

Should Hawaii Redefine MarriageAgain?

A letter to the **Red Shirts.**

By *Lane Davey*

Before reading please acknowledge that I am not a pastor nor a theologian, this is my own study and is not meant to be by any means authoritative but merely thought provoking. This is my term paper in which we were asked to use examples of the discourse in H-444 to describe the language. I have used examples from One Love church and my own pastor Mike Stangle who is a dedicated minister and gift to our community. I love and respect these leaders along with Christians who stand up for what they believe is right, I just disagree with them.

Aloha my fellow Christians,

I recently finished a course at UH Manoa called Religion & Homosexuality. The course was taught by an elegant lesbian woman, a P.H.D. of theology, who was recently married in Boston to her partner, Linda Krieger. Each week I came to the table and was utterly challenged by this issue. About a quarter of the way through it became almost like an onion which seemed to burn everyone on every side and never offered any refreshment. Unfortunately, God never uses the oranges of life to bring us closer to him, we are most likely to find him swimming in the tears of our onions that have melted us to the core of our Christianity.



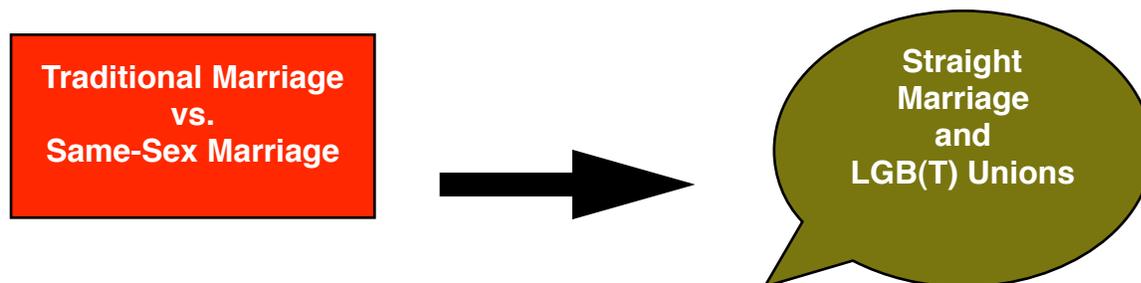
I hope you will join me on this journey to analyze the discourse of the Hawaii Civil Unions Bill H444. On the first day of class, our teacher stressed that her goal would be not to change our personal opinions, but just to find a better way for us to all coexist together. This will also be my goal in writing this paper.

THE MYTH OF TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE

Before you look at the onion, I am going to give you some glasses that will ease the sting. As we attempt to redefine marriage, we must accept that we cannot really define marriage at all. Many years back I told a friend of mine, how can we let gays marry, when the idea of marriage comes from God and God condemns homosexuality". She turned to me and said, well I am not a Christian so why then should I be allowed to marry. This sort of sent me on my journey because in fact my friend was right; marriage was not just a Christian ideal in history nor is it restricted to Christianity in modern America. Matter of fact marriages have been recorded way back to the beginning of time by different nations, cultures and religions.[w16] Jewish marriages in the Bible are not our first record of marriage and even if they were, these marriages are not what we would call "traditional" at all. When Jesus spoke so eloquently about the bond of marriage (Matt 19:4-6), he confirmed an arranged marriage where women as young as 12 1/2 years old were exchanged for property.[w17], [w18], [w19] In these modern times most of us would see this type of contract as a form of child labor, slavery, or even prostitution, but not marriage. Even in early 17th century American history, women were said to have been auctioned off for about 80 pounds of tobacco. [w20] In pre-colonial Hawaii marriages were said to have been "life lasting" as commanded by the god Hulionua, but not monogamous. [w21], [w22]At the same times Mormons practiced polygamy in the U.S. until 1962. Not until 1967, was it legal for marriage to be between one black man and one white woman or vice versa so tradition marriage up until the 70s was segregated marriage. Thank God we have been redefining marriages since the beginning of time!

“Hawaii’s congressional delegation remains opposed to amending the U.S. Constitution to protect traditional marriage” was a statement issued by James Dobson from Focus on the Family, a partner with Hawaii Family Forum on H444. It is probably not so shocking that Dobson was not a proponent of interracial marriage either and called our first interracial president “apocalyptic”

So now that you know our 21 century marriages are not “traditional”, we will be taking an important step in this process to change the common labels. I will no longer be using the terms traditional Marriage vs same-sex marriages, but will define this argument as being between straight marriage and LGB(T) Unions. Not only are we taking out the word “traditional” but we also remove the word “sex” from same-sex. By using the word “sex” in this definition, it forces us to focus on the sex act of homosexual unions instead of the loving relationships that are asking for a monogamous commitment under state laws. Finally, we are not calling it a marriage, since this legislation is not for marriage, it is for a civil union.



