



## SPEECH

# California Rally in Defense of Marriage

**Alan Keyes**  
**May 22, 2004**  
**Sacramento, California**



MP3 audio

To buy an audiotape, videotape, or DVD of this speech, contact the Campaign for Working Families, <http://www.savecalifornia.com/about/contact.cfm>.

Consider also making a donation to their cause:  
<http://www.savecalifornia.com/donate/index.cfm>

Thank you, praise God. Thank you, praise God. Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you very much. Praise God. Thank you very much.

It's a beautiful day, a rather incongruous day for what is in some ways such a somber occasion. And it is, you know. And I'm going to have to spend the next few minutes as best I can sharing with you why I believe it is so. But I would like, if you don't mind, for you to enter for a few minutes into the spirit of what I have to say, because we are dealing with, I know, a very emotional subject. Passions run high on this issue in all quarters. And there are those who like to treat it as if it is an issue of passion, when in fact it is not.

I think it is in fact one of those issues where the counsels of passion and indignation and sentiment will undoubtedly lead us astray, when we need to stand back and, in as clear and logical a fashion as we can, understand the nature of the issue we're facing and its impact on our country and its future.

Now, I know that there are those--because I encounter them all the time--who say that this is about whether or not bigoted people of this and that religious faith are going to stand in the way of loving individuals who want to express their love and attraction for each other by getting married. And even the way that folks talk about the issue seems to me illustrates the problem we've got.

Somebody asked me the other day, in fact, how it would hurt me if two men or two women wanted to get married. See, in the way that question is phrased illustrates the mentality that's gone wrong here, because what we're facing here as citizens right now is not the question of whether two men or two women getting together in what they call marriage, whether that's going to hurt me. The question is, "Is it going to hurt the institution of marriage?" The question is, "Is it going to hurt the country?" The question is, "Is it going to hurt our future?"

But in order to understand that, we'd have to realize, wouldn't we, that the issue here is not homosexuality.

I know that over the course of time and debate we have gotten sucked into, sometimes, a

discourse and dialog where people will act like "this is about your attitude toward homosexuality." Be that as it may, the truth is that when a legislature, when a judge, when anyone decides that they are going to address the issue of who can and cannot get married, the issue is not homosexuality or any sexuality. The issue is marriage. What is it? What is it? What does it need to be in order to serve its proper function?

Because, after all is said and done--this is the other thing we forget--in all this talking about it like it's individual rights and all this, for people to get together and get whatever self-gratification and pleasure they want through the use or abuse of their sexual organs, this does not require, the last time I looked, the intervention of the government. Actually, down through the centuries people have been pretty good about taking care of that on their own. What we generally forget therefore is that, as a social institution, marriage isn't about individuals getting together, or how and what they do when they do so. No, it has to be about something else.

Last time I looked, most people of reasonable intelligence wouldn't want the government meddling in their personal friendships anyway. Why would we want this? Somebody here, if you have--think of your best friend in the world and think whether or not you'd want legislation regulating your relationships with that friend, deciding what would be required, and how it would be required, and what would be expected, and so forth and so on. In fact, at some level that we all understand, that kind of government regulation contradicts the real heart of friendship, because you wouldn't be sure whether that friend is doing it because they love you and care for you, or whether they're doing it because the law forces them to do it.

There is only one intimate relationship in human affairs that has in every society in the history of the world been regulated by social norms, conventions, and laws, and that is marriage, and we've got to ask ourselves why. Why, with what is otherwise so deeply personal and intimate a relationship, be governed by law and regulation?

Well, to think that through, I think we need to take a look at what we're being asked to accept. We're being asked to accept the idea that a relationship between two men, two women, can somehow qualify for the respectable state of marriage. Now, when you look at that relationship, no matter how you look at it, at the end of the day it's about two people. It's about what they bring to the relationship and about what they get out of it. What they bring to it in terms of their needs, and desires, and expectations. What they get out of it in terms of their satisfaction, fulfillment, and pleasure. You have two people and they get together for their purposes and that's that. As a matter of fact, if you read some of the homosexual literature, it is the fact that homosexuality--unlike heterosexuality--isn't haunted by consequences that is often touted as an element of liberation in that sexuality that frees one to enjoy the pleasures and fulfillments of the relationship without regard for what might be the consequences.

