

# HIS VIEW: Civil unions are a better way to go

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Johnston

Two weeks ago, the California Supreme Court upheld the voter-approved constitutional ban on gay marriage. That same day, many miles away in Moscow, a small band of protesters held a demonstration to protest the "hate" against the gay and lesbian community.

While I agree with the principle of granting gay and lesbian couples the same rights as their heterosexual counterparts, I can't support calling it "marriage."

Why?

Because the discussion should be focused on equal access to the creation of a contract between two consenting adults who want certain protections with regard to personal and financial decisions.

If that sounds bland, well, it should be. Marriage is a longstanding religious tradition that should be preserved by the church.

When loaded words such as "marriage" and "families" (or "hate" and "intolerance") are injected into the discussion it becomes harder to separate the emotions from the logic and have a true debate about the real issue of equal rights.

Would we all not be better off if the term "marriage" was removed from our books completely and allow two consenting adults, regardless of sexual orientation, to enter into a civil union? And leave the "sanctification" of the union to the church where it belongs?

I certainly think so.

The sooner that both sides of this debate realize that equal ground can be found by removing "marriage" from the equation we will be so much closer to equal rights for everyone regardless of sexual orientation.

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I was pleased to read that Bryan Fischer, executive director of the Idaho Values Alliance, has accepted a job with the American Family Association that will require him to move to Tupelo, Miss. This will put the IVA into what Fischer calls "whisper mode."

Fischer, as many of you may know, was instrumental in bringing Idaho's own "gay marriage amendment" to the ballot box in 2006. He also paid a visit to Moscow last spring to threaten immediate legal action if the City Council upheld the extension of health benefits to domestic partners of city employees.

As a lifelong resident of Idaho, I've always taken exception to Fischer since he doesn't represent my values, though the name of his organization suggests otherwise.

As one blogger pointed out, Fischer leaving Idaho proves two things. The first is that God is real. Second, God must really hate the people of Tupelo, Miss.

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Local blogger Tom Forbes was quick to write a post about my last column regarding Moscow government being symbolically "egged." He provided an analogy that I think is worthy of being published here, which is that "city government should be all about the "P's" "Parking, police, paving, pets, permits, parks, pipes, parades, poop, potholes, public nuisances, and putting out fires."

I think that about sums up the proper role of city government and provides a baseline for the following challenge to the candidates running for Moscow city government this upcoming November.

Can we please keep the discussions about what you can do for Moscow to words that start with "P" and not waste time with philosophical discussions that have no real outcome as we have in elections past?

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