

# Valentine's Day Redefined?

by

Dan A. Synnestvedt

In several countries of the world, one day a year is set aside for the celebration of romantic love and marriage. It is generally known as "Valentine's Day." In the United States, Valentine's Day is an occasion for elementary school children to exchange innocent greeting cards and candy hearts with messages written on them like "Be my valentine". Men buy flowers, give jewelry, and pay special attention to their spouse, fiancé, or girl friend.

For at least the past six hundred years, February 14 has been associated not only with the third century Christian martyr, St. Valentine, but also with the exchange of affections and courtship between men and women.<sup>1</sup> In recent years, however, this sweet holiday has been accompanied by a troubling trend in Western countries: the increasing legal and moral acceptance of a profoundly false redefining of romantic love and marriage.

This altered definition of marriage and romance is one that aims to legitimate in law and society the sexual attraction of *any* two people for any amount of time, regardless of their sex. Since I am an American, let me use the United States as an example. Thirty years ago the laws concerning divorce were changed to make divorce easier and to de-criminalize adultery. Last year saw the legal approval of homosexual relations by the U.S. Supreme Court and a state court in Massachusetts, and its

ecclesiastical approval by some churches when they ordained openly practicing homosexual men as ministers and bishops.<sup>2</sup>

In an effort to stem the tide of judicial activism and minority pressure, an amendment to the U.S. Constitution has been introduced into Congress. The amendment, promoted by Alliance for Marriage (a non-partisan, ecumenical, multi-ethnic group), reads as follows:

Marriage in the United States shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman. Neither this Constitution or the constitution of any state, nor state or federal law, shall be construed to require that marital status or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon unmarried couples or groups.

Putting aside the details of this amendment and other legal solutions, the general question to ponder is this: Should a New Church person take action to support heterosexual monogamous marriage on the civil plane of life, or is the redefining of marriage and romance something a New Church person can passively accept or even actively promote? Is it acceptable if Valentine's Day is redefined? On the basis of my research, I have concluded that heterosexual monogamous marriage needs to be supported in the civil law and through social pressure. But let us consult the Word together for guidance on this important, and now pressing, question.

### *The Metaphysics of Marriage*

Since this is an emotionally-charged issue for some people, it is essential to first consider passages from the Heavenly Doctrines that teach about marriage, from the

metaphysical foundation of marriage on the spiritual plane of life to the laws regulating marriage on the civil plane of life.<sup>3</sup>

An inclination and also a capacity for conjunction as though into one was implanted in man and woman *from creation*, and *man and woman still have* this inclination and capacity in them. That this is so appears from the book of creation, and at the same time from what the Lord said. In the book of creation, which we call Genesis, we read:

Jehovah God fashioned the rib which He had taken from the man into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And the man said, "This one, this time, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman (*'ishshah*), because she was taken from man (*'ish*). For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and cling to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."  
(Genesis 2:22-24)

The Lord said something similar in Matthew:

Have you not read that He who made them from the beginning...male and female..., said, "For this reason a man shall leave father and mother and cling to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh"? Therefore they are no longer two, but one flesh. (Matthew 19:4-6)

It is apparent from these verses that woman was created out of man, and that they each have both an inclination and a capacity for reuniting themselves into one. (CL/ML 156)

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament proclaim that men and women were purposefully created for each other. That a man and a woman are intentionally designed to cling together means that this is the ideal of creation, not a chance event of a merely natural process or the psychological projections of a bourgeois bachelor. Heterosexual marriage is a metaphysical standard, a norm based in the structure of reality. Note that one does not need to draw upon controversial passages about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah or "evils not to be named" (CL/ML 450, 459) to

support this conclusion. Any Jew or Christian that takes the creation story seriously can see that God intended that a man and a woman marry one another.

Married love is from the Lord, and it corresponds to the marriage of the Lord and the church. It descends from the marriage of between good and truth. It is *the fundamental love* and the head of all celestial and spiritual loves. It is truly the seedbed of the human race and consequently of the angelic heaven. *The use it serves is thus more excellent than the other uses in creation.* (CL/ML 143)

Again, the metaphysical basis of the marriage relationship is asserted:

heterosexual marriage is an essential aspect of creation, not a social construction of ancient nomadic or agrarian culture. A man's body and a woman's body were designed by the Lord for physical conjunction and reproduction so that the outmost physical plane of life can correspond to, first, the couple's state of mind and, second, to the kind of relationship the Lord and the church can have.

