

261 Feedback – minor or major issue?

I've had feedback recently from six of the eight friends unhappy to sanction gay marriage, and it has come into clearer focus now.

For me, the issue is: should gay Christians be allowed to follow their conscience and consummate their love for one another? Something private and personal – a relatively minor issue.

But I think my eight friends want to insist that **any** kind of gay sex is definitely wrong, per se. To deny that is a challenge to the Bible. This, for them, makes it such a major issue that some Anglican churches are talking about not paying their dues to the diocese, and even considering separating from the church.

Anyway, to feedback. One friend writes,

I have read Amazing Love and lots of other pro-gay 'marriage' material and am not convinced.

As I said, I don't feel the need to convince anyone that gay marriage is 'right', just that it should be up to individuals, and not be dictated by the church hierarchy. It seems more akin to the issue of eating food offered to idols.^[1 Cor 9] Paul says it's not wrong per se, but a matter of how it might affect fellow believers – and we are affecting gay Christians big time!

Re ^[259] ... *Where is the line to be drawn then and whose line is it, mine or God's? Why is it that we are being expected to affirm something that for thousands of years has been seen as wrong?*

Just because a view has been accepted for thousands of years doesn't make it true and immutable. God has gradually got us to change our minds about a number of things over the centuries, most notably slavery, and about women being seen as subordinate. Those changes of mind on specifics are because they go against broader biblical principles, as demonstrated in the life, teaching and example of Jesus.

Who draws the line? We do! God expects **us** to decide, as individuals and as churches. God sets the general principles; we decide on the detail. Yes, it would be much simpler to just say, 'The Bible says such and such, and that decides it', but issues are rarely that simple, and circumstances and cultures change. Sorry, but we have to take responsibility, and we are answerable to God for our decisions. (And there are some very big decisions in the air, as above.)

[let's not go on arguing because] there are many more issues that the church, at a local level, needs to be discussing and taking a stand on, rather than just caving into the increasingly anti-Christian culture of today's society.

I'll leave that comment for you to think about, but gay marriage *must* be a pretty major issue if churches are willing to split over it.

More importantly, how do under-55 non-churchgoers (including my own family) view this? You can **say**, loud and long, 'love the sinner, hate the sin', but what they **see** is a church that condemns

a person just for being gay; and they now see one half of the church condemning the other half for not maintaining the truth of the Bible.

This is the reality, folks! And if you don't believe me, ask any non-churchgoing under-55. Remember, if our attitudes are hindering the gospel, we're answerable to God.

Paul Bev. 8.4.23