“I have said from the beginning that House Bill 444 attempts to circumvent the will of the people by authorizing same-sex marriage under a different name” Lt. Governor Duke Aiona (Hawaii News Now) [w1]

These types of statements are used to rally conservatives for fear that they are being tricked by a “gay agenda”. Aiona, however is right. Civil Unions are the closest we can get to gay marriage in Hawaii, since we already made an amendment to the constitution stating that marriages can only be between a man and a woman. Some argue that Reciprocal Beneficiaries are already set in place here in Hawaii to give LGBT couples basic human rights, but proponents such as Linda Krieger [w3] explain how civil unions would extend those rights to include health insurance benefits and parental rights such as adoption, child support, education, etc. (San Francisco Chronicle) Civil Unions would give LGBT full marriage equality under Hawaii state laws, but make no mistake their unions are not by any means equal since they are not federally legal and therefore, not portable. People such as my teacher who are married in Boston, come to Hawaii and their marriages are not recognized by the state of Hawaii or by the Federal Govern-

ment. LGBT are also denied the name “marriage” which proponents stress is very important for the social and cultural value that it carries. For example, you don’t exactly picture a grand wedding with family & friends for a civil union, but rather a lone, cold, trip to the courtroom.

“In Hawaii, people still believe in traditional marriage and the sanctity of marriage” says Dennis Arakaki, executive director of Hawaii Family Forum (MSNBC) [\[w2\]](#) Sanctity by definition means sacred or Holy. Ultimately conservatives argue that by making gay and lesbian marriages legal or equal, straight marriages would be less sacred and therefore conservatives do not want equality or equal marriage benefits for LGBT.

A THREAT TO THE FAMILY

“Anyone who thinks that same-sex “marriage” is a benign eccentricity which won’t affect the average person should consider what it has done in Massachusetts. It’s become a hammer to force the acceptance and normalization of homosexuality on everyone. And this train is moving fast. What has happened so far is only the beginning.” (Hawaii Family Forum-Issues) [\[w4\]](#) This is the opening statement to a recent article posted by Hawaii Family Forum discussing how the Boston legislation allowing LGBT marriage has impacted the public schools in that state. It expresses concerns that closeted teachers and principles have come out, they now celebrate Gay day, have introduced books that teach about homosexual marriages and have introduced the act of sodomy into public sex education. If the facts alone weren’t riveting enough for conservatives, this article uses descriptive alarmist type language. The word “benign” gives us the sense that this normalization of homosexuality is like a cancer, its like a “hammer” that moves at the speed of a “freight train”

In conclusion Brain Camekar states **“It’s pretty clear that the homosexual movement’s obsession with marriage is not because large numbers of them actually want to marry each other. Research shows that homosexual relationships are fundamentally dysfunctional on many levels, and “marriage” as we know it isn’t something they can achieve, or even desire. (In fact, over the last three months, the *Sunday Boston Globe’s* marriage section hasn’t had any photos of homosexual marriages. In the beginning it was full of them.) This is about putting the legal stamp of approval on homosexuality and imposing it with force throughout the various social and political institutions of a society that would never accept it otherwise. To the rest of America: You’ve been forewarned.”** (Hawaii Family Forum Issues) [\[w4\]](#)

The final statement of the article claims that research has proven homosexual relationships are “fundamentally dysfunctional” but gives no resource for this research. It then draws a conclusion based on nothing more than Camekar’s opinion that marriage isn’t something that is possible for homosexuals to achieve.

“Almost every professional group that has studied the issue indicates children are not harmed when raised by same-sex couples, but to the contrary, benefit from them.” (*Varnum v. Brien –Iowa*) In this recent court case they actually do list resources to back this claim including the American Psychological Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Association of Social Workers and more.

“Marriage is to procreate” says Cheryl Camara “If we have this bill, we are going to end the human race, and our kids are going to have this in our schools.” [w5] (Star Bulletin) I guess when Cheryl Camara said “our schools”, she means “our” heterosexual schools, our Christian schools? I would have to ask Cheryl to define “our” because whether we teach homosexuality in our schools or not, homosexuals are apart of “our” society and they are a part of “our” schools. Whether a teacher reads the book Heather Has Two Mommys or not, there are going to be Heathers with two Mommys and there are going to be Daddys with roommates in “our” schools. Is the Christian solution to homosexuality, to act like it doesn’t exist, to allow “our” Christian children to treat homosexuals as the former generation, degrading them to depraved animals missed by God. Just because our public school system teaches something doesn’t mean you have to teach that at home. Matter of fact, public schools teach evolution, give out birth control and are for the most part secular. Your beliefs, religious or otherwise can still be taught to your children in your church or your own home.