In addition, we see how important married love, and so marriage, is to the Lord relative to all the other uses in creation. God not only intended marriage between a man and a woman, but God also intended new human beings who would live to eternity as a result of their becoming one flesh. In other words, through our cooperation God created the family, and this use is elevated to the top of the list of uses. Through marriage, the Lord lets us have a taste of the joy that He experiences when He is creating and conjoined with His creation. The fundamental metaphysical principle of marriage is this: to be, means to be conjoined, for where there is no conjunction, there is no being (AC 5002). This applies to relationships on many levels of life, from our relationship with the Lord, to the relationship between the good an individual wills and

the truth an individual knows, to the marriage relationship. Yet not all conjunctions are heavenly; heavenly conjunctions require a commitment to spiritual selflessness.

True married love is a chaste love, and has nothing in common with unchaste love. It is with *one* and *only one* of the *opposite* sex, with *all others set aside*, for it is a love of the spirit and consequently of the body, and not a love of the body and consequently of the spirit, that is, it is not a love that infests the spirit. (CL/ML 44:5)

If there was any doubt about God's intention in the Old or New Testament concerning His ideal for the human race, this passage clears it up. True married love is monogamous and heterosexual. It stems from a transcendental union and this reality is then imaged on the material plane.

These blessings [of innocence, peace, tranquillity, inmost friendship, complete trust, bliss, felicity, delight, pleasure, and happiness] are not at all possible except in a *marriage of one man with one wife*. (CL/ML 181)

In other words, despite appearances to the natural eye, blessings from God are not possible with one man and several wives, or one woman and several husbands, or two "husbands", or two "wives", or some other multi-partner or homosexual configuration. While this passage is stating the case negatively, i.e., these blessing are *not* possible except..., it is important to keep in mind the general context for it. Married Love is a book that tells people how to experience the deepest most satisfying delights and happiness known to humanity. The reason the Lord is communicating this important qualification is so that we might rightly order our liberty and enjoy heavenly happiness. It is certainly not because God hates people.<sup>4</sup> New Church people know that

the Lord does not hate anyone, that He is Divine Love and Wisdom, and His greatest wish is to enter into a loving relationship with us and so render us happy.

**Nevertheless, marriages in the world are to continue to the end of life.** We cite this point to present more clearly to the eyes of reason how *necessary, useful and true* it is that in marriages where married love is not genuine, it should still be affected or be made to appear as though it were. It would be different if marriages once entered into were not compacts *to the end of life*, but could be dissolved at will. Such was the case in the Israelite nation, which arrogated to itself the right to put away wives for any reason, as is apparent from this account in Matthew:

The Pharisees...came..., saying to (Jesus), "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason?"

Then when Jesus answered that it was not lawful to divorce a wife and marry another excepting for licentiousness, they replied that Moses had nevertheless commanded them to give her a certificate of divorce and put her away. And the disciples said,

If such be the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.  
(Matthew 19:3-10)

Since the marriage covenant is accordingly a covenant for life, it follows that appearances of love and friendship between married partners are necessary.

The principle that marriages once contracted are to continue on to the end of life in the world is based on *Divine law*, and being based on this, it is a matter also of *rational law* and therefore of *civil law*. It is based on the Divine law which says that it is not lawful to divorce a wife and marry another excepting on the ground of licentiousness, as cited above. It is a matter of rational law, because rational law is founded on spiritual law, since the Divine law and rational law are the same. In the light of the one and the other together, or by considering the rational law in the light of the Divine law, it may appear to a great number of people *what monstrous and destructive ruinations of society and dissolutions of marriages would result if divorcings of wives were at the good pleasure of husbands prior to death*. What monstrous and destructive ruinations of society would result may be seen in some measure in the narrative account in which the origin of married love was discussed by the people gathered from the nine kingdoms, nos. 103-114, to which it is unnecessary to add further arguments. (CL/ML 276)

For the "me generation" of any culture, this passage constitutes a "hard saying".

Why should the modern, or postmodern, unencumbered individualist put up with a

marriage that is no fun and a partner who is seen as boring? Why not engage in adventurous liaisons with a variety of people? There are two reasons.

