

As he did in the previous chapter, Davis takes pains to again establish that homosexuality and gay marriage (he does not discuss transgender people) have moral and religious grounding on both sides of the debate. Davis once again reminds us that in order to proceed forward into substantive conversation and debate, we need to first dig down deeper as we move beyond scriptural proof-texting, fear-mongering, and public shaming of phobias. Moral and religious arguments both in favor of homosexuality and gay marriage, and against, are more complex and nuanced than many of us have taken the time to investigate.

Davis refers to three primary sources in his examination of the arguments against homosexuality and gay marriage. David Novak runs parallel alongside official Catholic doctrine and dogma. Namely, both insist that sex must be both unitive and procreative in order for it to be natural and orderly. Novak also strongly advocates complementarianism. That is, the human inclination towards self-absorption is necessarily mitigated by the equal human inclination towards finding one's complement; for the "other" who is fundamentally different. Novak, being non-Christian, fails to see the role God might play in this inclination. Stanley Grenz however, as a Christian thinker and writer, does contend that sexual difference is part of the *imago dei* and that our embodied maleness and femaleness is in part defined by our interaction(s) with the opposite sex. Grenz further contends that "heterosexual marriage ritualizes the intimate and exclusive coming together of two into one that symbolizes the love that binds the Trinity together, as well as our own union with the Divine".¹ Grenz further insists that without the appropriate complementary parts of male and female this intimacy cannot be achieved.

When looking into arguments in favor of homosexuality and gay marriage, Davis again comes to help us see that those who advocate in favor of such do so in reference to the established biblical tradition of social justice. Further, as a potential mutual starting point for dialogue and conversation, liberals *also* recognize the unitive function, love and commitment, of human sexuality just as conservatives do. They claim that it is this unitive function which gives primary meaning to our sexual lives thereby making the procreative possibilities of secondary importance. The social justice angle also allows those supporting gay marriage to call to societies attention the various failings throughout history, and in current time, of the nuclear family. Unfortunately, we must be reminded that the nuclear family has been a place where abuse has been tolerated. Those in favor of gay marriage also point out the decline of the nuclear family, that started long before Harvey Milk came on the scene in the 70's, and the advent of an increasing plurality of differing family units. Single parents, grandparents, co-parenting divorcees, and other guardians are increasingly raising children outside of the nuclear family. Liberals would argue that perhaps the time has come for a re-imagining of what family is and could be. And wouldn't it be amazing if biblical ideals like love, grace, mercy, acceptance, and forgiveness led the way in this imagining?

Both conservatives and liberals would be wise to see, hear, and apply the strengths and insights of one another's arguments; as well as seeing the deficiencies in their own. "The claim that raising children within gay marriages is detrimental to the children's emotional and social development, for instance, has little data to support it. At the same time, enough studies have confirmed the benefit that children receive from *stable* (emphasis added) two-parent homes - and role models of both genders - that liberals need to take more seriously this component of the conservative defense of

¹ Davis, James Calvin. In Defense of Civility: How Religion Can Unite America on Seven Moral Issues That Divide Us. Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, KY; 2010. p 92

marriage.”² Davis concludes his thoughts this way: “conservatives are right when they insist that choices about ‘acceptable’ sex and forms of marriage cannot be simply private matters, and when they demand that religion has a real stake in the debate. But liberals are right to remind us that the forms marriage takes are not static ideas dropped down from heaven, but contingent (at least in part) on the moment in history in which we find ourselves. How to figure out what this moment demands is the task before us all.”³ In short, together, unified, is the way we go forward. May it be so.

² Davis, James Calvin. In Defense of Civility: How Religion Can Unite America on Seven Moral Issues That Divide Us. Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, KY; 2010. p 100

³ Ibid. p 101