



Breaking News from New York State on Same Sex Marriage

December 3, 2009

The New York Times reported yesterday that the New York State Senate, by a vote of 38-24, defeated a bill that would have legalized same-sex marriage. The Governor of New York favored the bill and would have signed it if it had passed. The decision is described by at least one commentator as a "crushing vote" that spells doom to this movement.

Life is filled with surprises. Just when we think the tide is against a biblical definition of marriage, another state that had been thought to be a sure supporter declines to take the step.

The November decision in Maine was another pleasant confirmation of biblical marriage, when the people overturned a decision by the state legislature. This Wednesday's encouragement was that a legislative body itself made the decision.

To date, it has been state courts and legislatures that have decided -- essentially by fiat -- that same sex marriage will be acceptable in their state. But in every case where the people have had a voice, they have voted a resounding "no" to changing the traditional definition of marriage. In some cases (Maine & California, for example), decisions by elite bodies have been overturned by referenda. The District of Columbia refused a request to let the people decide, and its city council proceeded to pass a law on December 1st that dictates a rather draconian law in favor of same sex marriage.

Most states in the US have adopted laws that maintain marriage as a union between a man and a woman, including laws that do not recognize same sex marriages performed in other states. Only a tiny handful of states allow same sex marriage. In each case, the decision has been made by courts or legislatures, without consulting the will of the people.

Denominations on the same track

Last summer, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) took [an action](#) similar to the rogue courts and legislatures of our country and decided the issue of same sex marriage by fiat.

The Presbyterian Church (USA) cannot legitimately act without the will of the people. Because we have a representative form of government, decisions like this, which would change our constitution, must be ratified by at least a majority of our presbyteries.

Our highest legislative body, the General Assembly, has on several occasions acted with the intent to normalize the practice of homosexuality. Each time our presbyteries have said "no."

You can make the difference in the PC(USA) at the July 2010 General Assembly

We will face the challenge again next summer at the General Assembly in Minneapolis. That General Assembly will be asked to change the definition of marriage to "two persons," and to approve the ordination of persons in unrepentant homosexual practice. Clearly, the people do not want this to happen.

We in The Presbyterian Coalition are already at work to resist these efforts. Both before and during the G.A., we will be hard at work with commissioners and overture advocates from presbyteries for an

outcome that upholds the biblical and constitutional affirmations related to marriage, to sexual practice, and to Christian holiness. We do not want to see our denomination become a leader in denying what it means to live in obedience to Scripture and our Lord Jesus Christ.

How you can help

Let's rejoice that the decision by the New York State Senate retains barriers to immorality that benefit both homosexual persons and society as a whole. Let us also work toward godly outcomes at the next General Assembly, including movement back to biblical faithfulness.

You can help by praying for that. You can help by sending up an overture to General Assembly that gives commissioners opportunity to take a positive action. A good example is an overture from the Presbytery of New Covenant. Your presbytery can concur with that overture and send an overture advocate to G.A. to speak in support of a biblical understanding of marriage.

Your financial contributions to The Presbyterian Coalition help too. We'll be there working with you and on your behalf. If you oppose these efforts to change the definition of marriage and to normalize sexual behavior that Scripture opposes, please be generous in supporting the work of the Presbyterian Coalition.

In Christ,

Terry Schlossberg, Renewal Advisor

