

RELIGIOUS VOICES AGAINST PROPOSITION 8

Committed relationships—and households that endure—need all the help they can get. Proposition 8 will not enhance marriage by restricting that legal state to male/female couples.

Opponents of same-sex marriage have expressed fear that if all couples have the civil right to marry, those believers whose faith tells them that this is morally wrong will be compelled to bless same-sex marriages.

Many of us are aware that women have achieved great gains in civil rights over the past 40 years, including anti-discrimination measures that ensure equality in hiring practices. Has this forced, say, the Roman Catholic Church to ordain women as priests? Will the civil right to marry jump the firewall that is so carefully constructed between church and state? It seems most unlikely.

Much has been said about a return to “traditional” marriage. Biblical traditions of marriage include polygamy and women-as-property. Christian thinkers have concluded that marriage is, variously, worse than celibacy but OK for those who can’t control their lust; necessary for the procreation of children; the supreme metaphor of Christ’s love for the church; blessed union. Which of these is the “traditional” marriage? Which of these would be protected by the passage of Proposition 8?

Heterosexuals, as a group, haven’t achieved great success in making marriage work. The divorce rate is so high as to dizzy our hopes for constancy in raising children, and elevate our anxiety over the sheer number of adults walking around with wounded spirits while struggling to carry on capably. In all likelihood legal same-sex marriages will prove to be as glorious and as flawed as different-sex marriages are. Committed relationships—and households that endure—need all the help they can get. And part of that help is the public and pervasive recognition—through legal marriage—of each couple’s commitment to one another, with the full implication that pledging your troth and abiding in faithfulness are within your capacity as a human being.

The United Church of Christ affirms the individual consciences of our 1.2 million members to agree, disagree, and wrestle with life's biggest questions in a spirit of love. In its national setting, and in Northern California, the UCC has voiced support for civil equality in marriage.

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