

It is so exciting to get together with like-minded men and women and look at all the Lord has done since we last met here at the Augusta Civic Center last February and seek His face as we look towards the November ballot initiative to protect marriage.

Song of Songs 2:15 says, “Catch all the foxes, those little foxes, before they ruin the vineyard of love.”

Since the beginning of marriage, the enemy of our soul has been sending “foxes” to “ruin the vineyard of love.” In my lifetime, I have seen those foxes in the guise of “women’s rights” and the “sexual revolution.” Those foxes come disguised as pornography, adultery, premarital sex, idolatry, pride, and bitterness. The church must be about “catching the foxes before they ruin the vineyard of love.” And that is hard work! Speaking out against these issues offends people.

A friend of mine shared with me recently that she went to her pastor in Ellsworth to help her deal with a “fox” that was destroying her marriage. The pastor told her that he was not in the counseling business. Brothers and sisters, we are all in the counseling business—and we’ve been given the greatest textbook there is: the Word of God.

Charles Krauthammer wrote in the *The New Republic*, “We have had an explosion of deviancy in family life, criminal behavior and public displays of psychosis. And we have dealt with it ...by redefining deviancy down so as to explain away and make ‘normal’ what a more civilized, ordered and healthy society would label deviant.”

Ladies, can I speak directly to you tonight? I urge you to look at the foxes in your life, in your home, in your children’s lives -- and do not let them “ruin the vineyard of love.”

I am standing for marriage tonight because-- Marriage is good for women. Marriage is good for children. And marriage is good for society.

Marriage is good for women physically, emotionally, economically, and relationally.

A 13-year study published by the American Psychological Association (APA), found that married women who did not allow foxes to “ruin the vineyard of love” had lower levels of blood pressure, cholesterol, and body mass. In my case just carrying loads of laundry for five sons and a husband up and down 2 flights of stairs can lower the cholesterol. The study found that married women had lower levels of depression,

anxiety and anger. And married women are less likely to develop cardiovascular diseases.

In terms of financial security, Dr. Waite, a professor of sociology at the University of Chicago, found that women in a committed, traditional marriage are generally more well off. Financial security, she says, trickles down into better medical care, safer surroundings, better food and other things that raise the standard of living.

In addition to all of these, the Department of Health and Human Services issued a report that said women in a healthy, traditional marriages are—

- Emotionally healthier
- Less likely to be victims of domestic violence or assault
- Less likely to attempt or commit suicide or to abuse drugs and alcohol, and
- Have better relationships with their children

Traditional marriage is good for children.

If children deserve anything, it is to begin life in a relationship with their biological mother and father. A loving and compassionate society never intentionally creates motherless or fatherless children, which is exactly what every same-sex home does. We must ask ourselves, what is more important the desires

of adults for recognition or the needs of children for a mom and a dad.

According to a study by Child Trends, “Research clearly demonstrates that family structure matters for children, and the family structure that helps the most is a family headed by two-biological parents in a low-conflict marriage.” The study concludes “There is thus value for children in promoting strong, stable marriages between biological parents.”¹

Princeton University sociologist Sara McLanahan wrote, “If we were asked to design a system for making sure that children's basic needs were met, we would probably come up with something quite similar to the two-parent ideal. . . The fact that both parents have a biological connection to the child would increase the likelihood that the parents would identify with the child and be willing to sacrifice for that child, and it would reduce the likelihood that either parent would abuse the child.”²

The interests of the child must prevail over the desires of adults.

Not only is marriage good for women and good for children,

Marriage is good for society.

¹ Anderson Moore, Ph.D., Kristin, Susan M. Jekielek, M.A., and Carol Emig, M.P.P. "Marriage from a Child's Perspective: How Does Family Structure Affect Children, and What Can We Do about It?" Child Trends Issue Brief. June 2002. Child Trends. 9 June 2009. <<http://www.childtrends.org/files/MarriageRB602.pdf>>.