To address the first part of Cheryl Camara’s statement, I must discuss religion. Beyond our onion’s first flakey layers of bigotry, homophobia, and good ole male machismo, this issue finds most Americans rattled to the core. LGBT (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender) seek to gain equality and freedom from what David Richards calls “moral slavery” a state by which their moral consciousness is decided by the influence of the society that surrounds them. A good majority of Christians however see this as a direct attack on the church and its foundation in America. This issue challenges the church and the Bible as the authority of our moral code and template of our constitution. It gives root to a new form of liberal Christianity emerging from Gen Xers that is unfamiliar and unacceptable to the former generation. Underneath the legal jargon used to formalize these arguments, LGBT (some who themselves are also religious) may find themselves fighting on the front lines of a long awaited war between church and state.

THE SCRIPTURE

Camara's statement that the legalization of LGBT Unions could be the "end to the human race" sounds ridiculous to most of us, but it sheds light on an underlying fear presented by the churches interpretation of Leviticus scriptures. Genesis 19 shares the story of the destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah. Most fundamentalist (Christian, Jew or Muslim) believe that the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was homosexuality and hence the name "sodomy". Basically there is an underlying fear that if Americans accept homosexuality, we will also be punished, even destroyed by God as was Sodom and Gomorrah.

"And there were also sodomites in the land: and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel." [1 Kings 14:24](#) It wouldn't be fair to single out homosexuality as the single sin of Sodom. LGBT Christians would argue that the sin of Sodom was inhospitality and feminist might argue that the sin was Lot giving his 2 virgin daughters away. In Gen 18 God had already made a deal that he would spare Sodom if there were 10 righteous men so the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah was pretty much decided before this incident ever threatened Lot's guests. In Leviticus 18, it lists a number of detailed sexual sins which include incest, bestiality and homosexuality. This list of sexual sins are once again followed by a warning of destruction ***"The native-born and the aliens living among you must not do any of these detestable things, 27 for all these things were done by the people who lived in the land before you, and the land became defiled. 28 And if you defile the land, it will vomit you out as it vomited out the nations that were before you."*** [Lev 18:26](#)

In some ways there is nothing more polemic in this heated debate than the way Christians use Leviticus scriptures to address the argument. It is almost as if the fundamentalist Christian uses these scriptures to call homosexuals an abomination who should be put to death, LGBT Christians then of course reciprocate by calling the fundamentalists bigots. Nice exchanges for people who are suppose to be Godly?

In Mel White's book [Stranger at the gate](#), he barely touches on any New Testament scripture but makes a point of addressing the Leviticus scripture as "ancient bigotry" You would think that this pioneering recently married gay Dean of Dallas's Cathedral of Hope (MCC) would have at least one chapter dedicated to the explaining what the scriptures say about homosexuality. At the same time "born again" believers at One Love Ministries Kaimuki also put the focus on Leviticus instead of more relevant New Testament scriptures. In their blog post concerning civil unions in Hawaii it states ***"Jesus clearly endorsed the Mosaic Law as applicable during His lifetime in Matthew 5, and it clearly calls homosexuality an abomination. He also mentioned the account of Sodom and Gomorrah being punished for their actions, so His position on this issue is quite clear. (One Love Blog) [w6]"***

If Jesus did in fact endorse Mosaic law, its safe to say we are all in big trouble. Mosaic law condemns tatoos, wearing clothes with more than one type of fab-

ric(Lev 11:19) and unJewish hairstyles(Lev 11:27). It stresses the importance of Sabbath Laws (Lev 19:19), tells widowed woman to marry their husband's brother (Deut.25:5) and seems to even allow adultery with slave women so long as they are a man's own slaves(Lev 11:20) not someone else's. Leviticus 18:22 or Leviticus 20:13 say that **"If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman"** they are an **"abomination"** punishable by **"death"**. You should know that the word abomination is used 142 times in the Bible according to King James. Other abominations include eating fish without scales (such as shrimp) certain kind of birds, and women wearing men's clothing. Some other things punishable by death were children who were rebellious, married women found not to be virgins, and those caught in the act of adultery.