But that actually is an important point, because it points to the fact that when a man and a woman get together in a relationship--particularly an intimate, sexual relationship--despite all the efforts that we may make, despite the condoms and the birth control pills, despite the rampant indulgences in things like abortion, guess what? When a man and a woman get together in an intimate sexual relationship, that relationship is always haunted by the possibility of consequences. Why?

Well because when a man and a woman get together, there is always, in spite of all the ingenuity people have brought to bear in our times and other times, there's always that possibility, isn't there, of the child. And, unlike what some want to believe, they'll say, "Oh, that's an accident." Well, no, it actually turns out that when you think through what sex is all about, sex is actually about the difference between the sexes. Now, you can talk about it till the cows come home, but at the end of the day only one thing constitutes the difference between the sexes. They are made differently for the sake of the role they play in the business of procreation. That's what sex is all about.

And I know this might be hard for some folks to understand. It's one of the reasons that I've often said that I don't know exactly what it may or may not be that two men or two women do when they get together. One thing I'm sure of--they don't have sex. No, seriously. As a matter of fact, their relationship represents a desire to turn away from sexuality, to deny the

distinction that is the essence of human sexuality, and to escape from that shadow of the consequences which is inherent in the male/female relationship. Because that relationship, pointing as it does toward the act of procreation, means that the child is not an accident. The child is the essence of human sexual relationship. The child is the heart of the expression of that relationship.

But it is true that what some have said about it, though, in terms of the difference between same-sex relationships and man/woman relationships, it is true because the man/woman relationship, pointing as it does toward those consequences, leaves one burdened--burdened with the prospect of responsibility, burdened with a sense that, somehow or another, something might come out of this that would engage one's whole life and attention. And that's the heart of it, don't you see? The heart of it is that in that male/female relationship, in that man/woman relationship, there is the seed of that prospect of responsibility, that acceptance of the burdens and obligations of family life that is the essence of marriage.

It's as I tell people, in some ways, marriage--and folks will laugh, but I say it, anyway--marriage is a little bit like the military. It's a little bit like the military because at the end of the day you do make a voluntary decision to go into it, but as those of us who are married know, that's just about the last voluntary decision you'll make. And that's especially true after you have children. After you have children, you no longer voluntarily decide when you go to bed, when you wake up, when you eat, etc. It's all decided for you. You can't even decide how long and how hard you're going to work, because you're going to work as long and hard as is necessary to take care of them until they are grown enough to take care of themselves.

Marriage is about obligation. Marriage is about responsibility. Marriage is about the willingness to enter into a vocation and an estate that, in the end, requires the strongest discipline of heart and of character. Not for one year, or two years, or ten years but for the whole of your life.

Now, here's the difference and here's what we've got to contemplate, because the question before the legislators, the question before the people of California, the question before America is not whether or not some group of people is going to have the right to marry. The question is whether we are going to understand marriage as hedonistic self-gratification or we're going to understand marriage as the acceptance of lifelong responsibility and obligation, grounded in the business of procreation.

A word, though, before we wax enthusiastic: how did we get here? Why are we in fact confronted by this assault now, wholesale throughout the country, on marriage? At one level you've got to understand that, over the course of the last 20, 30, and 40 years, folks who did not understand the real meaning of marriage brought us here--long before the homosexuals, because homosexuality, with respect to marriage, represents a certain understanding of human sexuality. An understanding that says it's about the pleasures, it's about the gratification, it's about the fulfillment, it's about the relationship, it's about what individuals can bring to it and take out of it. And long before the battle over homosexual marriage began, we had battles over divorce, we had battles over what should be the tie and bond of marriage, and we answered those questions the wrong way.

We answered those questions in such a way as to suggest that marriage is about pleasure and marriage is about relationship and marriage is about self-gratification. And once we've done that, why should it surprise us that homosexuals would come forward and say, "Well, we're just as good at pleasure and gratification as heterosexuals. We should be able to marry"?

If we want, in point of fact, to restore marriage to its true and respectable condition, then rule number one has to be to understand that the heart and the essence of marriage is not just relationship--it is procreation. The heart and essence and mission of marriage is not just to produce fulfillment for the parties involved; it is, rather, to guarantee the security of the future of the whole society by reproducing men and women who can bear and meet the burdens and responsibilities of citizenship and family life.

See, once we do that, we have brought ourselves back to a common sense position, and we

remove, to some extent, all this argument over discrimination, because if the marriage institution is essentially about procreation, then to say that it's between a man and a woman doesn't discriminate against same-sex couples any more than it would be discrimination for the government to say that I can't offer to fly people to the moon without benefit of a rocket ship. See, you'll notice that I don't have the equipment to fly to the moon, and being as how I'm not physically equipped to fly to the moon, telling me I can't carry passengers there is not discrimination! It's common sense.

