Same-Sex Marriage

**Gay ‘marriage’ in medieval Europe: Same-sex unions aren’t a recent invention. Until the 13th century, male-bonding ceremonies were common in churches across the Mediterranean. Apart from the couples’ gender, these events were almost indistinguishable from other marriages of the era. Twelfth-century liturgies for same-sex unions –also known as “spiritual brotherhoods” – included the recital of marriage prayers, the joining of hands at the altar, and a ceremonial kiss. Some historians believe these unions were merely a way to seal alliances and business deals. But Eric Berkowitz, author of Sex and Punishment, says it is “difficult to believe that these rituals did not contemplate erotic contact. In fact, it was the sex between the men involved that later caused same-sex unions to be banned.” That happened in 1306, when the Byzantine Emperor Andronicus II declared such ceremonies, along with sorcery and incest, to be unchristian. *(The Week magazine, June 8, 2012)***

**Buenos Aires, Argentina: Gay marriage legalized: After a stormy Senate debate, Argentina this week became the first Latin American country to legalize gay marriage nationwide. The bill, backed by President Christina Fernandez de Kirchner’s government, was approved by a vote of 33-27 after 15 hours of impassioned speeches on both sides by the mostly Catholic lawmakers. Ahead of the vote, Catholic Church leaders had declared a “war on God” over the legislation, condemning priests and politicians who supported gay marriage. Argentine business leaders, though, welcomed the law, saying it would increase gay tourism. “From today onward,” said Argentine Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender federation, “Argentina is a more just and democratic country.” *(The Week magazine, July 30, 2010)***

**Following Argentina’s legalization of gay marriage last week, 250 million people worldwide now live in jurisdictions that recognize gay marriage. Same-sex couples can marry in Buenos Aires; Mexico City; Pretoria, South Africa; and Ames, Iowa – but not in San Francisco. *(Fivethirtyeight.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, July 30, 2010)***

**Why blacks still oppose gay marriage: Of all ethnic and racial groups, said William Saletan, African-Americans are the most hostile toward gay marriage. Exit polls show that about 70 percent of blacks voted in favor of Proposition 8 in California, which amends the state’s constitution to ban same-sex marriages, and similar patterns held true in Florida and other states. In fact, blacks are the only group among whom support for gay rights and gay marriage has been falling in recent years – a fact that pains gay-rights advocates, who often compare their struggle to that of blacks during the civil-rights era. But it’s that very comparison, apparently, that is driving blacks into the anti-gay marriage camp. “They think sexual orientation is different from race,” and polls show that only 15 percent of African-Americans think homosexuality is inborn. Among whites, support for gay equality – and gay marriage – has been rising rapidly, as people accept the scientific evidence that homosexuality has biological origins: If people are born gay, why punish them? In the years to come, as the evidence mounts, blacks, too, will accept “that being gay is a lot like being black.” When that happens, the battle over gay marriage will essentially be over. *(The Week magazine, November 28, 2008)***

**Sixteen months after leaving the White House, former First Lady Laura Bush says she supports gay marriage and that its legalization is inevitable. “When couples are committed to each other and love each other, they ought to have the same sort of rights that everyone has,” said Bush, whose husband endorsed a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage in every state. *(CNN.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 28, 2010)***

**About 11,000 same-sex couples were married in California in the first three months that gay marriage was legal there – more such marriages than have occurred in four years of same-sex marriage in Massachusetts, according to UCLA’s Williams Institute. *(Los Angeles Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, October 17, 2008)***

**Conservative leaders voiced dismay Wednesday at news that Mary Cheney, the lesbian daughter of Dick Cheney, is pregnant. Meanwhile, a gay-rights group said the vice president faces “a lifetime of sleepless nights” for serving in an administration that has opposed recognition of same-sex couples. *(Rocky Mountain News, December 7, 2006)***

**A total of 21 countries now have legalized same-sex marriage nationwide, including Argentina, Denmark, Ireland, Spain, and Sweden. *(Vox.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, July 10, 2015)***

Two thirds of the 150,000 homosexual couples who have gotten married or had other civil recognition of their relationships in the U.S. have been lesbians. *(NationalReview.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 25, 2012)*

**Same-sex relationships are criminalized in 76 countries, according to the United Nations. Almost all are in Africa and the Middle East. *(Slate.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, December 20, 2013)***

**The legalization of same-sex marriage nationwide could create an economic boom in the wedding industry worth as much as $2.6 billion over the next three years, according to the Williams Institute, a think tank at the UCLA School of Law. That could lead to $185 million in state and local tax revenue -- and support some 13,000 jobs. *(Oz.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, July 10, 2015)***