John 1 which proclaims Jesus as "the word" says ***"For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ."*** [John 1:17](#) The Strongs Greek dictionary describes the word law or νόμος: (through the idea of prescriptive usage), generally (regulation), specifically of Moses.. Laws were therefore like a medicine to preserve the Jewish race. For example, If we eat shrimp and are allergic we go to the doctor and get a shot, but in ancient Israel you died. I'm not sure these laws were so much for discipline as they were preservation of the Jewish race so that Jesus could come.

There is also good debate for the words [malakos](#) and [arsenokoitēs](#) which are translated to mean homosexual, a word we did not even have until 1872. These are the words used in 1 Timothy 1:10 and 1 Corinthians 6:9 to define homosexuality. In the Strongs Greek dictionary they are translated:
[malakos](#) Of uncertain affinity; soft, that is, fine (clothing); figuratively a catamite: - effeminate, soft.
[arsenokoitēs](#) From [g730](#) and [g2845](#); a sodomite: - abuser of (that defile) self with mankind
As you can see the original translation does not necessarily describe a homosexual especially if you do not translate the word sodomite to mean homosexual.

The liberal debate goes on to address the fact that homosexuality in Caanan and Egypt was often used in the Pagan worship of Molech and thus was condemned as idol worship. [\[w23\]](#) Some homosexual acts were forced upon male slaves by their slaveowners and some was prostitution. There is also evidence that homosexuality was used in the Greek military and that these male on male love interests were encouraged in order to boost morale. [\[w24\]](#) The Genesis 19 account of Lot is thought by some to be a representation of a type of violent homosexuality which was used to show domination over competing armies. The losing side were often afflicted in what we might compare to "prision sex". Some think that the sin of Sodom was violence and that God was condemning a violent sex act not a loving consensual relationship. In Greece and Rome the most prevalent form of men lying with men was in the form of pederasty. This was the practice of older men having relations with young boys. Some scholars say that the relationship was a form of teaching for the young boy and the which stopped once he came of age. It was most commonly an extramarital affair. From the articles I read, it seems almost as if pederasty was a form of mentoring that was per-

formed in account to gain higher knowledge. [w25], [w26], [w27] Gives new meaning to “**Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools**” Romans 1:22

The liberal debate for homosexuality has a lot of momentum until it reaches Romans 1 which does not use the words [malakos](#) and [arsenokoitēs](#), but addresses same-sex relations for both men and women as something that happened after “**God gave them over**”

“Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.” Romans 1:26 This is the first and only time lesbian relationships are condemned in the Bible which makes it a lot harder to pass off these same-sex affairs as violence, pederasty or slavery. These “shameful” lusts are then however included with a list of sins which are labeled as “depravity”. The list includes, gossip, strife, envy and greed, so I think it is safe to say we are all included as men with depraved minds who have been given up to shameful lusts. If we read Romans 1 in an attempt to condemn homosexuals, we miss the whole intent of the passage because we don’t continue on through chapters two and three which share that we should not judge others because we ourselves are sinners who are only justified through the blood of Christ, God’s new plan for our sinful nature. **“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.** (Romans 3:23-24)

And yet, even in the grace of Christ we are still called to live our lives according to a Godly standard of morality which brings us back to the same question; did Paul condemn homosexuality as unrighteous in these verses? Though sometimes so seemingly clear cut with a modern interpretation, the historical context keeps us guessing.

The Romans 1 condemnation of homosexuality also has a relative link to idol worship. **“And exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.”** Romans 1:23 Was Paul condemning real people who were doing these acts or the worship of statues who did them for religious practices. Whatever was going on in Paul’s time, it is fair to compare what seems to be the depiction of lustful promiscuity to LGBT couples who are vying for the right to share committed monogamous relationships under civil law?

PROCREATION

My final comments on Romans 1 concern the Christian push that “marriage is for procreation” as stated by Camara above. Again, I think most people in modern America see their marriage as more than a fertility exercise and consider this

ideal somewhat ridiculous. The Bible gives us a great example of how laws change according to their historical context with this very idea of procreation. **“Be fruitful and multiply”** (Gen1:28) was commanded at the very beginning of time, but Jesus highlights followers who have **“renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven”** (Matt 19:11) and makes it clear that **“At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage”** Matt 22:30 Paul says **“It is good for a man not to marry”**¹ 1 Cor 7:1, unless he **“burns with passion”**¹ 1 Cor 7:9 and warns that **“those who marry will face many troubles in this life”**¹ 1 Cor 7:28

