



something **greater >** than
marriage

A Response to the SCOTUS Decision by Christopher Yuan and Rosaria Butterfield

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The Supreme Court of the United States of America has made gay marriage legal in all 50 states and much of our country celebrates. The world with its rainbow flags waving proudly and plentifully was our world. We locked arms with our LGBT loved ones and friends and believed that they were truly and honestly our family of choice.

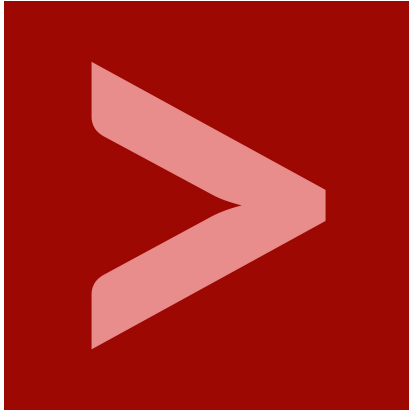
This is the world that we, Christopher and Rosaria, helped build—a world pursuing dignity and equality. The people you see celebrating the recent SCOTUS decision to redefine marriage (and with marriage, personhood) would have been us, not very long ago.

In 1999, when Jesus Christ revealed His saving grace and love to each of us, we learned that our unbelief, and the idolatrous sexual lusts that flowed from it, were no longer matters of personal choice. We accepted that following Jesus meant giving up everything. We understood that repentance meant fleeing from anything that embodied the temptations that we knew best and loved most. But even prior to our conversion to Christ, God provided the love and care of Christians, people who became for us a new family, new brothers and sisters and mothers and fathers in Christ—who knew and loved us before we were safe to love. Christians loved, accepted, included, and surrounded us with biblical truth *while we were still sinners*, thus modeling the Lord Himself.

Therefore, when the Holy Spirit changed our hearts, we came to know this: *the gospel is costly and worth it.*

The days after the Supreme Court's ruling are like the days before it: God is seated on His throne in power and majesty—and one day, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess Him.

We affirm that God has ordained marriage to be the union of a husband and a wife which Jesus himself restated in Mark 10:6-8 and Matthew 19:4-5. But even though some in our culture believe as Justice Kennedy wrote that marriage “embodies the highest ideals of love,” we disagree. Earthly marriage does not have a monopoly on love. God is love (1 John 4:7-19). The pinnacle of love is God's love for us in Christ. Nothing is greater than that.



Mystery and Reflection

In actuality, marriage is a mystery and a reflection of a greater reality. Truly, the highest ideal of love is Christ's love for his bride, the church. In Ephesians 5 and Revelation 21, marriage is analogous to Christ's redemption: the marriage consummation between the bride (redeemed sinners) and the Groom (Christ) shows that all redeemed people are married to Christ. Only in Christ can anyone experience the full definition of love and acceptance. As important as earthly marriage and family are, they are both fleetingly temporary, while Christ and the family of God (the church) are wondrously eternal.

We have failed to show the LGBT community another option to marriage—which is singleness—lived out in the fruitful and full context of God's community, the family of God. This does not mean as Justice Kennedy wrote that singles are “condemned to live in loneliness,” but that singles can have intimate and fulfilling relationships full of love. This is not a consolation prize. It can be just as rewarding and fulfilling as marriage.

Defining marriage as being between a husband and a wife appears unfair to the LGBT community, in part because a life of singleness is viewed to be crushingly lonely. Have we in the church inadvertently played into that lie with our idolatry of marriage while being pejorative and silent toward singleness? If singleness is unfair, then it is no wonder that marriage has become a right. Just as the LGBT community appealed to the rest of the world for dignity and respect, it is time for the church to fight for the dignity and respect of single women and single men.

Defining Moment

Some are now comparing the Supreme Court's decision on gay marriage with the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision on abortion. There is an important lesson for us to learn from the pro-life movement. Today, there are more pro-life millennials than others from previous generations who champion pro-life. When pro-life people, made up of more than just evangelical Christians, began fighting less and caring more for unborn babies and for women with unplanned pregnancies *just as they were*, a shift in focus brought about an important change. The question stands: will we begin caring for the LGBT community *just as they are*?

This is a defining moment in history. We have a faithful opportunity to shine for the gospel. Will we point people to marriage as the “highest ideal of love”? Or will we point people—whether married or single—to a life of costly discipleship pursuing the embodiment of love, Jesus Christ himself? The decision is ours to make.

In Christ's love,

Christopher Yuan and Rosaria Butterfield

Lovingly endorsed by our families: Kent Butterfield, and Leon and Angela Yuan

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