The simple fact is that the true reason why licenses should not be issued to same-sex couples to marry is that they cannot marry. They are physically incapable of performing the mission of marriage, which, at the end of the day, is to reproduce the species.

Now, just as a side element, I'd like to visit a thought here, because this is a debate that, sadly, goes on even in Christian churches, in the defiance of common sense which we've just been talking about (but common sense is available to all people). It's also in defiance of the sense that we got from our Lord Jesus Christ. And I will speak here for a moment, if you don't mind--you will excuse me, I do it often--as a Christian. But I think it's important that Christian Americans look at this in a way that reflects the understanding Christ gave us. And He was pretty clear. When He was approached about the adultery question and He answered, well, Moses let you have divorce for the hardness of your heart. And then He reminded people of the understanding in Genesis, and He said, "For this reason does a man leave his mother and father, and cleave to his wife: and the two become one flesh."

When we're speaking to our Christian brethren who are telling us that, somehow or another, there is room in the Christian understanding for so-called same-sex marriage, I wish somebody would remind them of that passage and ask them a simple question: "When do the two become one flesh?" Because that's what Christ makes the essence of marriage.

When do the two become one flesh? Well, I'll tell you something. They do not become one flesh when they take the marriage vows, that's pretty evident. They do not become one flesh when they cross the threshold and set up shop and live together. They do not become one flesh even in the marriage bed. They long for it, they desire it. In ecstasy that God has provided them, they seek it with all their hearts--but at the beginning, and in the middle, and at the end of the act of procreation, they're still two bodies, striving to become one. No. Do you know when the two become one flesh? The two become one flesh, as we know today better than people have ever known it before in the history of the world, everything that is in seed in the being of mother and father is joined together in the child. It is in the child that they become one flesh.

That's why, by the way, I think that's pretty clearly why, in the old common sense understanding of marriage, remember there was a time when people actually talked about how so-and-so "had to" get married? (You remember that language. I know it's archaic now. Maybe we could bring it back into style--wouldn't be such a bad idea.) What sense did it make? Why did you "have to" get married? What they were basically saying was that a child was coming along. And you know what the child was understood to be? The child was understood to be the publication of the marriage. A marriage had already taken place and you had to go through the formality of declaring it, so that you would declare before the world your acceptance of your responsibilities and consequences.

And you see, that need to deal with the child and the consequences of reproduction, that's why marriage existed as a social institution. That's why the government gets involved.

Look at the history of the world. Do you know how much trouble is caused in societies by people fighting over kinship relationships, family rights, who's the mother, who's the father, who's the child, who responds to whom, who gets the inheritance? These are things that in the course of human history have torn societies and civilizations apart. And that's why in every society and civilization they realize that marriage had to be regulated beforehand. It had to be clear who society would recognize as parents, who society would recognize as their children, what would be the obligation of parents to children, children to parents. What would be the obligation of society to the family that they constituted. That's why marriage exists in the law. It exists not in order to create the marriage institution but in order to recognize,

support, and respect it because it was here long before governments and societies got here.

I think it's time that we put on notice the judges and the legislators and others who talk about this casually like it's some issue of sexual liberation, that in point of fact it's an issue that profoundly affects the social contract on which our society is based. Power is ceded to government to protect our rights and belongings. And what more essential belonging is there than to belong to a family--to know who your mother is, to know who your father is, to know who your brothers and sisters are in the eyes of God and therefore in the eyes of human beings?

When a society starts to go down a road where they withdraw their recognition from the natural institution of marriage, they have breached the social contract and they move the society toward dissolution, toward conflict, and toward self-destruction.

That's why, you see, I think we need to reflect on how this is coming about in our society, because it's not an accident. I was just in Massachusetts where the Supreme Court of Massachusetts declared that they have to accept same-sex marriage. Basically they have taken it upon themselves to dictate to the legislature what must be the content of the law on marriage. Now all of us should hear what I just said with a chill of resentment and apprehension. We live in a society that is supposed to be based on constitutional self-government--of, by, and for the people. If we remain aware, as I know we used to be--we used to learn in school all about the separation of powers. There's the executive, the legislative, the judicial. Do you know why the powers are separated? The powers are separated because the Founders knew that if you put any two of the powers of government in the same hands, you don't have freedom--you have tyranny. Three separate branches, three separate wills, sworn to uphold the Constitution. And when the judges decide what the Executive or the Legislature believes is contrary to the Constitution, then the Executive and the Legislature is obliged to say no to the judges. That's why they are separate branches.