While neither advocated for marriage, you could argue that both offered procreation as a reason for these arranged contracts they called marriage in that time. Jesus brings up the fact that **“at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,'”** Matt 19:4 before concluding that married couples should **“become one flesh”** (vs5) unseparable by man (vs6)

Paul may have also made the case for procreation in his Romans 1 account as the main reason for the condemnation of homosexuality **“God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse”** Romans 1:20 After reading several commentaries I understand this passage to suggest that we are to define right from wrong by what we see God has created in nature. This then supports the conservative opposition that if the parts don't fit then God did not mean for them to go together. I don't think I know more than God nor would I ever try to challenge the incredible works of Paul, but in the 21 century we are also without excuse in denying what stands before us in the form of a hermaphrodite ([intersex](#) person)? What would Paul say to them and those who claim to have never been attracted to the opposite sex?

Divine nature to people in Paul's time (Christian or otherwise) dictated a patriarchal society. Women were property or slaves, and slavery was not criticized. I am not sure I agree with this idea that God is unchanging, but his creation is surely evolving and Jesus gave us the Holy Spirit or Parakletos as our counselor, our advocate. Can we take the message of Paul and leave behind the patriarchal society with its' interpretation of divine nature.

The mostly hegemonic, but often polemic debates over scripture are disgraceful to our representation of a Holy God. Why can't Christians allow other Christians their own interpretation of these verses, their own moral choices and their own relationship with God? The answer is Worldview.

COLONIALISM & WORLDVIEW

George Lakoff explains two basic American worldviews in his book [Moral Politics](#). The conservative is aligned with a Strict Model Father framework that views the world as dangerous. Tough love and self reliance are instilled through competi-

tion to breed survivalist that flourish in a hierarchal society. The Liberal model is based on a Nurturant Parent who believes that morality is fostered through relationships and a social conscious that is responsible to community. One of the most important differences in these models is that in the Strict Father Model questioning authority is shunned, even prohibited, whereas it is actually encouraged in the Nurturant Parent.

I think we can relate Lakoff's models to two popular frameworks. A recent trend in the church is to convince constituents that they must adapt a man-made Christian Worldview. The key ingredient of this worldview is the theory of absolute truths. My pastor put it quite bluntly one morning when he said, if I am right, someone else has to be wrong. The competing framework is that of a modern day type of Relativism. One Love Ministries blog post suggests that **"Relativism as a way of thinking actually ends up nullifying the concept of justice and fairness"** It concludes that **"if relativism is a good ethic"****The best kind of person is a sociopath?"**[\[w7\]](#)

The relativist calls the conservative intolerant and the conservative calls the relativist a sociopath. It is interesting because the discourse of each framework actually reflects their worldview. For the relativist, anyone who accepts only one view would seem intolerant, for the absolute truthist how can you tolerate wrong if there is only one right. For conservative Christians, being wrong often translates into one who chooses a sinful nature. What constitutes a sinful nature is believed to be what is stated as sin in the Bible plain, simple and literal. The second ingredient in the man-made Christian Worldview is in the mission statement of many evangelical churches which says **"The Bible...is the inspired, infallible Word of God and is relevant and applicable to people today"** **(NCF Mission Statement)**[\[w8\]](#) In [Ron Rhodes](#) own literature he accounts for 150,000 variants in Bible manuscripts with only 1% significant differences, but then claims the Bible's infallibility? The Bible says scripture is God-inspired, why can't that be enough? That can't be enough because it leaves room for relativism. More progressive churches are changing their mission statement by replacing the word "infallible" with "accurate". The final clincher in this worldview as stated by Chuck Baldwin is **"Believing that Satan is considered to be a real being or force, not merely symbolic"** **(Chuck Baldwin)**[\[w9\]](#) This is quite interesting because once again it reminds Christians that they will be punished for these sins which the Bible has so literally clarified to them. In a recent sermon my pastor spoke about one of his colleagues who said he would like to take every recent graduate and hold them over the pit of fire just to show them what hell is like (and basically to threaten them into following his Christian worldview). You can believe Satan is real without having to be held over the fire, but the strict father model and Christian worldview is fueled by the idea of retribution and punishment of sin. It is ironic that the Christian worldview mandates that noone can earn their way to heaven, but then puts such an emphasis on retribution and sin. Its almost contradictory.

