



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on July 15, 2025

## Professing Christians Chip and Joanna Gaines Produce Series Featuring Same-sex Couple and Kids

Chip and Joanna Gaines, stars of HGTV's *Fixer Upper*, are executive producers of a new series that features a same-sex couple and their surrogate-born sons. While this would, sadly, be an unremarkable occurrence on any other show these days, it has stirred up quite a bit of controversy in this instance because the Gaineses have long professed to be Christians.

### Experiment in Error

The couple's new, eight-episode series, *Back to the Frontier*, airs weekly on their "family-friendly" cable outlet, Magnolia Network, and streams on HBO Max. According to [Realtor.com](#):



YouTube  
Screenshot from Back to the Frontier

"In the series, three families hailing from across the country join together in the wilderness surrounded by 10,000 acres of nature, without the modern conveniences of technology, running water, or electricity," a description shared by Magnolia Network revealed.

"The Lopers (Alabama), Hanna-Riggs (Texas), and Halls (Florida) must live on the frontier for eight weeks, reinforcing their own shelters, raising livestock, collecting food, and rationing their supplies. Through this immersive experience, the families will have to reflect on their relationships and navigate the challenges that come with an 1880s lifestyle."

Considering that the series is being promoted by the [anti-Christian National Association of Realtors](#) and streams on HBO Max, it's hardly surprising that it includes LGBT propaganda. Specifically, it features the Hanna-Riggs family, consisting of two men "married" to each other and "their" twin sons, who were born via a surrogate mother. The series' [official trailer](#) even shows the "husbands" embracing each other.

Controversy erupted after [Chip Gaines](#) reposted a promotional image for the show on X Thursday with the comment "Y'all are going to love this show!! Social experiment + family time well spent."

The phrase "social experiment" was taken directly from the trailer, where it clearly referred to putting 21st-century Americans in 19th-century surroundings. [Some](#), however, recognized a double meaning behind it: Never before has a society equated same-sex relationships with marriage, let alone considered individuals in such relationships fit to rear children.

### Christian Criticism

Christians, who have been among the Gaineses' most ardent fans, quickly expressed their dismay at the couple's seeming capitulation to the cultural zeitgeist.



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[Sharayah Colter](#), chief communications officer of the Danbury Institute, a conservative, Christian activist organization, wrote on X:

Depravity cloaked in niceness and old-timey vibes and descriptions of “family-friendly” is the worst kind of depravity because it doesn’t just draw in the people seeking something edgy or rebellious — it sideswipes the innocent minded who didn’t have any inclination toward knowing more worldly things until it was placed in front of them. Very sad and actually very dangerous.

[Franklin Graham](#), president of Samaritan’s Purse and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, posted that the news was “very disappointing,” adding:

While we are to love people, we should love them enough to tell them the truth of God’s Word. His Word is absolute truth. God loves us, and His design for marriage is between one man and one woman. Promoting something that God defines as sin is in itself sin.

The American Family Association’s [Ed Vitagliano](#) expressed similar sentiments:

This is sad and disappointing, because Chip and Joanna Gaines have been very influential in the evangelical community. Moreover, in the past, they have stood firm on the sanctity of marriage regardless of the personal cost that has entailed. We aren’t sure why the Gaines[es] have reversed course, but we are sure of this: *Back to the Frontier* promotes an unbiblical view of human sexuality, marriage, and family -- a view no Christian should embrace.

## Targeted Left and Right

Vitagliano’s mention of the couple’s past stance on marriage refers to attacks that were launched against them in 2016. [BuzzFeed](#) published an article late that year criticizing them for appearing in a video with their pastor, who “takes a hard line against same-sex marriage and promotes converting LGBT people into being straight.” Another of their alleged sins against modernity was not featuring same-sex couples on *Fixer Upper*.

In early 2017, Chip Gaines [responded](#) with a blog post that did not disavow his pastor’s teachings. It was, however, somewhat vague as to his and his wife’s beliefs, and it urged readers “to learn to engage people who are different from us with dignity and with love.”

The Gaineses also courted controversy in 2023 through their [partnership](#) with the unabashedly pro-LGBT chain store Target.

## Chip Shot

After three days of online criticism over *Back to the Frontier*, Chip Gaines apparently had had enough, [posting on X](#):

Talk, ask qustns [sic], listen.. maybe even learn. Too much to ask of modern American Christian culture. Judge 1st, understand later/never

It’s a sad sunday [sic] when “non believers” have never been confronted with hate or vitriol



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until they are introduced to a modern American Christian

While some of the reactions to Gaines' post contained "hate or vitriol," many others expressed genuine concern for both viewers, especially children, and the Hanna-Riggs family. As [one pastor](#) put it:

Jesus ate with sinners but He also said to them: "Go, and sin no more" (John 8:11). He loved them enough to call them to repentance, not to showcase their sin for entertainment. Love that does not call people to turn from sin is not the love of Christ[;] it is sentimentality.

In [another post](#), Chip Gaines suggested there's "more to this" than the trailer indicates. With seven weeks left in the series, viewers will soon learn just what that "more" is — and whether it comports with Christianity.



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