² McLanahan, Sarah, and Gary Sandefur. Growing Up With a Single Parent What Hurts, What Helps. New York: Harvard University Press, 2006.

The legislature of Maine once understood the benefit of marriage on society. Title 19 of Maine State Law says, “The people of the State of Maine find that. . .the union of one man and one woman joined in traditional monogamous marriage is of inestimable value to society.” That means that the value of traditional marriage is so great, so valuable that it cannot be counted or measured. The statute continues, “The purpose of [this law is] to encourage the traditional monogamous family unit as the basic building block of our society, the foundation of harmonious and enriching family life.”³

The U.S. Supreme Court agreed. It wrote,

[C]ertainly no legislation can be supposed more wholesome and necessary in the founding of a free, self governing commonwealth . . . than that which seeks to establish it on the basis of the idea of the family as consisting in and springing from the union for life of one man and one woman.⁴

This is not rhetoric from the radical, right-wing Christians. This is the United States Supreme Court!

Throughout the history of our country, philosophers and statesmen have agreed that marriage is the foundation of

³ Maine Statue Title 19, § 23.

⁴ Murphy v. Ramsey, 144 U. S. 15, 45 (1885).

American society. Folks, you don't have to be an engineer to know what happens when you start shaking the foundation.

Before we attempt this vast social experiment, we should look at the results of redefining marriage in the nine European countries now granting marriage rights to same-sex partners.⁵

- England adopted same-sex marriage in 2005. A recent report states, "Marriage hits lowest rate since records began almost 150 years ago."⁶
- In Scandinavia where full gay marriage has been the law of the land for over a decade, marriage is dying. Sixty percent of first-born children in Denmark have unmarried parents.⁷
- Homosexual and lesbian couples experience the highest levels of domestic violence. Lesbians suffer more than 4 times the level of violence as do [traditional] married women.⁸

⁵ For further study, see "Norway Okays Homosexual Marriage, Adoptions," OneNewsNow, May 14, 2008 (<http://www.onenewsnow.com/Culture/Default.aspx?id=136648>); Stanley Kurtz, "The End of Marriage in Scandinavia," Weekly Standard, Vol. 9, Issue 20, February 2, 2004 (<http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/003/660zypwj.asp>); Maggie Gallaher and Joshua K. Baker, "Same-Sex Unions and Divorce Risk: Data from Sweden," IMAPP, May 3, 2004 (<http://www.marriagedebate.com/pb.php>); "Marriage and Divorce in France," Living and Working in France (<http://www.justlanded.com/english/layout/se/print/content/view/full/448530>) (accessed July 1, 2008).

⁶ "Marriage Rates Hit Lowest Rate Since Records Began Almost 150 Years Ago," Associated Newspapers Limited, March 26, 2008 (<http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/news/article-23465208-details/Marriage+rates+hit+lowest+rate+since+records+began+almost+150+years+ago/article.do>).

⁷ Stanley Kurtz, "The End of Marriage in Scandinavia," Weekly Standard, Vol. 9, Issue 20, February 2, 2004 (<http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/003/660zypwj.asp>).

⁸ Timothy J. Dailey, "The Slippery Slope of Same-Sex 'Marriage,'" Family Research Council, March 23, 2004 (at: <http://www.frc.org/get.cfm?i=BC04C02>).

In the next 6 weeks, you must tell your neighbors, co-workers, family members, people you meet at the WalMart this one thing: Question 1 is not about equality; it is about protecting Maine society!

For years we have sat idly by content to wag our tongues about the foxes rather than catching and preventing them from ruining the vineyard of love. Family experimentation of no fault divorce, the sexual revolution, cohabitation, fatherlessness -- have all been documented failures, harming women, children, and society in far deeper ways than anyone ever imagined.

In the next 6 weeks—and beyond—we must as Mainers, as the church, covenant together to “Catch all the foxes, those little foxes, before they ruin the vineyard of love.”