

February 2013

Hello, and welcome!

My name is Matt Grubbs. I am the owner-operator of Discover Annapolis Tours, which sells narrated sightseeing tours of historic Annapolis, general transportation service, and—until recently--wedding transportation. Because I do not want to support gay weddings, in December 2012, we took down the wedding pages on our website and stopped taking any new reservations for wedding transportation in order to avoid violating Maryland's public accommodations law which prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation. I issued no press release, but when asked, explained to inquirers that because I am a Christian, I cannot lend support to a gay marriage ceremony and so we were no longer doing weddings. I also indicated to one of the inquirers that they might contact their Maryland state legislators and suggest the State make a way to accommodate those who have a problem with the new law on religious grounds.

In the emails, phone calls and posts on media websites, I detected a lot of specious conjecture about my motives from both supporters and detractors and realized that a fuller explanation was needed. This is it.

I was surprised at the amount of interest my decision received (keeping in mind it was a slow news week). It's a sad commentary on the state of the Christian church in America today (broadly speaking) that anyone finds my decision remarkable. I don't think anyone would be surprised if a Muslim or observant Jewish trolley operator stopped doing weddings. But there's a lot of confusion out there today about what God says about this issue as revealed to us in His Word. Leading up to the November referendum, we saw television ads opposing the bill, followed by ads (with black clergy, who should know what constitutes a civil right) supporting the bill. What to think? Who to believe? The Bible has lots—lots—of warnings about false teachers, false prophets, wolves who will come in to ravage the flock, deceivers, treacherous leaders, cautions to test the spirit of a teacher to see if he is from God, etc. The only answer is to examine the Bible for yourself to discover the mind of God on this topic.

First, to address some of the most straightforward errors:

- Discover Annapolis Tours' two red trolley buses should not be confused with the City's blue and white trolleys, which the City uses on its Circulator route downtown.
- Discover Annapolis Tours is a privately-held, for-profit corporation. It is not part of any city, county or state transit agency and receives no public funding.
- My views are not necessarily shared by our tour guides and drivers.
- We have always welcomed gay people on our sightseeing tours, and always will. (But, how would we know?)
- We will be doing weddings in 2013 for reservations already on our calendar.
- We will continue to provide general transportation service for functions that are not weddings (shuttles, birthdays, Lights on the Bay, etc.).
- We will continue to do sightseeing tours.

Two points of confusion stand out from the many comments regarding our new policy:

- A belief that if I don't support gay marriage, I must hate gay people. Nothing could be farther from the truth.
- The question of whether there should be an exemption for wedding vendors with a conscientious objection to the new marriage law. One media report got it wrong: I am not planning to ask the General Assembly to find an exemption for people of faith. I believe they should, but I am not leading any initiative.

On the question of an exception in the law for wedding vendors: Someone wrote me to say, "Your right to swing your arm ends where my nose begins." Actually, that's my line. I'm not swinging my arm. Having to choose between obeying the State or obeying God hurts no one but me, my employees, and my family. There are two other transportation service providers in this area with trolleys in their fleet who are happy to work with gay couples.

On the assumption that because I cannot support gay marriage, therefore I must be a monster, a member of the KKK, and connected to the Westboro clan: I am none of those things. Nor are the rest of the 48% of Marylanders who voted against the bill. It is possible to "Love your neighbor as yourself," including gay folk, and believe gay marriage is a bad idea.

(Interestingly, *many* are also convinced that I hate black people. I guess they assume that the only reason I would be willing to forfeit revenue in order to avoid facilitating a gay wedding would be blind prejudice against gays—and blacks. I can't get my mind around that connection, but come and take my [African American Heritage tour](#) and I'll tell you about the history of racial prejudice in Maryland. And, some should know that I don't own any guns, nor do I listen to Rush Limbaugh or Sean Hannity. My car radio is set to four public radio stations and C-Span.)

And I don't think gay people are monsters, either. I've had two friends die of AIDS, and (like everyone else) I have gay neighbors and business acquaintances. (A reporter tried to make something of the fact that the owner of a transportation company we work with is gay. I've known that for years.) I got to thinking about gay people I admire, and it turned into a list too long to include here. There are many notable gay people in all walks of life. Gay people are – wait for it – people, like everyone else, made in the image of God and therefore deserving of love and respect. In my view, if there's anything unique about gay folk, it's not that they are guiltier than anyone else (they aren't). What's unique is the amount of rejection, ostracism, frustration and sometimes persecution they have to endure in order to feel a little bit like members of the human race.

I am not holier than thou. I'm keenly aware that I am "prone to wander" as the hymn puts it. I turned down all media requests for interviews because (a) I don't pretend to be knowledgeable about all things gay as it relates to my faith, and (b) I didn't want to be a part of the self-righteous indignation and disclaiming about "What's Wrong With the World" that characterizes the media these days. It stirs up contention, increases ratings and sells advertising, but Christians

are called to be peacemakers. Most Christians I know are just that, but some need to double-down on humility, patience, forbearance, grace, and love.

2 Timothy 2:24-26 And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

Basic Bible knowledge is no longer a shared phenomenon in our society. So I set out to write a brief primer laying out those passages that informed my decision to stop doing weddings (starting with 'Homosexuality is sin'). But it got very long and was taking a lot of time and I realized that the same information is already out there on the internet and I wasn't going to change anyone's mind, so why was I bothering? I didn't expect anyone to agree with me on these points, but I wanted to demonstrate that my position is a conviction based on historic, orthodox Christian teaching drawn from the scriptures. This isn't a matter of me following a hazy personal preference, or blind prejudice. It's a matter of consistently acting like a Christian, following the very clear revelation of a loving God. (To those who wrote me to explain why the Bible doesn't mean what it says, you need not trouble yourself further. There are lots of websites out there on that viewpoint, too.)

