

# Scripture and Marriage Equality: Resources

2006 Colloquy resource materials



Pursuing Equality:

– Dr. Stephen D. Jones\*

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We are going to Olympia as Religious Leaders and Members of Congregations to support marriage equality for all couples and to support legislation to prohibit discrimination in Washington State based on sexual orientation.

This is a justice issue, plain and simple. It compares most obviously to anti-miscegenation laws that once outlawed inter-racial marriage. Many felt that allowing couples of different races to marry would challenge the foundation of marriage. It hasn't.

There are over 1300 federal benefits and over 300 state benefits automatically granted to heterosexual couples that are automatically withheld from homosexual couples. No legal agreement could be broad enough to bring all those rights up to the same standards. This places an unnecessary and unconstitutional burden on same sex couples.

Same sex couples are not a threat to opposite sex couples. We do not have to live in different worlds. Much can be gained by our attempting to strengthen others' relationships, regardless of orientation. Many of the issues, joys and challenges faced by couples are the same, regardless of whether they are a same-sex or opposite-sex couple. Homosexual couples don't wish to be a cause; they don't desire any harm to heterosexual couples. They just want equal rights.

As [organized religions], we have railed against promiscuity and casual sexual relationships. The paramount issue here is monogamy. We have couples who want to make life-long vows of love and support. Will we as a society encourage them or discourage them? That is the real question.

Every effort to maintain "separate but equal" rights in our country has failed miserably. We could advocate for "civil unions" for homosexual couples and "marriage" for heterosexual couples, but the rights would never be equal. No one is trying to force congregations to accept homosexual couples. That isn't the issue. The issue is whether our government will discriminate against some couples and offer preferential treatment to others. This is un-American. Marriage offers many legal and civil rights, and it must be made available on the same basis to all adult couples who seek it.

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