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Table of Contents

The Sacraments and Vocation in Luther's <i>Lectures on Genesis</i> Paul Gregory Alms	3
Luther and the Heavy Laden: Luther's Sermons on Matthew 11:25–30 as Liberation from Christ-Centered Legalism M. Hopson Boutot	21
Luther's <i>Oratio, Meditatio, and Tentatio</i> as the Shape of Pastoral Care for Pastors John T. Pless	37
All Theology Is Christology: An Axiom in Search of Acceptance David P. Scaer	49
Reflections on the Ministry of Elijah Walter A. Maier III	63
The Spirit-Christological Configuration of the Public Ministry Roberto E. Bustamante	81
The Dichotomy of Judaism and Hellenism Revisited: Roots and Reception of the Gospel Daniel Johansson	101
The Contribution of the Lutheran Theologian Johann Salomo Semler to the Historical Criticism of the New Testament Boris Paschke	113

Theological Observer	133
The Origin of Authentic Rationalism	
<i>Lutheran Service Book</i> at Ten Years	
Is It Time for Wedding Silliness to End?	
What Angels Witness “through the Church”	
“This Is the Night”	
The Human Case against Same-Sex Marriage	
Offending a Postmodern World: The Prophet Speaks the Truth	
Book Reviews	165
Books Received	191

Errata

There is an error on page 285 in the article by Charles A. Gieschen, “The Relevance of the *Homologoumena* and *Antilegomena* Distinction for the New Testament Canon Today: Revelation as a Test Case,” *CTQ* 79 (2015). The sentence in the first paragraph that reads, “It is ironic that the two primary proof-texts . . . are both from the *antilegomena*” should read: “It is ironic that one of the two primary proof-texts for the divine nature of the Scriptures, 2 Timothy 3:15 and 2 Peter 1:21, is from the *antilegomena*.”

The Editors

The Human Case against Same-Sex Marriage

[Timothy Goeglein presented this essay on March 31, 2016, as part of a series at Valparaiso University entitled "Dialogue and Discernment: Seek First to Understand—A Conversation About Same-Sex Marriage." Goeglein was one of two panel members who supported traditional marriage while two other panelists supported same-sex marriage. The panel discussion was billed as "a respectful conversation, around a seemingly irreconcilable issue, designed to demonstrate non-contentious conversations in an ever growing contentious world." The Editors]

Same-sex marriage is not primarily about homosexuality, individual rights or equality. It is not even about marriage or family at its deepest point. It is about the fundamental essence of humanity. At its core, same-sex marriage questions our historic and collective understanding that humanity is *one* nature embodied in *two* mysteriously diverse but wholly equal forms: male and female.

Male and female are not merely cultural constructs. Consider what *National Geographic* has taught each of us about the remarkable and starkly different cultures of the world. For all their splendid diversity, they share a few immutable commonalities. All cultures have rituals for collecting, preparing, and eating food. Just as basic, all cultures have a system of marriage, some form of socially encouraged, permanent pair-bonding. And until the last few nanoseconds of human experience, it has *always* been between the two streams of humanity: male and female. There were no exceptions until the Netherlands embraced genderless marriage in 2001. So why this unbending universality? Is it because Focus on the Family, religious conservatives, and the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church everywhere and at every time forced this "view" of family upon all these helpless cultures? Marriage requires male and female because nature demands it. And as such, marriage transcends culture, politics, economics, religion, and law. It is *the* primary human institution; both anthropologists and theologians hold this as true.

Consider the word "matrimony": the stem *matri/mater* can be seen in many other words, such as maternal, matrilineal, or maternity. Marriage exists in all human cultures for the interest of the woman, the mother, making sure that the man who fathers her children is attached to her in a way that protects and provides for her. Do we still need this today? Human nature and culture demands it. Consider a term coined by the sociologist Dianna Pearce in 1978, "the feminization of poverty"; because

of the decline of marriage, too many women were being left to raise their children by themselves.

Marriage is humanly fundamental because it is the way we solve the primary paradox of humanity, that men are not women and women are not men, but both are human. It is the way we bring these two parts of humanity together in the most intimate and cooperative way. No other social union bridges this mysterious distance as marriage does. Because every society consists of these similar but different beings, every society finds it must have marriage. Marriage—and particularly monogamy—socializes men, protects women from unattached males, regulates sexuality, and ensures that the people who create the babies are the ones who provide for and raise the babies. Aristotle referenced this essential nuclear nature of the family in his *Politics*.