First, keeping one's promise to be committed to another human being of the opposite sex until the end of one's mortal existence is a very powerful means of spiritual growth. If we believe that this message of fidelity is from God, and that God is love and wisdom itself, then we should also believe that God is telling us to remain faithful to our marriage covenant because it will help us to become regenerate. How? By consistently putting the gratification of our selfish desires for variety, "fun", and license behind our desire to follow the Lord's path, we rightly order our loves so that they mirror heaven. In the beginning, love makes the marriage, but then the marriage will make the love. Unlike the typical homosexual relation or that of "open marriage", being committed in full fidelity to loving one person who is *truly* other than oneself does wonders for our capacity to become increasingly human and reflect the likeness of God (who also loves those who are truly other, that is, finite). In a society geared toward immediate results and instant gratification, this can seem very difficult, if not impossible. Yet with God all things—even order in sexual relations—are possible.

The second reason that is emphasized in the above passage and in the two that follow is that by keeping our promise to remain married, we prevent "monstrous and destructive ruinations" of society.<sup>5</sup> If we keep our part of the marriage covenant faithfully to the end of life in this world, this, too, helps us attain heavenly happiness. How? Again, by consistently putting the needs of other people--in this instance society

in general, our local community, or our church community--ahead of the satisfaction of our selfish desires.

### *Marriage and Civil Society*

Notice that this principle of marriage is a matter of civil law because it descends from rational law and, ultimately, Divine law. In other words, our legal code can and ought to reflect rational and Divine law. Where the Divine law or revelation is silent, we must make use of our prudence and reason carefully from Divine principles in order to apply them to the civil plane of life. But, as we will see, revelation is not silent, but very vocal, when it comes to direct teachings on law and marriage.

Toward the end of the chapter on the origin of married love from the marriage of good and truth, Swedenborg relates his experience of a symposium on the origin and potency of married love. Representatives from various European kingdoms gathered in a palace to discuss their views on the matter. Each room in the palace was located under a window. When discussion ended, their written answers were read aloud by an angel.

We fellow countrymen under our window have decided that the origin of married love is the same as the origin of love for the opposite sex, because it results from it. The difference is only that a love for the opposite sex is unrestricted, uninhibited, liberated, indiscriminate and fickle, while married love is restricted, directed, contained, sure and constant. Married love has therefore been prescribed and established by the prudence of human wisdom, because *otherwise there would be no empire, no kingdom, no commonwealth, indeed no society*, but people would roam through the fields and forests in bands and troops with licentious and stolen women, and they would flee from place to place to escape bloody slaughter, rape and pillage, by which the whole human race would be wiped out of existence. (CL/ML 107)

We fellow countrymen in our party looked around for the causes of the origin of married love, and we agreed on two. One of these is the proper upbringing of children, and the other, the clear claim of heirs to their inheritances.

We selected these two, because they are aimed and directed toward the same objective, this being the public good. This is achieved by these means, because children conceived and born of married love become the proper and true offspring of both parents; and as objects of a parental love that is deepened by their being of legitimate descent, they are raised to become the heirs of all their parents' possessions, both spiritual and natural. *Reason sees that the public good is founded on a proper upbringing of children and on the clear claim of heirs to their inheritances.*

...married love has engraved on it the salvation of the whole human race, which is what we mean by the public good. (CL/ML 109)

This narrative account ends with an African entering and, after he has correctly identified the origin and potency of married love as God, the prize (a gold miter) is awarded to him (CL/ML 113-14).<sup>6</sup>

The reasons presented here for encouraging and supporting marriage throughout life on this earth are not lofty ones. Yet these pragmatic considerations ought to make the civil and moral maintenance of marriage clear to people who do not have a belief in Divine law. Clearly these passages are suggesting that it is the wild, unrestrained behavior of men and the chaotic consequences for women and children that lead to the destruction of society and bring an end to civilization. People with common sense can see that divorce apart from adultery undermines society and the public good. Frankly, it is in the nation's interest to support heterosexual monogamy and fidelity.