At the same time this worldview is threatened upon congregations that are usually introduced with this type of statement: **“The prolific pollster George Barna just released another startling survey: among America's professing "born-again" Christians, only 19% possess a Biblical worldview. That's right. Some 80% of professing Christians do not possess a Biblical worldview.”**
[w9] My question is whose Christian worldview?

Lakoff makes an important point in his book that the more liberal education system is threatening to the Strict Father Model. GenXers who are accused as being unaccepting of absolute truthisms are not likely to be won over to this model. They have not only experienced the damage of the strict father model in their own families, but have studied it throughout history in society. Since history is now being taught with the intent to show not only what America has done right, but also our wrongs, GenXers are unlikely to adapt such a worldview which has proved itself to cause such suffering and injustice.

What is more hallowing than the models is the similarities shown between this modern trend of a Christian worldview and the Colonial mentality of our Christian forefathers. The Stanford encyclopedia of Philosophy defines Colonialism as **“ a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another”** [w11] Wikipedia claims that one of the four main goals of colonialism is to **To convert the indigenous population to the colonists' religion.** [w10] and explains that **“Some colonists also felt they were helping the indigenous population by bringing them Christianity and civilization. However, the reality was often subjugation, displacement or death.** [w10]

Here is my pastor's testimony against LGBT Unions:

Re: HB-444 HD1--PLEASE VOTE NO

Aloha!

I attended the rally yesterday at our State Capitol building. As I approached the building, I again saw that huge metal work of art, hanging in the front of the building, bearing our State Motto (in Hawaiian), *li*The life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness. 11 I concur wholeheartedly! I also believe the opposite is equally true: **"THE DEATH OF THE LAND IS GUARANTEED IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS."** Our own State motto, if not followed, will become an indictment against us!

Let's not kid ourselves. We all know there is an agenda behind this bill. This is just the first step towards legalizing Same Sex Marriage. I believe this goes completely against what Hawaii's founding fathers meant by the term "righteousness.11

Please hear the will of Hawaii's people. Please search the scriptures and see: passing this bill would be a huge mistake. Please take a stand for traditional marriage, which is one man married to

one woman.

Mahalo for your time.

Sincerely,
Mike Stangel

[w12]

In making this statement my pastor defines what is righteous for Hawaiians and their land. He even goes as far as to say this goes against the will of the founding forefathers. When missionaries like him came to the islands in the late 1800s they defined righteousness by outlawing surfing, hula, and the Hawaiian language, calling all these cultural practices pagan. There were a few testimonies that used the state motto in this fashion, most of them were haoles like my pastor, not Hawaiians.

“It is a sad irony that many of the people wearing those red shirts are themselves Filipinos or other brown-skinned folks, whom their soulmates in bigotry back in South Carolina see as only one small step up from the African.” (Jim-Rodonline forum)[w13] However liberal, LGBT proponents don't fair any better because they aren't very liberal about allowing Pacific Islanders to embrace Christianity as a part of their history and culture. In the film Queen Liliuokalani and other outlets, you gain understanding that though the messengers of Christianity surely missed the mark, the message of Christ is still sacred to many Hawaiians. Even some of the most spiritual Hawaiian Queens turned to Christianity and some believe that there was actually a spiritual even amongst the colonial annexation. Proponents of LGBT Unions however, put Pacific Islanders in a sort of moral slavery for choosing post-colonial religious ideas over ancient Hawaiian practices with the intent to make them feel unHawaiian.

Whether it be haoles on the right, “defining righteousness” or haoles on the left pushing Pacific Islanders to embrace 150 year old customs, we(the haoles) continue to be colonialist by imposing our views. The big rip off for Hawaiians is that they did not get to choose, they did not get to evolve as a culture, as a society and instead had haole views forced on them. The discourse is insensitive to say the least especially in a time when Hawaiians are finally just getting some of these things back. I look forward to the day when we(the haoles, the colonialist) learn to give Pacific Islanders the dignity to decide what is right for them both individually and as a group without calling them passive, ignorant, or pagan.

Girlfest's Kathryn Xian has done a beautiful documentary[w14]showing the culture of Mahu in Hawaii and bringing awareness to the ideology that the third-sex (homosexual or transgendered) type person was valued in pre-colonial Hawaii. Wayne Cordeiro of the Four Square church has also run educational stories on historic Hawaiian history with a Christian focus. Both are valuable types of activism because it educates without a position of imposing values on people.

