

Opinion: Church's gay marriage policy change a good thing

By Henry G. Brinton

The long evolution of marriage has continued in the Presbyterian Church (USA), with the decision last month to redefine marriage as “a unique commitment between two people, traditionally a man and a woman, to love and support each other for the rest of their lives.” Previously, marriage had been permitted in the church only “between a woman and a man.”

While many people fear that this change represents a departure from biblical authority, I am convinced that it brings us closer to the Christian ideal of the covenant of marriage – a promise-based relationship of life-long love and commitment, with deep roots in Scripture.

Traditional marriage has been in flux for thousands of years, with numerous elements discarded for good reason. For most of human history, marriage has been a financial decision determined in large part by property transfers. The wedding question “Who gives this woman to be married to this man?” is a remnant of this transaction – the pastor is asking the father of the bride to transfer ownership of his daughter to the groom. Good riddance to this practice.

Polygamy is another traditional marriage arrangement that most people now reject. Yes, it made sense in ancient Israel, when families needed to have as many children as possible, to herd the sheep, fight the wars and continue the family line. Polygamy was an efficient way to create the largest possible families, but it imposed second-class status on women. Monogamy is now the law in the United States, for good reason.

But polygamy does raise the question of procreation, which has been a central feature of marriage for most of human history. Biblical prohibitions against same-gender sexual activity (Leviticus 18:22) and masturbation (Genesis 38:9) are designed to encourage procreation, since these activities do not produce offspring. Today, many Christians consider procreation to be an essential aspect of marriage, and the Catechism of the Catholic Church says that “sexual pleasure is morally disordered when sought for itself, isolated from its procreative and unitive purposes.”

The Bible, however, does not put procreation at the heart of the covenant of marriage. In Genesis 2:18, God creates Adam and Eve and says, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” God’s decision to create Eve doesn’t emphasize procreation but stresses relationship. Later, the prophet Hosea suggests that the marriage relationship should be one of mutual love, justice, respect and fidelity (2:19-20), with the wife calling her spouse “my husband” and not “my master” (2:16).

Jesus did not marry, nor did he advise his disciples to marry. He certainly viewed marriage in a positive way, and discouraged divorce out of concern for the welfare of vulnerable women and children (Matthew 19:1-9). But procreation was not a top priority for Jesus or his followers.

At the heart of the message of Jesus is the commandment “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:39). This is lived out in numerous ways, including the life-long love and commitment that is at the heart of the covenant of marriage. Children can be produced by this relationship, but they are not essential to it. In fact, many couples who are too old to have children are married in Christian churches every day, with the full expectation that they will have rich and satisfying marriages.

With its redefinition of marriage, the Presbyterian Church

(USA) has focused in a biblical way on covenant – a relationship that can be entered into by any two people who are willing to promise to be faithful to each other for as long as they both shall live. Such a marriage is deeply rooted in the Christian faith, and does nothing to undermine traditional heterosexual marriage. If anything, the desire of same-gender couples to make promises to each other should be a challenge and an inspiration to heterosexual couples.

In his book “The Bible’s Yes to Same-Sex Marriage,” Presbyterian Mark Achtemeier writes, “a relationship of mutual love and commitment with a beloved partner reflects growth into the image of Christ’s self-giving love. It is precisely through giving ourselves away in this fashion that human beings find our true selves.”

Because these words are equally true for same-gender and heterosexual Christians, I am glad that my denomination has now changed its definition of marriage.

Henry G. Brinton is pastor of Fairfax Presbyterian Church in Virginia and author of “The Welcoming Congregation: Roots and Fruits of Christian Hospitality.”

Sugar – bad for psychological wellbeing

By Carolyn Gregoire, Huffington Post

We know that too much sugar is bad for our waistlines and our heart health, but now there’s mounting evidence that high levels of sugar consumption can also have a negative effect on brain health – from cognitive function to psychological

wellbeing.

While sugar is nothing to be too concerned about in small quantities, most of us are simply eating too much of it. The sweet stuff – which also goes by names like glucose, fructose, honey and corn syrup – is found in 74 percent of packaged foods in our supermarkets.

And while the World Health Organization recommends that only 5 percent of daily caloric intake come from sugar, the typical American diet is comprised of 13 percent calories from sugar.