### ***What the Social Scientists are Saying***

It is only now, at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, that social scientists are realizing the damaging psychological, economic, educational, and social consequences of the "divorce and sexual revolution" of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the West. It turns out that children really do need a mom and a dad. Research shows that children from

heterosexual married two-parent households do better academically, financially, emotionally, and behaviorally than children from “alternative” families.<sup>7</sup> In addition to these positive outcomes, “they also experience much lower rates of many social pathologies, including: premarital childbearing, illicit drug use, arrest, health problems, poverty,” and expulsion from school.<sup>8</sup> These benefits are then passed on to future generations as well, because children raised by married moms and dads are themselves less likely to cohabit or to divorce as adults (Ibid).

But what about homosexual “couples” and “families”? Do they provide the same kind of stability and social benefits that heterosexual marriages do? Consider this statement from Thomas E. Schmidt:

As homosexuality enters the media mainstream, homosexual activities are carefully portrayed as parallel in every respect to heterosexual sex except for the incidental difference of the sex partners. ...homosexual couples are portrayed as highly attractive people who enjoy stable relationships. But the camera always cuts away, or the page turns, before any display of affection goes beyond a brief kiss or caress. ... On closer inspection, though, what we observe in homosexual practice is altogether different than heterosexual practice in at least three respects.<sup>9</sup>

Schmidt then discusses these three differences: frequency of sex outside of long-term relationships, sexual techniques, and alcohol and drug use. It is the first difference that we will examine.

Let’s look at the evidence. According to Schmidt, in one study only 10% of the male subjects and 28% of the female subjects (all homosexual) were found to be cohabiting in a stable relationship.<sup>10</sup> This same study found that 74% of male homosexuals reported having more than one hundred partners during their lifetime and 41% more than five hundred partners. A second study found that 50% of

homosexual men over the age of thirty experienced no relationships that lasted more than one year.<sup>11</sup> Another large survey reports that only 7% of male homosexuals had been in a relationship that had lasted more than ten years; 55% had never been in a relationship that lasted more than two years.<sup>12</sup> A fourth study compared instances of “cheating” in the previous year among different groups and found that among “close-coupled” homosexual males, 79% reported at least one instance of cheating, as compared to 19% among homosexual women, 10% among married heterosexuals and 23% among cohabiting heterosexuals.<sup>13</sup> Schmidt draws the logical conclusion: “Promiscuity among homosexual men is not a mere stereotype, and it is not merely the majority experience – it is virtually the *only* experience.”<sup>14</sup>

The latest research confirms this conclusion:

- In their study of the sexual profiles of 2,583 older homosexuals published in the *Journal of Sex Research* [1997], Paul Van de Ven et al. found that “the modal range for number of sexual partners ever was 101-500.”
- This same study found that only 2.7 percent of older homosexuals had only one sexual partner in their lifetime.
- A study published in the journal *AIDS* in 2003 found that among homosexual men in the Netherlands, the ‘rate at which men with a steady partner acquire casual partners’ averaged eight *per year*.
- A survey conducted by the homosexual magazine *Genre* found that 24 percent of the respondents said they had had more than 100 sexual partners in their lifetime.
- A study of sexually transmitted disease among lesbians reviewed in *The Washington Blade* [a homosexual newspaper] notes: ‘Behavioral research also demonstrates that a woman’s sexual identity is not an accurate predictor of behavior, with a large proportion of lesbian women reporting sex with (often high risk) men.’
- The same study found that ‘the median number of lifetime male sexual partners was significantly greater for women who have sex with women than controls (twelve partners versus six). Women who have sex with women were significantly more likely to report more than 50 lifetime male sexual partners.’<sup>15</sup>

While the passage above (CL/ML 107) describes a love for the opposite sex as uninhibited, indiscriminate, and fickle, these same descriptors obviously apply to homosexuals and bisexuals as well. This sort of “love” is more accurately described by the now old-fashioned word “lust”.

The figures on homosexual promiscuity stand in stark contrast to the statistics regarding sexual fidelity in heterosexual marriage. They vary with the study or survey, but between 75 and 88 percent of husbands and wives have never had sexual relations outside of marriage.<sup>16</sup> While there is room for improvement, it is clear from the social science research that heterosexual monogamy provides a better environment for raising well-adjusted productive citizens. And this does not even take into account the correlation between homosexual behavior and the increased incidence of disease, drug and alcohol abuse, and pedophilia.<sup>17</sup>

### *Am I My Brother's Keeper? Marriage and Law*

How should we respond to this promiscuous behavior? One way is to redefine marriage and cultural events such as Valentine's Day to include homosexuals and confer economic benefits, new civil rights, and social praise upon these “couples” in the hope that they will “settle down”. Some might claim that what they do is none of our business, that we should “live and let live.” Another way to respond is to do a better job of educating young men and women about the most orderly ways to prepare themselves to experience true married love in a satisfying monogamous heterosexual marriage.