*Hawaii born Lawyer, Professor and activist Linda Krieger expresses her frustration that many Hawaiians consider the push for civil unions to be a **“mainland, haole issue”*** (San Francisco Chronicle) [w3]

Hiller posts the statement of a Hawaiian clergymen: **“Hawaiians haven’t wanted to get involved in the same-sex battle.....When you talk about the larger world and government thats too big and complicated. The most we can do is protect ourselves and what little we have left and what little were trying to regain and reclaim and we have to pic our battles wisely.”**

I mean activism and involvement in American government hasn’t exactly faired well for Hawaiians. Furthermore, they don’t understand the urgency of activism because they do not have a haole mindset. You could maybe even relate haole society to the strict father model survivalist type government and Hawaiian society to a more nurturant government that takes care of the people. Maybe for Hawaiians to even have to fight for rights is already a sign that they have lost the battle.

I must end by acknowledging Hiller’s statement that the 1997 hearings on same-sex marriage **“brought the largest political rally since statehood”** and still recent battles have drawn large crowds of Pacific Islanders on both sides of this debate.

The argument over colonialism might be compared to the race analogy on the mainland where African Americans are being torn between the church and the civil rights movement whose foundation is rooted in the church.

The feminist movement is a little bit more sheltered from the fight, but opened the door for LGBT rights since the discrimination against gays is often compared to a gender discrimination. In the joining of two men, one is regarded as effeminate and what could be worse than a man downgrading his status to that of a woman. The Biblical feminist studies also allowed for a modern interpretation of scripture, most significantly the breakdown of a divine patriarchal structure. This is explained in Richards gender analogy.

I once asked my parents what it was like for them to walk into the WHITE ONLY bathrooms in the deep south. They chuckled and said, we didn’t think about it, it was all we knew. Mid-semester, I had an awaking that I too had been walking through straight only doors without even recognizing that homosexuals were not equal and suffering from discrimination. I think it is good to use race and gender analogies to show the discrimination we as a society have imposed on LGBT. Some comparisons are insensitive however, to each movement, the individual struggles and their impact that lives through our history and our lives.

RELIGIOUS RIGHTS VS GAY RIGHTS

As civilians argue over the LGBT lifestyle as a matter of genes or choice to overturn literal interpretation of scripture, legislators argue over them for classifica-

tion. Both impact America's religious foundation. Currently LGBT is classified with the lowest level of discrimination laws as a "special class" If they could prove sexual orientation is similar to that of gender they move up one class and if they prove sexual orientation is similar to that of race they will receive the highest level of protection under the 14th amendment or Equal Protection Clause. Recent cases such as *Varnum vs Brien* have elevated sexual orientation to the same level as gender laws and in *Lawrence vs Texas* LGBT discrimination was tried under due process, an attempt to declare orientation a Fundamental Right under the definition of Liberty.

Religious rights are the one thing in this debate that could be a concern for Christians, not necessarily because of LGBT or LGBT unions, but other groups that see this as an opportunity to tear down the foundation of religion in our country. Though I have no background whatsoever for understanding law, it is pretty easy to recognize the typical alarmist language of the right and its agenda which is to scare you about the so called "gay agenda". LGBT Proponents dance around the "religious agenda" by constantly bringing up separation of church and state and providing that religious reasoning is not a constitutional basis for morality. The question is can both exist; gay rights and religious rights?

There has been a common misconception that if LGBT Unions were legalized, churches and Christian pastors would have to marry gay couples. This is not true since churches are private institutions. Basically, they don't have to marry anyone they don't want to no matter what the reason. If the church were however, to have a public marriage hall or a public charity, they would be affected. If LGBT Unions were legalized by the state, public institutions or organizations taking a tax exemption could be forced to follow the public policy of that state. Kmeic calls this "fiscal suicide" for the church and its charities. Catholic Charities would most likely be forced to offer their adoption services to LGBT couples which would be against the beliefs and morality of some organizations. Christians who have businesses would have to hire LGBT persons, but religious institutions would not. The "ministerial exemption" under the First Amendment would be applied in this situation.

Professor Kathleen Sands suggests that LGBT legislation should be processed as a First Amendment legislation which falls under the classification of religious rights. When I first heard that I had Christian doomsday syndrome. I was like oooooooooo noooooo they are calling homosexuality a religion, we are going back to Molech, the world is coming to an end! (nah, not that bad, but you get the point) By the end of the semester, after a brief look at the law I could understand how it just might fit. Be it a genetic disposition or a choice, LGBT people consider their sexual orientation a core part of who they are just as we consider "faith" an integral part of our being. To introduce LGBT in the form of a religious right it actually allows both moral views to exist without one dominating the other in the form of public policy or otherwise.