But the same-sex marriage experiment says that we can ignore all this, and the mighty river of human experience can be diverted in a genderless direction in the present age without harmful consequences. It is a short-sighted and arrogant proposition driven by adult wishes, eclipsing child and societal needs, and ignoring the pan-cultural wisdom of the ages. This experiment's biggest stumbling block is that male and female are not mere social constructs, regardless of how much we are told they are. Every human life is a beautiful declaration to the contrary, an advertisement of the boundless wonder of that mysterious union of masculinity and femininity. The advertisement expresses itself in two ways: existence and embodiment.

First, each of us is an endorsement of the wonder of male and female in our existence. Every human person is inconceivable without a significant contribution from both streams of humanity. Every breathing, wriggling human baby that makes a debut upon the earth is a flesh-packaged message from creation that man and woman as a functioning unit is a fantastic idea. Nature sends no such endorsement of genderless unions. Every one of us gained access to our existence by passing through the door of heterosexuality, by either mechanical or intimate binary union of sperm and egg. There are no other options. Biology is a rigid and close-minded gatekeeper.

Second, there are two complementary models of embodied persons: male and female. Sylviane Agacinski is a leader in the French feminist *parité* movement—and shares a son with Jacques Derrida—who points out in her book *The Parity of the Sexes* what was obvious to our grandparents: “One is born a girl or boy, one becomes woman or man. . . . This division, which includes all human beings without exception, is thus a dichotomy.

In other words, every individual who is not a man is a woman. There is no third possibility."³ (Only 0.018% of the human population can be termed truly intersexed.⁴) The miracle of every male's existence as a male person is not only an important value statement about the significance of male, but also about female. For the male proclaims the virtue, wonder, and necessity of female simply by contrasting her in his "otherness." Female does this for male also. We would not be able to define old without a value called youth. This is why same-sex unions are fundamentally genderless. The yin gains its full essence in contrast with the yang and is of little meaning in a yang-less community.

The legalization of same-sex marriage and the resulting same-sex family, however, brings all these basic human realities into question. For if two men or two women are the functional equivalent of a male and female family, the only thing that the first couple needs from the former to start a family is their respective gametes. In order to make the next human generation, the male same-sex couple must go next door and borrow an egg from heterosexuality. This reduction of gender to reproductive material is dramatically evidenced in a lesbian mothers' website that sells little t-shirts and bibs for their babies that inform the world "My daddy's name is donor."

This is a radical deconstruction of humanity, reducing the profound mystery of male and female to mere differentiated reproductive material. This genderless rationale is why marriage licenses address the couple as "Party A" and "Party B" rather than the "bride" and "groom" or "male" and "female." It is also why birth certificates are increasingly asking for the name of "Progenitor A" and "Progenitor B." It is why activists are arguing for the possibility for a child to be assigned to more than two legal parents.

But our human nature as either male or female is much deeper than one's genitalia, sperm, or egg. If same-sex marriage is socially valid, then male and female are no longer essential for the family, and therefore, humanity. They are simply preferential. And children are denied their natural mother or father for no other reason than adults desire such families. This is precisely what Rosie O'Donnell told ABC's Diane Sawyer when she explained her little boy often asked, "Why don't I have a dad?"

³ Sylviane Agacinski, *Parity of the Sexes* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 3.

⁴ Leonard Sax, "How Common is Intersex? A Response to Anne Fausto-Sterling," *The Journal of Sex Research* 39 (2002): 174-178.

Her answer? “If you were to have a dad, you wouldn’t have me. Because I’m the kind of mother who wants another mother.”⁵

We hear that love makes a family, but can an abundance of love from two men turn one of them into a mother? Can any amount of love make a father out of a woman? A loving and compassionate society *always* comes to the aid of motherless and fatherless children; it *never* intentionally creates them.

Family configuration has always been intricately bound up with the structure and health of the larger community, and we cannot change it without significantly changing society. When we no longer have mores concerning the structure of marriage and family but settle for a buffet model—just pick what suits you, because one choice is as valid as another—society loses a shared norm without which it cannot function cohesively. This is why the male/female norm of marriage is humanly universal.

This is essentially what we believe at our core at Focus on the Family:

1. The marital union of male and female is exceptional and essential for human thriving.
2. Marriage should be loving, sacrificial, and life-long.
3. All children should have the benefit of being loved and cared for by their own mother and father.
4. Sexuality ought to be confined to the protective harbor of the intimacy of a husband and wife.

This is the sexual ethic that Jesus taught us. We have no right as Christians to say that he is too narrow here.

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⁵ Ann Oldenburg, “Rosie talks adoption in coming-out interview,” *USA Today*, March 14, 2002, <http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/life/2002/2002-03-14-rosie.htm>.