

**JULY—2009**

*Iowa District West*

# Human Care

## ***“LCMS and Homosexuality—Gay Marriages”*** *(from an article submitted in Dec. 2007 by Pr. Asmus)*

Currently, there is an ongoing debate happening among Christian churches, not only in Iowa, but throughout America. Topics in this debate include: homosexuality, gay rights, same-sex marriage, freedom, tolerance, homophobia, and Christian love. While the discussion continues, you may be asking, “What does our church believe and teach about these issues?” First, what does the Sixth Commandment say?

**“You shall not commit adultery.”**

What does this mean?

**We should fear and love God that we lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do, and husband and wife love and honor each other.**

God desires for us to live an abundant life (John 10:10), and for that reason, He has established boundaries in each Commandment that our lives not be torn and ripped apart in sinful behavior (thought, word, and deed). He has created us as sexual beings, that we may experience sexual pleasure and intimacy, but only within marriage—the “one flesh” union of husband and wife.

Whether one is heterosexual or homosexual, this means that there is only one safe place for sexual intercourse, that being within marriage. Therefore, sexual activities, such as adultery, fornication (sexual intercourse outside of marriage), lust, sexual fantasy, and homosexual behavior are clearly outside His will for us, and are sinful. Whether our government makes/interprets laws that allow such behavior, these behaviors remain sin in God’s eye. God’s Law remains firm, yet His love for all remains constant. Jesus paid the ultimate price for the forgiveness and salvation of all, but this precious forgiveness is granted only to those who the Holy Spirit draws

in sincere repentance and contrition, confessing our sins before Him (1 John 1:8-9). To be contrite means that one is truly sorry for sins (Ps. 51:17). To repent means that we turn away from our sin toward God, trusting Him for our forgiveness, and then trusting Him for strength and guidance to walk in the light of His will for us (Gal. 5:25).

Such terms as “acceptance” and “tolerance” sound nice, because they are couched within a culture that has no moral absolutes, and no axiom of truth. Some voices even demand that Christians be more tolerant and less judgmental: “Let’s just love each other and get along.” Others say, “How can it be so wrong when it feels so right?” Still others say, “I can’t help what I do because God made me this way.”

So, what can we do/say about sexual sins, whether they be heterosexual or homosexual in nature? First, let’s grow up in our faith and knowledge: “Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ” (Eph. 4:14-15). Secondly, we take our stand. “Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted” (Gal. 6:1). Thirdly, remember that our purpose is to discern, not to judge; to restore, not to condemn. It’s not about what you want, I want, or what others want. It’s about God and His holy will for us all. “Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows...Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up” (Galatians 6:7-9).

## *"Life thoughts" for you from Lutherans for Life*

The answer to so many issues we face today doesn't lie in making more laws. While the law helps to curb human behavior, it cannot change people within. Only the Gospel has the power to transform us into becoming all that God has created us to be, people who belong to God and live in His light.

God the Father sent His Son because He loves life. God the Son paid the price necessary to redeem life. God the Holy Spirit calls people to faith and gives them new life now and eternally (John 3:1-17). Father, Son, and Holy Spirit:: three Persons, one God! The Holy Trinity is for Life!



From the rubble of Jerusalem, Jeremiah writes Lamentations, where he literally grieves over the unfaithfulness of God's people. Yet in the middle of this short dirge is an uplifting message of hope based on the faithfulness of God! (3:22-33). While everybody else is focusing on how bad things are, let's be Jeremiahs! Let's speak of God's faithfulness which sustains us in all circumstances and frees us to be faithful and live faithfully!

## **Building Healthy Families** (a helpful tip from Lutheran Family Service of Iowa)

Do your children know that you love them unconditionally? Do your children know that God loves them, no matter what? Or do they think you only love them when they are "good?" Take away the pressure. Help your child understand that you will always love them simply because of who they are, not because of what they do or accomplish. Show them that a parent's love is unconditional and unending, just like our heavenly Father's love is for us all!

John 13:34-35 (Jesus says, "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.")

Lutheran Family Service of Iowa has an office near you. Call their toll free number: 1-800-622-7285.

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## *A prayer for your kitchen table*

Lord, we thank You for Your grace,

Our needs are met here in this place.

Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest. Let these gifts to us be blest.

Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good,

And His mercy endures forever. Amen

