

'Marriage On Trial' Details Reasons Why Natural Marriage Should Be Defended

Reviewed by Frank York

Dr. Bill Maier, a child and family psychologist with Focus on the Family and Glenn T. Stanton, social research and cultural affairs director at Focus have recently written *Marriage on Trial: The Case Against Same-Sex Marriage And Parenting* (Intervarsity Press).

Maier and Stanton clearly state in the introduction their purpose for writing this book: "In these pages we explore Why marriage can't be anything we want it to be. To do so is to radically redefine a fundamental and historic human institution. *To do so is to deconstruct humanity.*"

In the "Acknowledgement," they thank NARTH Scientific Advisory Committee member Dr. A. Dean Byrd as well as Dr. Joseph Nicolosi and his wife Linda for encouraging them in this project.

The authors present the case against gay marriage and gay parenting in a helpful question and answer format, which includes such basic questions as: "Does it really matter how we define marriage?" and "Why aren't loving parents enough for children?"

Each section of the book also provides a "Cheat Sheet" that outlines the main points of the section for the reader as well as succinct summaries at the end of each chapter to help the reader easily grasp the concepts outlined.

This is a meaty, fact-filled book and one that is also filled with sound philosophical reasons why marriage must not be redefined by gay activists to be whatever they wish it to be.

In Section III of the book, the authors debunk the many myths surrounding homosexuality including the claim that gays are "born" that way. This section also lists the serious mental and physical health consequences of a gay lifestyle and the dangers that this behavior poses to our culture.

Dr. Maier and Stanton argue persuasively in Chapter 10 that children need both a mother and a father to develop normally. Men cannot be mothers and women cannot be fathers. Both fathers and mothers provide unique skills to boys and girls—and these are not interchangeable. Children learn different life skills from fathers than they do from mothers and vice versa. They note: "Children growing up in intentionally mother-only or father-only homes will suffer in terms of lack of confidence, independence and security. Boys and girls will be a greater risk for gender confusion, abuse, and exploitation from other men. They will be less likely to have healthy respect for both women and men as they grow into adulthood." (pgs. 119-220)

One of the most insightful chapters, in my mind, is Chapter 15: "Do All Homosexuals Want To Get Married?" The authors survey three schools of thought about gay marriage in the gay activist community. Some argue for gay marriage as an equality issue; others view marriage as a heterosexist institution that is oppressive and they seek to destroy the concept of marriage altogether; and a few voices argue that the culture should not tinker with marriage as an institution designed to nurture children.

Among those arguing for gay marriage are Andrew Sullivan, Jonathan Rauch and Evan Wolfson. Others like Paula Ettelbrick, Nancy Polikoff and Judith Stacey argue that marriage should be deconstructed as an oppressive, archaic institution.

Dr. Paul Nathanson, however, represents a minority view among gay theorists. He says that "it is risky to tinker with the institution of marriage and that legalizing same-sex unions could endanger the health and well-being of society." Nathanson has written: "...advocates of gay marriage have made no serious attempt to consider the possible harms and object to those who want more time to assess the evidence from other periods or other cultures."

The authors conclude their book with an interview with former homosexuals Mike Haley and Melissa Fryrear, both gender affairs experts with Focus on the Family. In asking the question: "Is there hope for the homosexual?" both of them answer in the affirmative.

Haley observes that hope is available for homosexuals through faith and through such organizations as NARTH and Exodus International, which provide resources and counseling for individuals struggling with same-sex issues.

Fryrear notes: "I really like the words *progress* and *process*, and leaving homosexuality has certainly been multifaceted. So many people and so many events in my life were involved, but the most important part was that I eventually became a Christian."

Marriage On Trial provides the reader with sound reasoning and excellent studies and statistics on the importance of the natural mother-father family as the foundational unit of society. It is well worth reading and discussing.

Dr. Bill Maier, Glenn Stanton, *Marriage On Trial: The Case Against Same-Sex Marriage And Parenting*, (Downers Grove, Ill, Intervarsity Press, 2004, 200 pages, \$15.)