Not so in Massachusetts.

All these people are saying, "Well, the judge says it. It must be law." The only law-making bodies in any of our constitutions, in any state and at the national level, are the elected representatives of the people--not the judges. But when the judges take it upon themselves to dictate the law to the Legislature, to crack the whip over the Executive and demand that their will be done, then they do not act as judges and they do not act in conformity to law. Then they act as tyrants and dictators and destroyers of our constitutional way of life!

I have to say I don't think it's an accident we are seeing this whole idea of same-sex marriage imposed upon the nation by these dictatorial means. Just as you've shown here in California, so it has been shown in almost every part of the nation--an open and clear appeal to the will of the people gets a resounding no! Because the people still have their common sense, whatever the judges may say. But this is being forced upon us against the will of the people, against the heart of the people, against the conscience of the people, against the faith of the people, against the right of the people to govern themselves when it comes to the substance of their laws.

Now, I know there are those who are going to argue, "But Alan, Alan, this is about rights. It's about the right of homosexuals to marry." No, it's actually not, because when we look at it, it turns out that they're not talking about the rights of homosexuals, they're talking about the right understanding of marriage--and they're trying to force upon society their understanding of what shall be right and wrong conduct when it comes to the institution of marriage.

Now, I understand people coming along, as they usually do, in their sophomoric ways, saying, "Well, you can't legislate morality"--and then it turns out, doesn't it, that every law that we pass involves distinguishing right conduct from wrong conduct according to a standard or code of conduct that we call the law.

That means that legislation is, at its heart, always about morality. When we decide what the tax rate shall be, we're deciding what shall be just for people to give, what just burdens they

will bear, that's a moral decision. When we pass criminal laws against fraud and theft and murder, we are passing judgment about morality. The difference, of course, in this case is that, yes, when it comes to whether or not a given action by the government has violated the laws and procedures already agreed on by the people, it is for the judges to decide conformity to law. But when it comes to deciding what shall be the substance of the law--not what is the law but what should be the law--that question is for the people and for their representatives. It is not for the courts!

When they take it away, as they have in this case, with respect to the most fundamental moral issue I can think of, don't believe it's an accident that they do what is destructive of marriage and the family in a way that destroys our system of self-government. These crises are one and the same. Don't we see this? We are not just here today in defense of the institution of marriage. For the means they are using to destroy the institution of marriage announces the real goal of this effort, and that is to destroy our institution of self-government. And they mean to do so especially by destroying that institution which is the source of our character, which is the basis of our self-discipline through which we pass on from one generation to the next our reverence for God and our respect for His will. They mean to destroy the family.

I think that it's important that we see the connections here, because we are faced with a wholesale assault on the moral foundations of our country. The destruction of marriage is one essential element, but it was preceded by another--something that, in one way or another, I'm sure has passed through the minds of some folks here. It's always mentioned in the media. People will get up and they'll talk about marriage as a God-ordained institution, and somebody in the media will write that that violates the separation of Church and State.

I've always thought it incongruous in America that the common sense of the people tolerates this kind of nonsense. Our country was founded on a simple principle: "All men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights." That's why we have self-government, that's why we have elections, that's why we have due process, that's why individual rights must be respected--because they come not from human law or constitution but from the Hand of the Creator, God.

I want somebody to explain to me how we can separate the people of this country from their reverence for God without separating them from the foundations of their liberty!

And that is precisely why, when they come to us and say, "Well, there is no natural family"--a woman in Arizona was actually threatened with prosecution for saying that same-sex marriage violated the natural family.

You do know, don't you, that the Declaration of Independence refers to "the laws of nature and nature's God"--that the people of this country claim all their rights, including their fundamental right to govern themselves, from an understanding that those rights come from the Hand of God and is reflected in the laws that govern us as human beings and that govern the universe by God's Will?

By bringing us to a point where we have denied the authority of God over marriage, they bring us to a point where we can no longer appeal to the authority of God for our freedom! That is the objective! That is the objective, that we will be a people no longer living in the presence of that authority by which we claim our freedom.

And once we have turned over to government the right to decide what the family is, first they'll have homosexual marriage, then anybody they want, and then guess what? They'll decide that marriage is irrelevant anyway. They will--just as they're moving in that direction in Sweden, where they've already gone far down the road on this experiment.

