Cultural Apologetics

Same sex marriages in America according to Christian persuasion

# *Introduction*

After President Obama’s decision of legalizing same sex marriages, American society is becoming increasingly acceptable to same-sex marriages. However, not many Americans believe this the right sociological move. Many Christian families and conservative citizens of America still consider this a sin and against the will of God. These Christian families believe that the idea of marriage emerged from the marriage between Adam and Eve, and not between Adam and Steve. Bible also states marriage as heterosexual in nature. “For this cause, a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh…[[1]](#footnote-1)”. The Bible solely has not demonstrated such an understanding of marriage. Every human civilization conforms to the idea of marriage put forth by the Bible.

The history of Christian faith and the world largely speaks against homosexual marriages. Beside Bible, many modern psychologists and experts of human behavior argue that men and women are created to complement each other emotionally, and such feelings are unnatural when it comes to same-sex marriages; whether it be lesbian or gay marriages[[2]](#footnote-2). According to them, the idea of family is associated with the feelings of the opposite sex and with good gender. They consider it essential based on the fact that it is essential to raise a well- adjusted children[[3]](#footnote-3). Many social experts also argue that nature and physicality clearly illustrate that men and women are a natural partner and their physiques are designed to ‘fit’ for sex[[4]](#footnote-4). In light of the references mentioned above, this research paper aims at focusing on same-sex marriages according to the Christian persuasion. The research paper will first focus on the idea of secularism, and the later paragraphs will then follow the arguments about law and same-sex marriages. It will likewise include the analysis of cultural apologetics.

# *Secularism*

The two words *secular* and *secularism* have many different and conflicting meanings. The two words have different annotations and apply to entirely different situations[[5]](#footnote-5). There could be a third dynamic to this word too, which can be associated with the individual conduct of a person[[6]](#footnote-6). However, the three pressing concepts which define the idea of secularism today are as follow

*Secularism as Government’s Non-Interference in Religious Matters:* Secularism in this sense is attributed to how Americans, Europeans or conservative Christians at any part of the world grasp the idea about secularism[[7]](#footnote-7). These people consider that any government as secular which seeks to create law, irrespective of the religious interpretation. Such governments assure strict scrutiny of laws and make sure that no negligence is paid in making laws that offshoots religion. In a simple context, secularism in-state would be considered as two ships detached from each other[[8]](#footnote-8). There is a large belief among conservative Christians that in the pretext of secularism, the Christian laws are being misunderstood.

*Secularism as delimiting Religious matters:* Secularism by this manner is tied to Communism and certain authoritarian regimes in Asia[[9]](#footnote-9). For example, Atatürk’s Turkey, 1790s France, and 1917 Post-Revolution Mexico. Such countries actually took over many aspects of a theocracy, as like promoting one religion or ideology above all others and effectively inhibiting, regulating, and controlling all other religions. It happened for the fact that religion which is supported is actually non-religion[[10]](#footnote-10). At present, these states have religious ministers who take over the charge of managing other religions and laws which significantly weaken their religious entities in many ways.

*Secularism as a Personal Choice:* As the term, Atheism is infected in many ways, and the atheists and agnostics have taken to using understatements to describe their conceptualization towards religion[[11]](#footnote-11). These terms like humanist, ethical culturist, bright, and secularist do not actually mean “atheist” and have specific connotations. However, they can effectively serve as an inoffensive replacement for atheists since they alienate people.

# *Same Sex-Marriage and Laws*

The meaning of the word ‘same-sex’ appears uncommon to the general sense. This is the primary reason why it is prohibited in most parts of the world. However, states are free to accord or grant perks of civil marriage to same-sex unions, and as most argue that they should, but that doesn't impact in any way over the institution of marriage. Irrespective of some state laws which work for promoting same-sex marriages, same-sex exclusivity, relationship with community property, unlimited mutual support and liability, and some form of quasi-sexual relationship; the Bible never even considers such idea. Bible condemns and forbids anal sex, gender-bending, cross-dressing, effeminacy in males and mannishness in women, and confused and inverted sex roles, including same-sex relationships that ape male-female dominant-submissive matrimony. Two laws of Leviticus (18:22 and 20:13) appear more relevant. They quote a man being deceitful with another man instead of his wife an abomination[[12]](#footnote-12).

Other than Christianity, the standard Jewish law Halachah also forbids it. The standard recitation by the groom is “By this ring you are consecrated to me, as my wife, in accordance with the laws of Moses and Israel[[13]](#footnote-13).” However, some Conservative priests and many Reforms and Reconstructionist Priests have performed such a marriage, possibly with a modification of the recitation. The majority of the Christian sects also don’t allow same-sex marriage. However, in the US it remains irrelevant as the Biblical law is to the US law. The Constitution of the US does not mention the Bible anywhere nor even refer to it. The First Amendment specifically forbids the use of religious law in the US, as its state that Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion…[[14]](#footnote-14).

