

Domestic Partnerships: Doing What is Right for the Right Reasons

Formal Position Letter written by the Cayman Ministers Association

As we in Cayman continue to grapple with the contentious and divisive issue of sexuality and gender, in this case framed in the terms of a domestic partnership bill, let us be aware of some of the pitfalls that have been strategically placed before us—in particular before our Parliament. For it is ultimately our elected representatives who have to run this obstacle course.

The first alarm that we must sound is for us to discern reality from illusion. The reality is that our Christian heritage and worldview does clearly hold love as the ultimate ethic behind our actions. However, we must not allow our concept and application of love to be reinterpreted by secularists—especially those who have rejected the truth expressed in the scriptures about the sacredness of sex and marriage. In particular, if we are to be guided by the biblical ethic of love, we must start first with what the Lord Jesus said was the “*first and greatest commandment*,” to “*love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind*.” The “*second is like it: love your neighbour as yourself*,” states Jesus. This is not just a sequential arrangement, but a prioritised arrangement. We must begin by loving the LORD God before we can understand and apply the second—loving our neighbour. Clearly it is not possible to love the LORD without respecting, loving and keeping his commandments regarding the sacred character of marriage, and therefore the sacredness of sexuality and sex. The first divine purpose for marriage is that, “It was ordained for the increase of mankind according to the will of God, and that children might be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and to the praise of His holy name.” (Form of Solemnization of Matrimony)

If making a decision about the current domestic partnership bill is to be guided by this ultimate ethic of love, then we—the public and our legislators—must not fall into the trap of conflating love with approval. Love acts in the best interest of others, and not merely to meet the wishes or desires of those we care about or are responsible for. To say “Yes” to this bill and then defend one’s position by an appeal to love, may give the appearance of taking the moral high ground, when in reality it may only be doing what is circumstantially expedient.

This leads us to identify the second trap we must avoid: equating desires with rights. The current scenario representing a seismic shift in western morality has resulted in legislators and courts seemingly accepting the default position that a desire—whether or not one seen to be in the higher levels of the hierarchy of human needs—must be catered to and reframed as a right, sometimes without sufficient or any consideration of the pressing needs of other affected and vulnerable parties or the long term good of society.

Drawing upon the biblical ethic of love and morality, we acknowledge that human desire is the worst possible foundation for determining public and private morality. What is *good*, both for the person and for the community as a whole - old and young, adults and impressionable children - does not answer to the demands of fleshly passions, but rather must answer to the question of what is truly right. This is the real issue. And this is the criterion that every elected member of our parliament must apply as they engage their hearts and minds fully in this exercise.

Again, our appeal to both the public at large and our legislature is that we do not conflate rights with desires, nor conflate love with approval. It is important to avoid confusing the love expressed in the scriptures with secularism’s counterfeit version of love. Doing what is right for the right reasons, regardless of the consequences, is a fundamentally biblical approach to all of life. This is our appeal to you all.