Read the whole story

Winter to descend upon Lake Tahoe Basin

Winter is returning with a bit of a vengeance. A winter weather advisory is in effect for 24 hours beginning 5am Tuesday.

Expect 3 to 6 inches at lake level, with 6 to 12 inches above 7,000 feet.

The National Weather Service in Reno expects the worst driving conditions to be Tuesday morning. For up-to-date road conditions, click on the state icons on the home page of *Lake Tahoe News*.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Elton John, Brad Paisley added to Harveys lineup

Elton John and Brad Paisley are going to play at Harveys Outdoor Concert Series. This brings the number of summer concerts to 11 at this venue. More concerts are likely.

Elton John returns to the South Shore on Aug. 8 at 8pm. Tickets start at \$99.50 and top out at \$255.50.

Paisley will be in Stateline on June 11 at 6:30pm. Opening will be Justin Moore and Mickey Guyton. Tickets range from \$69.50 to \$135.50.

Other concerts are:

July 3, 7pm – Aerosmith, \$89.50 to \$235.50

July 18, 8:30pm – Imagine Dragons, \$89.50 to \$179.50

July 21, 7pm – Train, \$49.50 to \$99.50; opening are The Fray/Matt Nathanson

July 22, 8pm – Kenny Chesney, \$79.50 to \$149.50; opening Chase Rice

Aug. 7, 8pm – Jackson Browne, \$39.50 to \$89.50

Aug. 13, 6pm – Slightly Stoopid, \$37.50; opening are Dirty Heads/Stick Figure

Aug. 23, 6:30pm – Dierks Bentley, \$59.50 to \$99.50; opening are Kip Moore/Maddie & Tae/Canaan Smith

Sept. 5, 7:30pm – Sammy Hagar and the Circle, \$69.50 and \$75 (door); featuring Michael Anthony, Jason Bonham and Vic

Johnson

Sept. 9, 7pm – Dave Matthews Band, \$85.

Marines to gather in South Lake Tahoe

Veterans of 1st Battalion, 5th Marines will recognize the 10th anniversary Reunion for the Battle of Ramadi on July 25.

This event will bring together combat veterans for the first time in 10 years that is not a funeral. It will be at Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel in South Lake Tahoe.

Although 32 veterans are planning attendance, organizers say others are deterred because of the costs of the trip. That is why a GoFundMe account has been set up. For more info, go online.

Tiered water rates hinge on court decision

By Carolyn Lochhead, San Francisco Chronicle

California cities could lose a big tool to encourage water conservation in an intently watched court case from San Juan Capistrano, a picturesque mission town in Orange County where

a taxpayer group has challenged the city's authority to charge homeowners more money for using more water.

The Capistrano Taxpayers Association won in lower court, and a state appeals court is expected to rule any day. If the taxpayer group prevails, water districts say, it could make it harder for them to achieve the deep reductions in water usage Gov. Jerry Brown ordered last week.

With the Sierra snowpack at a record low of 5 percent of normal, water officials argue that pricing incentives for residential consumers are vital to encourage conservation. Since a severe drought in the 1980s, about two-thirds of urban water utilities have used tiered rates, which charge higher prices for higher volumes of water used.

But the taxpayers group won at trial court in 2013, arguing that Proposition 218, approved by California voters in 1996, bars any local government agency, including water utilities, from raising rates above cost. The city appealed and a decision is due this month.

Proposition 218 is a follow-up to Proposition 13, the landmark 1978 law that prevents local governments from raising property taxes without approval by two-thirds of voters. Looking to make up for that loss of revenue, local governments quickly began turning to various fees and assessments. Taxpayer groups responded with Proposition 218, which requires fees for essential services be based solely on the cost of providing them.

Read the whole story

All things Tahoe to be focus of festival

The 3rd annual Made In Tahoe Festival returns to Squaw Valley Memorial Day weekend, bringing two days of festivities that showcase local businesses, artisans, product designers, nonprofit organizations and performers all hailing from the Lake Tahoe Basin and Truckee region.

Festivalgoers can explore from more than 50 vendor booths throughout the village.