**What is good about marriage for heterosexuals is also good for homosexuals. The fundamental nature of marriage as an ideal is a committed, loving, and sexually exclusive relationship between two adult people. If such a relationship between a man and woman is good for them and good for society, then the burden of proof is upon those who oppose that union between two men or between two women. In other words, if love, commitment, and sexual exclusivity are good for heterosexuals, why are those things not good for homosexuals? *(James Gaither, in Contact magazine)***

**For the first time, two male graduates of West Point were married at the military academy's chapel last weekend. The happy couple are Larry Choate III, class of 2009, and Daniel Lennox, class of 2007. *(TheAtlantic.com, as it appeared The Week magazine, November 15, 2013)***

**For the first time in history, the average American is now more likely to live in a state that recognizes same-sex marriage than one that doesn't. Some 44 percent of Americans live in states where gay couples can marry, and 54 percent are in jurisdictions that legally recognize a gay couples' relationships. *(WashingtonPost.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, August 1, 2014)***

**3,000: The number of certificates filed by same-sex couples since the Massachusetts high court ruled a year ago that gays have the right to marry in the state. State lawmakers have a new gay-marriage ban in the works that would conform with the court’s ruling by allowing civil unions. It won approval this year, but must be approved in a consecutive session before it’s submitted to voters in 2006. *(Associated Press, as it appeared in Rocky Mountain News, November 19, 2004)***

**Of the 5,400 gay couples who have married in Massachusetts in the past year, two-thirds have been women. *(The New York Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 20, 2005)***

**Obama “evolves” on gay marriage: President Obama declared his personal support for gay marriage for the first time this week, after he came under mounting pressure to take a stand. The president, who had previously described his views on same-sex marriages as “evolving,” told ABC News, “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.” Obama said, however, that he still believes states should decide the issue on their own. Earlier in the week, Vice President Joe Biden told an interviewer he was “absolutely comfortable” with gay marriage – bringing a new wave of criticism on the president for lacking political courage. Mitt Romney, the president’s GOP rival, reaffirmed his own opposition to gay marriage. “I do not favor marriage between people of the same gender,” he said, “and I do not favor civil unions if they are identical to marriage other than by name.” *(The Week magazine, May 18, 2012)***

**When rights clash with religion: Society is ready for gay marriage, even if the church isn’t, said Madrid’s El Pais in an editorial. When Congress passed a bill that opened up the institution of marriage to homosexual couples, there was a predictable outcry from religious conservatives. But the dissent is no stronger than was “the opposition to divorce in its day, and now all of society accepts divorce as normal.” We can expect the same evolution here. One could argue, as some conservative parties are now doing, that the legislature should have had a longer political debate on the issue. Perhaps a drawn-out discussion would have been more politically palatable, but the end result would have been the same. “Spanish society has already made up its mind”; poll after poll shows a strong majority in favor of extending full legal rights to homosexual couples. The Catholic Church is free to condemn the law – in fact, the new pope already has. And the church can certainly refuse gays its religious blessing. But it can have no say in marriage as a civil contract. With the new law, Spain demonstrates once and for all that “a religious belief is not a valid legal argument.” *(The Week magazine, May 6, 2005)***

**Culminating one of the most rapid cultural changes in U.S. history, the Supreme Court last week struck down state bans on same-sex marriage as unconstitutional making gay unions legal in all 50 states. The historic decision set off jubilant celebrations across the country, as gay couples rushed to secure marriage licenses and the rainbow colors of the gay pride movement were projected into the White House. *(The Week magazine, July 10, 2015)***

**Same-sex marriage: Washington became the seventh state in the country to legalize same-sex marriage this week, striking down a state law limiting marriage to one man and one woman. Gov. Chris Gregoire, a Catholic Democrat who declared her support for same-sex marriage in January 2011, signed the measure into law less than a week after it won approval from state lawmakers. This is “a day historians will mark as a milestone for equal rights,” she said. “I’m proud of who and what we are as a state.” Same-sex couples in Washington won’t be able to marry until June 7, when the law takes effect, but opponents are already organizing a repeal effort, announcing that they will collect signatures for a referendum to be placed on the ballot in November. “I think in the end, people are going to preserve marriage,” said Joe Fuiten, senior pastor at Cedar Park church, a proponent of the referendum. *(The Week magazine, February 24, 2012)***

**Hallmark has rolled out a line of wedding cards for same-sex marriages, illustrated with intertwined flowers, overlapping hearts, or twin tuxedos. The cards omit the words “bride” and “groom,” and bear neutral messages such as “Two hearts, One promise,” making them suitable to commitment ceremonies as well as weddings. *(Associated Press, as it appeared in The Week magazine, September 5, 2008)***

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