Family is the greatest single obstacle to totalitarianism, to government domination and control. I can understand why those people--call them socialists, call them liberals, call them whatever you want--I can understand why people who think that a government-dominated world will be some kind of utopia would want to destroy the family. I can't understand why a people

that wants to continue to live in freedom would let it happen.

One last point. Am I going to be forgiven if I become just a hair partisan for a moment? Now, I am not going to speak on behalf of any party, see, but I do want to talk to you about a party. There's a party in this country, and it includes folks who have lined up behind every kind of immorality and depravity you can name. They champion abortion, they champion same-sex marriage, they champion approach to law and sentencing that relieves individuals of responsibility for what they do. On every front and in every way, turn where you will, they have championed the destruction of the moral foundations of this nation. They are the party of sodomy and secularism and surrender of our heritage and our rights.

And the question I think it's time that every American put to themselves is not the question of whether they're Democrats or Republicans or Libertarians or Constitutionists, but whether or not they are going to belong to the party of sodomy, secularism, and surrender or to the party of God, and family, and freedom!

It's a question I think needs to be put by every one of us as individuals as we go to the polls. Look away from the labels, look away from the lies, look away from the manipulative deceptions and ask yourselves the simple question: "Where does this person stand on the real and true nature of marriage? Where does this person stand on the issue that is at the heart of our life and death struggle with terrorism--the issue of respect for innocent human life?"

We can no longer afford to act the way they want us to act. You know how they want us to act, don't you? They want us to act like Esau. They come to us every election time, bidding with each other over how big a mess of pottage they're going to put in front of us, for the sake of which we will sell, once again, our birthright of freedom. We will let them destroy the family and kill the innocent babes and undercut the character and discipline of our young people if we can get a little more of our own money back off the income tax, if we can get a little more of our own money in dependency payments from the government.

I know, myself, that I reject that prospect, see, because--I reject it especially because I'm a black American. A lot of people don't understand this, but see I look back on a heritage, a heritage where my ancestors actually had a guaranteed job. They had guaranteed job, guaranteed housing. Up to a certain point, they even had guaranteed medical care. People don't realize that, because if you're working somebody, you gotta keep them healthy enough to work. You understand?

So when these politicians come to me and they act like I'm supposed to be happy because they're going to give me a job and they're going to have free medical care and they're going to do all this other stuff, I look at them and I remember the words of Frederick Douglass, that the question isn't whether you have a good master or a bad master--it is to be your own master, as we should be master in the house of America!

But know this. If we do not reject those who are now seeking to destroy marriage, to tear us away from the godly foundations of our country, to rip away from us even our right as citizens to acknowledge and reverence God in our public places and institutions and laws--if we back them because they'll offer us more money and jobs, then we will end up, all of us, where my ancestors were: a free people no longer, but a people enslaved, enslaved by our own passions, our own delusions, our own failure to understand that freedom is not about what we get, it's about what we are willing to do for the sake of our liberty!

So I challenge all of you here. You must realize--and I hope people throughout this state and nation will understand--this is not the end of a battle. This is the beginning of a struggle that will prove life or death for our freedom. If we do not stand up to defend the natural family, if we do not stand up to defend the separation of powers and the right of the people to decide these issues, if we do not defend the right of people in conscience to have laws that reflect and respect their religious beliefs, then we shall be free no longer!

That is our task, that is our challenge. And I believe that in meeting it we must do what every previous generation of Americans have done. We must begin with the truth that, if it is indeed

within our power as a people to act in order to affect these changes and to bring our country back to a path of right thinking and decency, it's not a power we get from the Constitution, and it's not a power we get from the President, and it's not a power we get from the Congress, it's a power we get from our God, from our Lord, from our faith.

It is time for us to go forward boldly in that faith, to act in accordance with its convictions as citizens once again. By citizens of faith, America was founded, by citizens of faith slavery was defeated, by citizens of faith were more and more people enfranchised in liberty, and by citizens of faith awakening now to the challenge of this republic's most desperate hour shall we save this last best hope of earth;

That the blessings of liberty will indeed be passed from this to new generations;

That they shall live to look back upon us in this time of trial and not curse but bless us;

That in this the time, quietly, of the greatest challenge to America's spirit and the moral heart of its freedom, we did not forsake the truth, we did not forsake our faith, we did not forsake our belief that they, too, have the right to live in the years to come under God, in liberty.