As we have seen from the passages above, there is no theological support for the first alternative and quite a bit for the second. Based upon the findings of the social sciences, there is also no empirical support for the first alternative and plenty for the second.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, assuming that the status of divorce law in the U.S. does not change with the recognition of “gay marriage” in some states, we have no empirical reason to suppose that rates of homosexual cheating (and thus “divorce”) will be reduced.

Let us turn to some teachings from the Writings on marriage and law. Here is the first one:

Before the celebration of the wedding, a marriage covenant should be established in the presence of witnesses. A marriage covenant ought to be established before the wedding is celebrated in order that the requirements and ordinances of true married love may be acknowledged and a remembrance of them be retained after the wedding. Such a covenant also serves as a bond, obligating the couple’s minds to an honorable marriage. For after some initial tastes of marriage their former state preceding betrothal recurs at times, and in that state their memory fails and they begin to forget the covenant they entered into. Indeed, enticements by unchaste people to unchaste desires cause them to forget it altogether, and if it is then called to mind, they curse it. To *deter* such transgressions, however, *society itself* has taken under its jurisdiction to *protect* that covenant, and has set *penalties* for those who break it.

In sum, a prenuptial covenant makes plain the requirements of true married love, establishes these, and binds libertines to complying with them.

In addition, such a covenant establishes the *legitimacy of any children* they produce, and legally secures for the children *a right to inherit* their parents’ possessions. (CL/ML 307)

Teachings such as this are not only filled with beautiful ideals set before humanity so that we have something uplifting to strive for, but also contain accurate observations and practical considerations. As with other aspects of human behavior, the Lord is “realistic” when it comes to marriage and sexuality. He is telling us that people are tempted to break their marriage promise and they go through states in which they

regret having entered into that sacred covenant. So He advises us to deter transgressions against marriage through social and legal penalties and protections. Doing this is especially important for the protection and nurturing of children, upon whose welfare the future of a society rests. He does not specify the exact legal means for protecting the marriage and family covenant or the penalties for those who break it. But it is clear that we must use our prudence to find legal and social measures, such as contracts, that will have a positive effect upon human behavior and attitudes. Another passage recommends a combination of penalties that deter and amend bad behavior, and rewards that function as incentives for good behavior (NJHD 312).<sup>19</sup>

In order that it may be known again how extraordinary the grossness of this age is, that its wise counselors do not see anything sinful in adultery – I will add the following account: (repeated, with minor changes from AC 2733, HH 385, SE 4405) [Swedenborg speaks to a famous commander of an army who, when he had lived in the natural world, regarded adulteries as nothing.] But I was able to say to him that adulteries are unspeakable, even though they appear to people like him...to be not so, indeed permissible. Moreover he could know that adulteries are unspeakable from the fact that marriages are the seedbed of the human race, and also the seedbed of the kingdom of heaven, and therefore are not to be violated but held sacred.

At least he might have known, I said, that to violate marriages is contrary to Divine laws, *contrary to the civil laws* of all countries, and contrary to the true light of reason, and is thus contrary to *universally accepted morality*, because it violates both Divine and human order. (CL/ML 481)

Notice that it is wrong to violate marriage on all three planes of human life: the spiritual, the moral, and the civil. Marriage is not just a private spiritual issue. In opposition to today's relativists and subjectivists, this passage, along with the ones above, asserts that support of monogamous heterosexual marriage is consistent with a universal morality, one that can be seen with the true light of reason. Without civil and

moral laws to penalize adultery and illegitimacy, and reward fidelity and legitimacy, we encourage the violation of Divine and human order. There are many passages in the Heavenly Doctrines which teach this; here are a few:

All in the entire world are saved who acknowledge God and live according to civil laws of justice as a matter of religion. By *civil laws* of justice we mean such injunctions as are found in the Ten Commandments, namely, not to commit murder, *not to commit adultery*, not to steal, and not to bear false witness. These injunctions are civil laws of justice in all countries of the earth, *for without them no state would survive*. (CL/ML 351)