However, I will include here my answer to two questions posed to me:

1. If you allow gays on your sightseeing tour, why won't you do a gay wedding?
2. You've probably provided transportation for weddings that, biblically speaking, shouldn't have taken place (a Christian marrying someone who isn't; someone divorced without a biblical reason getting remarried). So why do you draw the line at doing a gay couple's wedding?

Here are principles drawn from the Bible that guided my thinking on both these questions:

Christians routinely associate with those who aren't Christians. We have dealings in the marketplace with the world at large all the time, including maybe even doing weddings for folks who, biblically, shouldn't be getting married. "Don't ask, don't tell" works in lots of situations (see 1 Corinthians 10:27-28). But other than the bride and groom's names (and sometimes not even that much), I didn't know the details about the wedding couple, and we didn't make it our business to ask. But of course, there is no ambiguity where a gay wedding is concerned.

1 Corinthians 5:9-12 I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people--not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler--not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge?

Many pointed out that Christ dined with tax collectors and sinners. But I'm sure the topic of conversation was along the lines of "Repent, for the kingdom of God is near," not "So, how much did you fleece the taxpayers for today?" or "Can I get a piece of the action on your next swindle?" "Associate" in the Corinthian passage above cannot mean that Christians endorse or participate in sexual immorality, greediness, swindling, or idol worship. And therein lays the difference between why we're happy to have gay folk on our sightseeing tours but decline to participate in gay weddings. There is nothing wrong with a sightseeing tour. But providing transportation for a gay wedding is endorsing and lending legitimacy to something God has said is wrong and sends a wrong message to the celebrants and others who view our business.

Luke 5:30-32 And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" And Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

God is love. He has given us instructions for the best possible life here on earth, a life with meaning and genuine love. He is also just, and there are consequences for violating the instructions. It would be wrong for me to encourage others to violate God's commands knowing it will hurt those who do so.

Romans 1:26-27 For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

Hebrews 13:4 Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.

1Thess. 4:3-6 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own vessel in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you.

Christian are to do everything, including driving a trolley, to the glory of God. All work is God's work. It's more than just a paycheck. The kingdom of God means His dominion over every area of life, whether you're a minister, missionary, trolley driver or ticket taker. In all of life, including our work, we love God and love our neighbor. We don't make a distinction between sacred and secular. Max Weber called this "the Protestant work ethic."

Colossians 3:17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

1 Corinthians 10:31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

“Discover Annapolis Tours” is our trading name. The incorporated name is “His Biz, Ltd.,” and I am not the “His” in His Biz. God is, and I gave it that name to remind me that I and everything I own, including the business, belongs to Him. Our service for weddings wasn’t just to show up and transport folks from here to there. The trolley gleamed, wheels and tires were shined, all the brass freshly polished. We hung garlands and bows inside and installed a big sign outside. The driver got dressed up and we played wedding music on the sound system. We were an integral part of the big event, lending support, facilitating—enabling—the celebration of a new marriage.

For all of the above, I hope you can see that there is no way I could pretend that providing transportation for a gay wedding is merely a commercial transaction with no ethical problems. God’s word speaks very clearly to this issue. I cannot profit-- make money—from an unholy imitation of God’s design for marriage.

A refrain often heard from pro-gay witnesses in the testimony on this bill was that since “demography is destiny” and this issue will be a non-issue in another generation, legislators should want to “stand on the right side of history.” Amen to that! But just how much history are we talking about? Twenty years from now, gay marriage may be the norm across the country. But every day, God’s day of reckoning draws nearer when He will judge the world by Jesus Christ. On that day, by His mercy and grace, I will stand on the right side of history. I hope that you will, too.

John 3:16-18 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

1 Peter 4:3-5 For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

Philippians 2:5-11 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord [i.e., God; see Isaiah 45:18-23], to the glory of God the Father.

Matthew 25:46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

John 5:22, 27-29 The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son.... And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

Acts 17:30-31 The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.

Romans 2:6-11 He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

2 Thess. 1:5-7 This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering-- since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels

2 Timothy 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

2 Peter 3:2-15 ...You should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should

perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. And count the patience of our Lord as salvation....

Rev. 11:15 Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

To sum up: My decision to stop doing all weddings in order to avoid doing gay weddings is not because I'm a "homophobe" (my inner Greek student cringes at the word). I am not afraid *of* homosexuals. I'm afraid *for* homosexuals. Homosexuality is an indicator that a person is in need of God's gift of righteousness in Jesus Christ. And the Bible holds out the hope that there is nothing unique about being gay that puts a person beyond God's love and power to change.

1 Corinthians 6:9 -- Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

If a person has a weakness for alcohol and drunkenness, most people would agree that the loving thing to do is to help that person face and overcome their destructive habits. Those who would encourage indulgence are not the loving ones, but those who have the courage to confront and help them. The same is true with those struggling with sexual sins, including same-sex attraction. The loving thing to do is not to encourage people to indulge or celebrate their sin but to help them live in accordance with God's design for them. Paul could say to the Corinthian believers, "Such were some of you, but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." In Christ, there is forgiveness and salvation, whatever the sin that has enslaved a person. Christians need to be about bringing to others the deliverance they have experienced. To do anything else would be unloving.

To find out about some people who are living in victory over their homosexual tendencies visit Stephen Bennett Ministries WWW.SBMinistries.org or Janet Boynes Ministries WWW.janetboynesministries.com.