Adding to this the Fourteenth Amendment, not allow the state to prefer one religion over other religions, nor to prefer religion over lack of religion, or vice versa. It states that ‘everybody gets to pick their own religion or lack thereof … or prohibiting the free exercise and neither Congress nor the states can interfere with that…[[15]](#footnote-15)’. Interesting to note is the fact that Jesus never directly addressed this topic, he could have obliquely referenced it by praising those who choose to remain celibate rather than practice sexual sin ([Matthew 19:8-12](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+19:8-12&version=HCSB))[[16]](#footnote-16).

# *What is Cultural Apologetics*

Chatrwa denies apologetics as ‘the practice of offering an appeal or the defense for the Christian faith’. In simple words, an apologetic is one who believes that his or her actions can make someone believe or respect his religion. The apologists by their actions benefit religion or help is creating an image that is consistent with the original revelations. Apologists largely rely on their belief according to ‘But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord[[17]](#footnote-17)’. They are always ready to give an answer or root out any misconception which, according to them, can hurt their religious sentiments. Cultural apologists do a similar task, keeping their actions in relevance to culture. Considering the same-sex marriages, the cultural apologist has largely worked against what they believe went against the norms of Christina faith. For them, each reason remains too narrow to justify the socially or norm-based institution of sex the same marriages.

The global conceptualization of cultural apologetics is needed to be differentiated. This differentiation should be based on Christ's relationship to the social world or more broadly to the culture. Richard Niebuhr looked into this aspect in quite a detail in his book Christ and culture[[18]](#footnote-18). He argues that this differentiation must be broadened to include the ideas presented by Francis Schaeffer and Nancy Pearcey[[19]](#footnote-19). About the affiliation between the culture and God. He presents five postures which are Christ as an opponent of culture, allied into the culture, above culture, as contrary to the culture and lastly as the transformer of culture[[20]](#footnote-20). Considering this aspect as presented by the author, one may come up with his own kind of interpretation of the relationship between Christ and culture. As many of us, human beings think Christ as a reflection of what we actually are. James Davison's idea ‘faithfully present within’ is the widely accepted approach that takes one toward the cultural aspect of Christianity[[21]](#footnote-21). This is the most defensible approach toward cultural apologists. Different from him, Anduy Crouch offers that we (Christina) are creators of goods, and we had never been part of the plot, which led to distraction or havoc. Andy Crouch’s insight has also got the attention of many[[22]](#footnote-22).

# *Christians*

As per Stern, Christianity originated from the phrase/ word ‘Kristos’. Kristos is largely considered as a Greek word. According to such interpretation, Christianity is a monotheistic religion[[23]](#footnote-23). Christianity is guided by the life and conduct of Jesus Christ, according to the Holy Bible. In the first century, Christianity emerged as a sect of Judaism in the Eastern Mediterranean. Gradually by the fourth century, much of Europe was Christianized[[24]](#footnote-24). During the middle ages, Christianity emerged as the dominant religion in the Middle East, in some parts of Africa and to the Indian continent. In the continents of America and Australia, it reached by colonization. In Western civilizations, missionary work became a major influence. Lewis writes that Christianity, at present, dominates much of the world and is the largest religion of the world[[25]](#footnote-25). Christians normally follow one out of the three sects of their religion. These three sects are Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox.

In Christianity support for same sex marriage largely comes from some Christian denominations which are theologically considered liberal[[26]](#footnote-26). Some of the more liberal theological scholars of Christianity like the Metropolitan church holds the belief that ‘homosexual’ has been referred to any times in the modern version of the Bible[[27]](#footnote-27). However, some Christians contend their claim. This argument then holds the claim that as original authors of the Bible have refrained from mentioning this word in the Bible, and have not dedicated Christian homosexual couples, therefore there could be a prohibition about marrying rights[[28]](#footnote-28). However, some Christian scholars also believe that homosexuality has been referring to some specific acts of sex and not all.

# *Conclusion*

The paper has taken into account different versions of the Christian faith which talk about same sex marriages. Considering the views mentioned above, it appears right to argue that same-sex marriage is not a foundational concept of Christianity. The concept was later introduced and was misinterpreted by some of the more liberal schools in Christianity. A large number of Christians still resort to the fact that marriage is a foundational concept of their religion and exists between a man and women. Anything which goes in favor of this concept destroys the basic social structure. As Gruden refers to the Bible mentioning that a government official is God's servant for your good, and God is no one to tell them what they believe God expects of them[[29]](#footnote-29)? The Bible finally quotes that ‘officials are sent to punish those who do evil and praise those who do good[[30]](#footnote-30)’.

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