The event will be held from 11am-7pm May 23 and 11am-5pm May 24.

Made in Tahoe features live music from local bands and singer/songwriters throughout the day. The festival will have three performance stages.

Those interested in being a part of Made In Tahoe may submit an application through April 15. For more info, go online.

Running events to bring awareness to wildfire

University of Nevada Cooperative Extension is partnering with the Bureau of Land Management, Nevada State Parks and Desert Sky Adventures to put on the Wildfire Awareness Half Marathon and 5K Trail Run.

The May 9 event at Washoe Lake State Park will begin at 8am. Participants will run through some of Nevada's most

infamous wildfire fuels such as big sagebrush, bitterbrush, cheatgrass and rabbitbrush.

The race is part of Nevada Wildfire Awareness Month, a collaborative effort by local, state and federal firefighting agencies, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension and others. The event will promote this year's wildfire awareness message: Improve Your Odds – Prepare for Wildfire.

The event will also raise funds for the Wildland Firefighter Foundation, a nonprofit organization that provides assistance to fallen firefighters' families and to firefighters injured in the line of duty. All proceeds from the \$35 entry fee and donations collected during the event will be donated to the foundation. As part of the race event, there will be displays of educational information, fire engines and a visit from Smokey Bear.

To register for the race or for more information about Nevada Wildfire Awareness Month, go online.

Letter: Wyndham spends evening helping community

To the community,

Bread & Broth's mission is to feed community members who are struggling with hunger. Thanks to the tremendous support of individuals, organizations, churches and businesses from the Lake Tahoe South Shore community, B&B has been providing nutritious meals to anyone who attends our dinners for over 25 years. Our Adopt A Day of Nourishment program is just one way our sponsors can support our program and feed up to 130 meals

for just \$250.

A frequent sponsor for B&B's meals is Wyndham Vacation Ownership, which hosted the Adopt A Day dinner on March 30.

"Wyndham sponsors and volunteers for four Adopt A Days a year," said Sue Harley, a Wyndham recruiter. "We love being able to give back and support the needs of our community."

Due to the additional generosity of Wyndham, the dinner guests were given toothpaste and shampoo/conditioner samples to supplement their food filled give-away bags provided by B&B and local stores.

Helping the B&B volunteers with the dinner event, Harley was joined by fellow Wyndham associates Jacob Garcia, quality assurance; Kelly Osio, administrative assistant; and Cassie Hamilton, marketing. This great group of sponsor volunteers worked diligently to give back to those in need and make the evening a great experience for the evening's diners. B&B would like to thank Wyndham Vacation Ownership and its employees for their efforts to help those in need in our community.

Carol Gerard, Bread & Broth

Calif. drought tests history of endless growth

By Adam Nagourney, Jack Healy and Nelson D. Schwartz, New York Times

LOS ANGELES — For more than a century, California has been the state where people flocked for a better life — 164,000 square miles of mountains, farmland and coastline, shimmering with

ambition and dreams, money and beauty. It was the cutting-edge symbol of possibility: Hollywood, Silicon Valley, aerospace, agriculture and vineyards.

But now a punishing drought – and the unprecedented measures the state announced last week to compel people to reduce water consumption – is forcing a reconsideration of whether the aspiration of untrammelled growth that has for so long been this state's driving engine has run against the limits of nature.

The 25 percent cut in water consumption ordered by Gov. Jerry Brown raises fundamental questions about what life in California will be like in the years ahead, and even whether this state faces the prospect of people leaving for wetter climates – assuming, as Mr. Brown and other state leaders do, that this marks a permanent change in the climate, rather than a particularly severe cyclical drought.

This state has survived many a catastrophe before – and defied the doomsayers who have regularly proclaimed the death of the California dream – as it emerged, often stronger, from the challenges of earthquakes, an energy crisis and, most recently, a budgetary collapse that forced years of devastating cuts in spending. These days, the economy is thriving, the population is growing, the state budget is in surplus, and development is exploding from Silicon Valley to San Diego; the evidence of it can be seen in the construction cranes dotting the skylines of Los Angeles and San Francisco.

But even California's biggest advocates are wondering if the severity of this drought, now in its fourth year, is going to force a change in the way the state does business.

Read the whole story