All peoples and nations know without immediate revelation, and moreover their laws decree, that man is not to be killed, as also that adultery, theft, and false witness are not to be committed. (AC 8902:17)

What nation in the wide world is not aware that it is evil to steal, to commit adultery, to kill, and to bear false witness? If men were not aware of this, and if they did not *by laws* guard against the commission of these evils, it would be all over with them; for without such laws the community, the commonwealth, and the kingdom would perish.... (Life 53; AR 529)

There is not a nation in the whole world which does not know that it is wicked to murder, to commit adultery, to steal, and to bear false witness, and that kingdoms, republics, and every form of organized society, unless these evils were guarded against *by laws*, would be at an end. (TCR 282)

The following passage from Heaven and Hell is even more specific:

Furthermore, the laws of spiritual life, the laws of civil life, and the laws of moral life are set forth in the ten commandments of the Decalogue; in the first three the laws of spiritual life, in the four that follow the laws of *civil* life, and in the last three the laws of moral life. (HH 531)

Among the four commandments that follow the first three, is the commandment forbidding adultery and thereby promoting marriage between one man and one

woman. This, the Writings declare, is supposed to be a law of civil life. Why? There are two major reasons, one “earthly” and the other one “spiritual”.

As this set of passages makes clear, without such civil laws, society degenerates and eventually fails. It is painful to live in, even to contemplate living in, a nation “so barbarous” that it does not prohibit through the civil law such things as adultery (DP 322). Without civil society, the necessities of life are very difficult to obtain. To put it mildly, daily living becomes *very* difficult. This is the earthly reason.

The spiritual reason is that just as the “chastity of marriage makes one with religion”, so “the lasciviousness of adultery makes one with naturalism” (AE 981:2). As Swedenborg found through repeated experiences in the spiritual world, people who love adultery scorn the things of religion. Such a person “does not raise his eyes above nature, but turns to it as to a deity that sanctions his lust, the influx of which then moves his spirit.” (CL/ML 464) In other words, a person justifies his or her actions by making an idol out of nature, an idol that can justify evil behavior. This is strikingly illustrated in a narrative account toward the end of Married Love.

Once, Swedenborg heard thousands of spirits shouting for the punishment of three priests who had dared to assert that adulterers lack any acknowledgement of God (CL/ML 500). The priests were surrounded by people from “the Christian world” and “not a hundred in a thousand” among them believed adulteries were sins. How did these people justify their adulterous behavior? Sometimes they did it by committing the *ad hominem* fallacy, saying that clergymen, monks, legislators, and judges have committed adultery too and that they made adultery unlawful just to gain power

(CL/ML 500:2-3).<sup>20</sup> But most of the time they supported their actions by invoking naturalism, saying that marriage love is just sexual love, like the kind that exists in birds and animals, so that it is natural and they are free to enjoy unrestrained (promiscuous) love (CL/ML 500:2). In fact, “only the simple and religious believe that adulteries are sins. Not so the intelligent, who, like us, view them in *the light of nature*” (Ibid., emphasis added).

Indeed, today’s debates over homosexuality are infused with naturalism. Several apologists for homosexuality resort to biological research which has discovered the “gay gene”. Of course this line of reasoning only works if one accepts the claim that our genetic heredity determines all, or at least our sexual, behavior and is therefore incapable of being regulated by the state, by society, or by individual choice. It should come as no surprise to readers of the Heavenly Doctrines that there is a genetic basis for homosexuality, for this is the case with all evils and inclinations to them. True, individuals have stronger tendencies toward some evils and not others, yet it is clearly and repeatedly taught that we have the freedom to choose what is good and fight against our hereditary inclinations.<sup>21</sup> Were this not the case, religion itself would be an absurdity.

