



Gays Don't Threaten MY Marriage, Thank You

by Eric Fried Forum Correspondent

The recent Massachusetts Supreme Court decision legalizing gay marriage has put the issue squarely in the political crosshairs for the 2004 election. Conservative strategists worried about the quagmire in Iraq and the so-called economic recovery in which people are still being laid off believe they have found their hot-button issue to mobilize their base and divide the Democratic electorate. Once-libertarian-leaning Colorado has become the epicenter of reaction to advancing social acceptance of homosexuality, with local politicians including Congresswoman Musgrave and Senator Allard introducing legislation for a "Defense of Marriage" amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

I am sorry to hear that Mrs. Musgrave's marriage is so fragile that it may collapse if two men or women are allowed to marry each other. Personally, my wife and I have been together going on 25 years, and while there are many challenges that come with the territory, gay marriage is not even on the radar screen. If gays are allowed to marry it will not threaten my marriage in any way, shape or form. It might even strengthen it, as it will strengthen the community that surrounds our family. Let a

hundred weddings bloom!

Our society castigates gays and lesbians as serial bed-hoppers, and then when some want to settle down for life with a partner we say, "Oh, no, marriage is reserved for heterosexuals!" It's the same double-bind in which we place single women with kids: we demand they get a job, and then blame them for not being home with the children! The real but unspoken answer is many in society want homosexuals to simply disappear, or become straight. You might as well demand cats become dogs. Given the ongoing legal discrimination against homosexuals (can't marry, can't adopt, can't inherit, can be fired if found out) as well as continuing threats of violence, why would anybody CHOOSE to be gay? Do you remember when you chose to be straight? Of course not, because you never did. You just were the way you are, and so are they. A certain percentage of people in every society has always been gay, and always will be. It's nature's way. Why sweat it?

Some folks use their religion to justify opposition to gay marriage. Since the majority in this country is Christian, many quote the Bible to buttress their arguments. Curiously, I've never heard anyone quote Jesus himself condemning homosexuality, so over Thanksgiving I reread the Gospels and now I know why. While Jesus praises heterosexual marriage (who doesn't?), he says nothing (zip, zilch, nada) for or against homosexuality. An oversight? Hardly. Jesus was no shrinking violet, and railed against merchants, moneychangers, publicans (precursor of

today's re-publicans?), hypocrites and rich folks in general, while hanging with the poor, lepers, prostitutes and other social outcasts of his day (likely including homosexuals). He does say "Judge not, that ye be not judged," resist not evil, turn the other cheek, love your enemies, don't pile up treasures on earth, give away your money, pray in secret, feed the multitudes, etc etc. Although our president claims the man from Galilee as his favorite political philosopher, he apparently never read much of the Bible because Jesus was clearly a total raving bleeding heart liberal! Indeed, the very term "bleeding heart" is a reference to the medieval paintings of Jesus with his side pierced and his heart dripping.

In any case, in a religion-neutral society (reread that First Amendment, would you please?), scripture should not be the basis

of secular government. No religion, even the majority one, should be promoted by the state, or its tenets enshrined in civil law, as some Christian theocrats want.

Many of the arguments against gay marriage are the same ones used to oppose interracial marriage. Those barriers thankfully are disappearing. Some day we will look back on the struggle over gay marriage and wonder, "Gee, what was everyone so worked up about?" That day will come sooner if Musgrave and Allard stop pandering for votes and join the Green Party in saluting the courage and wisdom of the Massachusetts judges in extending marriage rights to same-sex couples.

Eric Fried is a spokesperson for the Green Party of Colorado, and a member of the Poudre Valley Green Party. He can be reached at eric@pygreens.org.