



Marriage, the Bible, and the CGGC

Dear brothers and sisters across the Churches of God, General Conference,

Last week (May 9) President Obama made the following statement to Robin Roberts of ABC News. "I've just concluded that for me personally it is important for me to go ahead and affirm that I think same-sex couples should be able to get married." His comment followed similar statements by the vice-president and other top executive department personnel. The president noted that he and the first lady "are both practicing Christians and obviously this position may be considered to put us at odds with the views of others but, you know, when we think about our faith, the thing at root that we think about is, not only Christ sacrificing himself on our behalf, but it's also the Golden Rule, you know, treat others the way you would want to be treated."

The president's opinion is just that, nothing more. He wields great influence in public opinion, and sadly many will accept his view as their own. President Obama invokes the Golden Rule and Christ's sacrifice as a justification for his support of same-sex marriage. The Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12) is not an endorsement of a "live and let live" philosophy or a rationale permitting ungodly choices. Certainly the followers of Jesus need to treat all people generously and graciously, but that does not include encouraging or promoting lifestyle choices contrary to direct biblical teaching. Both the Old and New Testament clearly condemn same-sex relationships (Leviticus 20, Romans 1:24-32).

President Obama is also mistaken in his understanding of Christ's sacrifice. It's true that Jesus did not come to condemn (John 3:17), but to save lost mankind (John 3:16). Through his death at Calvary he redeems everyone who turns to him (Joel 2:32, Romans 10:13). He didn't die to whitewash our sins so we could continue in them, but rather to free us from them. He never endorsed personal choices that contradict biblical teaching, quite the contrary. He told the woman caught in adultery, "Neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin" (John 8:11). Jesus' sacrifice demonstrates God's love for the world and invites obedience to God's will. His sacrificial death does not endorse an anything-goes lifestyle, living however we want. Quite the opposite is true.

The Churches of God, General Conference made its position on this issue of same-sex marriage perfectly clear at its 45th triennial session in 1986. Basically the CGGC does not, nor can it, affirm same-sex marriage. Based on the scriptures, the CGGC believes and teaches "outside monogamous heterosexual marriage there can be no biblically moral expression of human sexuality." No matter what secular society, public figures, or even some religious leaders may say, the CGGC believes same-sex marriage to be contrary to the word and will of God. This position is more fully expressed in the attached resolution and further elaborated in the CGGC publication *Reaching Beyond Ourselves* (1988), which is available for purchase through the CGGC office in Findlay.

As American culture becomes increasingly humanistic, the Church more and more needs to be salt and light. Society seems to be moving in the direction of legalizing same-sex unions, but the CGGC must be true to its convictions and uphold God's divine design for human sexuality. It cannot endorse same-sex unions, but in the spirit of Jesus needs to love the sinner when addressing the sin.

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