The Heavenly Doctrines make it abundantly clear that if we allow people to engage in whatever form of sexual activity they want and weaken the civil law regarding adultery and heterosexual marriage, we in fact encourage people to live sexually promiscuous lives. The result is that people do not acknowledge God. Instead they have an incentive to acknowledge nature. Light from heaven is shunned by people

who indulge in sexual evils. Their aim is to destroy society and instead of a Creator, they acknowledge nature (AC 2747). In the end spirituality is replaced by naturalism (CL/ML 483). By allowing the civil law to be changed so that it undermines heterosexual monogamy, we frustrate one of the major purposes of having civil law in the first place, namely, to help people get to heaven.<sup>22</sup> Religion is a human good and the civil law can and should support it.<sup>23</sup>

### *A Call to Action*

I have not canvassed all the reasons for and against marriage and homosexuality,<sup>24</sup> nor have I delved into the pros and cons of passing a constitutional amendment as a partial remedy for the challenges we face in the U.S.<sup>25</sup> Yet, I hope that I have laid before the reader a number of reasons for sustaining and bolstering heterosexual monogamous marriage through the civil law. Toward this end I invite you to show your love for your spouse, your society, and the Lord by taking action to support true marriage love on the spiritual, moral, and civil planes of life. It is with joy that we contemplate the growing realization that Valentine's Day is a time to celebrate the increasing happiness that true married love can bring to people everywhere. With gladness and gratitude we cooperate with the Lord as He restores that priceless pearl of life, conjugal love, to the people of our planet.

---

<sup>1</sup> According to some sources, such as The New Encyclopedia Britannica (15<sup>th</sup> edition, vol. 12, Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1998, p.242), there was at least one Catholic priest named Valentine who was murdered for his faith by the Roman emperor Claudius II Gothicus. This source also asserts that the modern tradition of sending special greeting cards has no relation to the saint, or saints.

---

<sup>2</sup> The Episcopal church ordained an openly practicing homosexual man as bishop in 2003. Also, some people in the Swedenborgian Church of North America (a.k.a. the General Convention) and some in the Caritas group in Bryn Athyn have defended homosexuality. See Studia Swedenborgiana, vol.13. nos. 1 and 2 (June and December, 2003), specifically the article by Kimberely M. Hinrichs and the responses to this by H. Roslyn Taylor and Wlima Wake.

<sup>3</sup> The following passages are from the N. Bruce Rogers translation of Conjugal Love/Married Love. All italicized emphasis in the following quotations has been added by me.

<sup>4</sup> One Christian protest group that has received media coverage marches with signs proclaiming, “God hates fags.” When asked by a reporter why they assert this, one member of the group replied that anyone can see from reading the Old Testament that God hates evil people of all kinds. This is yet another reason why we need to spread the good news about an internal sense to the Old Testament and how the portrayal of God in the Old Testament was accommodated to people’s state at the time it was written. Unfortunately this misunderstanding of the character of God and His revelation can be used to legitimate violent behavior and hateful attitudes toward people who engage in homosexual acts. Like the angels in heaven, New Church people on earth should be able to defend what is good and true while being motivated by love for the neighbor.

<sup>5</sup> The Acton translation has “social destructions” and the Gladish translation “social shambles”. Of course the same negative social consequences could, and do, occur when the divorcing of a husband is at the good pleasure of a wife. This does not mean that all divorces are unjustified. On the contrary, there are times when divorce (and separation) is justified and the reasons for legitimate divorce are given in the Heavenly Doctrine (CL/ML 255, 339, 468). In keeping with the Lord’s words in the New Testament, the main reason for divorce is adultery by the spouse.

<sup>6</sup> Interestingly, while there has been some resistance to ordaining homosexual clergy in the U.S., the most vociferous and strident resistance has come from members of the clergy in Africa. I don’t mean to idolize all Africans, for when it comes to sex and marriage they—like human beings the world over-- face their own challenges. However, some well-known African leaders are crystal clear about the incompatibility of homosexuality and Christianity.

<sup>7</sup> For a summary of the research on the harmful consequences of the divorce and sexual revolution in the U.S. and why heterosexual monogamy is important for the long-term health of society, see Why Marriage Matters: Twenty-One Conclusions from the Social Sciences (New York: Institute for American Values, 2002) and Hardwired to Connect: The New Scientific Case for Authoritative Communities (New York: Institute for American Values, 2003). For book-length studies see The Divorce Culture by Barbara Dafoe Whitehead (New York: Knopf, 1997); The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce: A 25 Year Landmark Study, by Judith S. Wallerstein, Julia Lewish, and Sandra Blakeslee (New York: Hyperion, 2000); and The Case for Marriage: Why Married People are Happier, Healthier, and Better Off Financially, by Linda J. Waite and Maggie Gallagher (New York: Doubleday, 2000).