H444 Testimony by Kathleen Sands Interfaith Alliance

Religious opponents of this law imply that religion is monolithically opposed to civil unions. But that is demonstrably false. Hundreds of clergy and religious leaders support this bill, as evidenced by the statement just released by the Interfaith Alliance. Religious opponents of civil union also may tell you that anyone who supports civil unions cannot be a "real" Christian, or a real Jew, or Muslim and so forth. And on the other side, as you know, religious supporters of civil union will say that their opponents are misinterpreting scriptures or distorting religion.

You've listened for hours to those kinds of arguments and as you listen you probably reflect on your own judgments about what is true and good. Those sorts of judgments are essentially theological - they are about ultimate truths and values. In our personal lives, we have to make those kinds of judgments. But we can't really prove them in an objective way - because they are just too basic, too fundamental. It would be like proving the existence of the ground on which your own life stands. All any of us can do, at the end of the day, is simply to stand that ground - to choose, live, and witness to our most fundamental beliefs.

Now, if anything is clear about the religion clauses of the U.S.

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constitution, it's that the government may NOT make theological judgments of this sort. There is a lot of disagreement over what the Free Exercise clause means. But there is no disagreement that, at a bare minimum, no citizen may be denied civil rights on account of expressing a conscientious belief, provided that they do not harm anyone else. And everybody also agrees that being offended or upset by somebody's belief does not count as harm! There is also a lot of disagreement about what the Establishment clause means. But again, there is no disagreement that at the very least it FORBIDS the government to take a position on a religious belief that is hotly and widely contested. Instead, government is simply obligated to create an environment in which all citizens can express their beliefs, disagreeing as vigorously as they want but NOT taking away each other's civil rights.

So I disagree with those supporters of gay rights who characterize religious opposition as bigotry. Provided that people do not engage in defamation or violence, they deserve the presumption of moral seriousness. But I also disagree with the claim, made by some opponents of this bill, that to pass the civil union bill is to endorse, accept or celebrate homosexuality. Does the Free Exercise clause require Mormons to endorse Buddhism, or evangelicals to celebrate Hinduism, or Wiccans to agree with Catholicism? Of course not! But the Free Exercise clause, as interpreted by the US Supreme Court, absolutely does demand that each of these is entitled to the dignity of the word religion and to the religious rights our constitution guarantees.

Here in Hawaii, disagreement about homosexuality are deep and serious. But I ask you: is this MORE serious than disagreement about the existence of God, the nature of salvation, the path to enlightenment, or the meaning of the universe? Yet those are disagreements we live with all the time. And nobody is denied inheritance rights, health insurance, or parental privileges on account of them. Why then can people be denied those things on account of a conscientious, lifelong commitment to a same sex partner?

[\[w12\]](#)

Instead of fighting against the moral choices of LGBT we should be fighting to strengthen the foundation of our own religious rights. We need to make sure our churches can get tax exemptions for their non-profit organizations, because these organizations benefit our communities and our country. Our country was formed in the name of religious freedom and right or wrong Muslim or Christian

we have to fight for our right to practice religion in America. We have to fight for the right to make our moral choices whether they be for LGBT, or religion.
Jesus gave people a moral choice.

THE PEOPLE HAVE SPOKEN

“ In 1998, the people of Hawaii sent a clear message that marriage in Hawaii must remain between one man and one woman. Civil unions are just another attempt to thwart the will of the people.” (*Hawaii Family Forum*)[w15]

First of all Jesus never said marriage was between one man and woman. Look it up. The will of the majority does not always do what is right for the will of the minority. An 11 year old vote does not show a clear message of the will of the people. My Christian classmate Logan Laturi brings up the valid point that he and anyone 29 years old or younger has never voted on this issue. They are the ones most likely to turn the vote. Besides 11 years of introspection on this issue has allowed this 39 year old Christian, to change her vote in favor of LGB(T) Unions. Even if a man wanted to marry his dog and a woman wants to marry herself, it does not threaten the sanctity of my 21 century marriage which is also a lifestyle “choice”, not a contract of class status. Our public schools should teach about homosexuality in order to stop the violence against these people. Do I think God condemned homosexuality in the Bible? Probably. But as a one who can barely stand an hour without cable or electricity, I think its safe to leave some wiggle room for relativism here. Would Jesus condemn homosexuality today? I really don't know, but as a heterosexual it is not my place to pass judgment on LGBT friends or fellow-believers, only to support their moral choices designed through their own relationship and experiences with God. I believe in an almighty God who has the power to reveal himself to each individual through Parakletos.

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