need to think not just critically, but Biblically. As the cultural attacks against Christians and their Biblical values intensify, students MUST be equipped to refute and see through the outright lies and misrepresentations of God's Word by so called "religious" and even compromising "evangelical" scholars who have caved to the morally crumbling culture and allowed themselves to be "shaped into the world's mold" (something we are warned NOT to do in Rom. 12:2). For example, a June 6, 2013 Huffington Post (AOL) news article "*Biblical Marriage Not Simply Defined as One Man, One Woman,*" cites three "religious scholars" from three Iowa Universities, Hector Avalos, Robert R. Cargill and Kenneth Atkinson, who say ". . . despite popular opinion, the Bible does not simply define marriage as between one man and one woman." These scholars ridicule those who appeal to Biblical precepts in opposing "marriage equality" (same-sex marriage), and pedantically conclude that ". . . such appeals often reflect a lack of biblical literacy" on the part of those who use that "complex collection of texts as an authority to enact modern social policy." Can the average college student repudiate that kind of interpretive bias and twisted logic? Most cannot, because their knowledge of Scripture is usually inadequate and they have never been taught the principles of Biblical interpretation.

But thankfully, our students at Shasta Bible College & Graduate School can! Why? Because in addition to studying the Bible, they learn to "*accurately handle the Word of truth.*" They learn what the Bible actually teaches from a literal, historical, grammatical perspective; as well as the context in which it is taught. They understand that marriage is rooted in God's purposes at creation. That purpose is revealed to us in Genesis 1:28: "*Be fruitful and multiply and fill the*

earth,” They know the fulfillment of this God-given directive requires the union of a man and a woman: In Biblical terms, Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve, or Eve and Genevieve. They understand that prior to the entrance of sin in the Fall, Genesis 2:18-24 clearly reveals that woman was created to be a *“suitable helper”* for Adam. They are aware that this Gen. 2 passage, which was cited by Jesus Christ in Matt. 19:5, tells us, *“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.”* Common sense tells them that anatomically, it is impossible to become “one flesh” in a homosexual or lesbian relationship or a same-sex marriage. Not only do the reproductive parts not fit, the alternative same-sex practices facilitate the spread of STD’s including HPV and HIV. They understand that the explanation given by Christ, Himself, in answering the Pharisees who tested him with the question, *“Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?”* was based upon this historical Genesis passage, giving it Divine legitimacy. Furthermore, Christ concluded his answer with the command, *“What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate”* (Matt. 19:6). Then, in further attempting to trap Jesus, the Pharisees asked, *“Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate of divorce and send her away (vs. 7)?”* Jesus’ answer in vs.8-9 says it all: *“Because of the hardness of your heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman, commits adultery.”*

In their attempt to legitimize same-sex marriage, the Iowa “religious scholars” say that the Bible’s definition of marriage can be confusing and contradictory based upon “the religious book’s stance on Polygamy.” But Shasta Bible College & Graduate School students learn that coupled with Christ’s statement: “. . . **but from the beginning it was not this way,**” God’s original plan for marriage (prior to the entrance of sin) was a permanent, monogamous relationship between a man and a woman. Polygamy was never God’s plan and the “religious scholars” appeal to polygamy is simply a straw-man argument to make room for other alternative forms of marriage, specifically same-sex marriage. God’s design for marriage as a permanent, monogamous relationship between a man and a woman is clearly reinforced in 1 Cor. 7:2 *“But because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband.”* It is worthy of note that both “wife” and “husband” in this passage are singular, not plural. Additionally, the Apostle Paul clarifies the permanent, nature of the marriage relationship in vs. 10-11: *“But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband (but if she does leave, she must remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not divorce his wife.”* Eph. 5:22-33 further amplifies the husband’s responsibility to his wife and the wife’s responsibility to her husband. The same is true of the Apostle Peter in 1 Pet. 3:1-7. Never is there a hint or remote possibility that Apostles Paul and Peter are speaking of same-sex relationships. That would be inconsistent with what both Paul and Peter say elsewhere because both Apostles decry the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah (Rom. 9:29; 2 Pet. 2:6-10). Also, the Apostle Paul graphically condemns same-sex relationships in Rom. 1:26-27: *“For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.”*

The deceptive, dishonest scholarship of the religious same-sex proponents is already impacting the evangelical church. Jack Rogers, former Professor of Philosophical Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary (now Prof. Emeritus at San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Anselmo, CA) advocates welcoming practicing lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transsexuals as full and equal members in the church. And he's not the only one. Emergent Church superstar, Former pastor of the Mars Hill Bible church, Rob Bell, whose book, *Love Wins*, challenges traditional teachings on a literal, eternal hell and belief in Jesus Christ being necessary for heaven, is now actively defending homosexuality and same-sex marriage, saying that he does not see same-sex relationships as destructive or evil. Then British *Evangelical* leader, Steve Chalke, earlier this year, shocked *evangelicals* around the world when he openly *endorsed gay marriage*. So there is a growing trend among some "so called" evangelicals to accommodate the message to fit the culture. This is a far cry from what the late 20th Century apologist, Dr. Francis Schaeffer, advocated 35 years ago. Schaeffer wisely proclaimed: *"Our task is not to bend the Bible to fit the culture, but to bend the culture to fit the Bible."*

I can assure you that we at Shasta Bible College & Graduate School are unequivocally committed to Schaeffer's perspective. While we know that the Holy Spirit must do His work of regeneration in individual hearts for the culture to be "bent," accommodation of Biblical truth to science, sociology, psychology, contemporary morality, ethical relativism, philosophy or any other discipline that seeks to elevate itself above God's inspired, inerrant Word does not and will not happen at SBC&GS. Rather, our students will be equipped to understand what they believe and why they believe it. They will be taught that Scriptural truth is relevant to every culture, every age, every academic discipline, and is sufficient for life and ministry. They will be taught that Biblical absolutes are not just descriptive of the times in which they were written, but rather prescriptive for all time. Psalm 119:89 confirms this: *"Forever O Lord Thy Word is settled in heaven."* Seeing through the ecclesiastical and cultural "spin" of heretical and apostate church leaders is not always easy, but essential. However, it cannot be done without an adequate working knowledge of God's Word. And that is precisely what our students receive at Shasta Bible College & Graduate School.

Let me emphasize once again how critical it is that institutions holding uncompromisingly to God's inspired Word be adequately supported so that the standard of Biblical truth will continue to be lifted high. Especially in these days when so many are capitulating to the prevailing politically correct cultural trends.

Thank you; again, for the strategic role you play in supporting Shasta Bible College & Graduate School with your prayers and tax-deductable gifts.

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