



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on April 10, 2009

## Rick Warren's Stance on Same-sex "Marriage"

Many think California pastor and author of *The Purpose Driven Life* Rick Warren to be a purveyor of designer religion. Now these critics have been given some more ammunition in the form of an interview the mega-church mogul gave to CNN's Larry King. At issue are comments Warren made in which he seemed to vacillate in his support of his state's pro-marriage amendment, Proposition 8, and appeared indifferent to the matter of same-sex "marriage" in general.



For example, in the interview Warren said he was "oblivious" to the Iowa Supreme Court ruling legalizing faux marriage, and, when asked about the controversy surrounding his support of Proposition 8, he said:

In the first place, I am not an anti-gay or anti-gay marriage activist — never have been, never will be. During the whole Proposition 8 thing, I never once went to a meeting, never once issued a statement, never — never once even gave an endorsement in the two years Prop 8 was going.

Yet this seems to lie in stark contrast to what Warren said while addressing his church members mere weeks before the Proposition 8 vote. Here is a transcript (and video) of Warren's remarks to those parishioners:

The election's coming just in a couple of weeks, and I hope you're praying about your vote. One of the propositions, of course, that I want to mention is Proposition 8, which is the proposition that had to be instituted because the courts threw out the will of the people. And a court of four guys actually voted to change a definition of marriage that has been going for 5,000 years.

Now let me say this really clearly: we support Proposition 8 — and if you believe what the Bible says about marriage, you need to support Proposition 8. I never support a candidate, but on moral issues I come out very clear.

This is one thing, friends, that all politicians tend to agree on. Both Barack Obama and John McCain, I flat-out asked both of them: what is your definition of marriage? And they both said the same thing — it is the traditional, historic, universal definition of marriage: one man and one woman, for life. And every culture for 5,000 years, and every religion for 5,000 years, has said the definition of marriage is between one man and a woman.

Now here's an interesting thing. There are about two percent of Americans [who] are homosexual or gay/lesbian people. We should not let two percent of the population determine to change a definition of marriage that has been supported by every single culture and every single religion for 5,000 years.



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This is not even just a Christian issue — it's a humanitarian and human issue that God created marriage for the purpose of family, love, and procreation.

So I urge you to support Proposition 8, and pass that word on. I'm going to be sending out a note to pastors on what I believe about this. But everybody knows what I believe about it. They heard me at the Civil Forum when I asked both Obama and McCain on their views.

And Warren had carried the torch for marriage in other venues as well. For example, read the following excerpt from an [interview](#) Warren gave to editor-in-chief of Beliefnet Steven Waldman in December 2008:

**Rick Warren:** But the issue to me is, I'm not opposed to that [giving homosexuals certain partnership rights] as much as I'm opposed to the redefinition of a 5,000-year definition of marriage. I'm opposed to having a brother and sister be together and call that marriage. I'm opposed to an older guy marrying a child and calling that a marriage. I'm opposed to one guy having multiple wives and calling that marriage.

**Steven Waldman:** Do you think, though, that they are equivalent to having gays getting married?

**Rick Warren:** Oh I do. For 5,000 years, marriage has been defined by every single culture and every single religion — this is not a Christian issue. Buddhist, Muslims, Jews — historically, marriage is a man and a woman.

Not surprisingly, the apparent contradictory nature of these comments has only intensified the maelstrom surrounding Warren, causing him to take flak from people on both sides of the faux marriage battle. In response, Warren has sought to clarify his comments. As to this, Sarah Pulliam at *Christianity Today* [printed](#) an explanation sent to her by one of the pastor's spokesmen. Here is an excerpt:

Because he's a pastor, not an activist, in response to inquiries from church members, he issued an email and video message to his congregation days before the election confirming where he and Saddleback Church stood on this issue.

During the King interview, Dr. Warren also referenced a letter of apology that he sent to gay leaders whom he knew personally. However, that mea culpa was not with respect to his statements or position on Proposition 8 nor the biblical worldview on marriage. Rather, he apologized for his comments in an earlier Beliefnet interview expressing his concern about expanding or redefining the definition of marriage beyond a husband-wife relationship, during which he unintentionally and regrettably gave the impression that consensual adult same sex relationships were equivalent to incest or pedophilia.

In light of this, it may not be fair to call Warren a liar — perhaps he is more of a rationalizer. He seems to be trying to serve two masters, drawing a dubious distinction between being a pastor and an activist. But while it's a rationale that should satisfy his congregants, it's likely that others will simply view it as a lack of moral clarity. After all, Warren seems to be trying to remain married to both the spirit of the age and the Holy Spirit, and such theological polygamy inevitably leaves many with bruised feelings.

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