<sup>8</sup> Getting It Straight: What the Research Shows about Homosexuality, by Peter Sprigg and Timothy Dailey, co-editors, (Washington D.C.: Family Research Council, 2004), p.118. Using only social science research (no theology or philosophy), this book dispels the following six “myths” or misconceptions: people are born gay, ten percent of the population is gay, homosexuals are seriously disadvantaged by discrimination, homosexuality is harmless, children raised by homosexuals suffer no harm, homosexuals are no more likely to molest children than heterosexuals are. In other words, all these oft-repeated assertions are false.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas E. Schmidt, Straight & Narrow? Compassion and Clarity in the Homosexuality Debate. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Pr., 1995), p.105.

<sup>10</sup> Schmidt, p.106.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.,pp.107-108.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.,p.108.

<sup>15</sup> Sprigg and Dailey, pp.84, 103-04. Despite the promiscuity of homosexuals, the percentage of the population that is homosexually active in a given year is quite small, three to two percent for males and less than two percent for females. See Stanton L. Jones and Mark A. Yarhouse, Homosexuality: The Use of Scientific Research in the Church’s Moral Debate (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Pr., 2000), p.46.

<sup>16</sup> Sprigg and Dailey, p. 105.

<sup>17</sup> Sprigg and Dailey, pp. 69-93, 109-132. As the co-editors of this book note, what is called “male intergenerational intimacy” in the homosexual literature, is actually pedophilia (pp. 128, 136-9).

<sup>18</sup> See the sources cited in endnotes six and seven above.

---

<sup>19</sup> This passage in New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine does not specify the penalties or rewards. It is up to each nation to apply this principle to its own citizens through prudential means.

<sup>20</sup> This same type of reasoning can be found in today's society too: "The leaders of the churches and our politicians can't live up to this standard, so let's lower the standard."

<sup>21</sup> In their chapter "Can Homosexuality Be Changed?" Jones and Yarhouse summarize their findings this way: "The research on change of sexual orientation is intensely debated today. Most of the research was conducted and published between the 1950s and the 1970s, with an average positive outcome of approximately 30%." "Definitions of 'positive outcome' vary across studies." "There are a number of methodological limitations to the early studies published on change, including small sample sizes, the reliance on self-report and therapist-report of change, and lack of control groups." "Research on change of orientation is not formally relevant to the moral debate in the church, as the church's moral concern is not with changing experiences of same-sex attraction but with how a person chooses to express those inclinations across relationships." (Homosexuality: The Use of Scientific Research in the Church's Moral Debate, pp.150-51).

<sup>22</sup> See "Toward a New Church Philosophy of Law" by Eli A. Echols, unpublished manuscript, April 2003, p.18 where he refers to HH 358 and TCR 74:3. For a doctrinal study of how the civil law and government of a nation can effect its people's spiritual condition, see "The Life of Justice" by Rev. Daniel W. Goodenough, Jr. (New Church Life, July and August, 1968), pp.334-52, 370-77.

<sup>23</sup> By "religion" here I refer to the "church universal" or religion in its generic form as a heartfelt acknowledgement of God and a life according to the Ten Commandments, not just the New Church.

<sup>24</sup> For additional discussion of the arguments surrounding homosexuality and marriage, see The Broken Hearth by William J. Bennett (New York: Doubleday, 2001) and several books by Christopher Wolfe, especially Same Sex Matters: The Challenge of Homosexuality (Dallas: Spence Publishing Co., 2000). The chapter by philosopher Michael Pakaluk, "Homosexuality and the Principle of Nondiscrimination" is cogently written. This chapter can also be found as an on-line article: "Gay Rights' Is Not a Civil Rights Cause" at <http://www.newoxfordreview.org/apr01/michaelpakaluk.html>

<sup>25</sup> I have not considered addressing the legal status of marriage by amending state constitutions, nor have I said much about the use of the civil law as only one means of changing people's minds and behavior regarding the sanctity of heterosexual monogamy. There are moral, rational, and religious means that should be used to ensure that a culture in general supports laws regarding marriage. Based upon the polls I have read, sixty to sixty-five percent of Americans are opposed to redefining marriage to include homosexuals.