

Gay Marriage



The Ifa Foundation performed our first same sex marriage years ago. Frankly, at the time, it never even occurred to me that there was any big issue involved. As a priest who has married many couples, my concerns always focus on the question of marriage being a loving, caring, mutually respectful relationship, not the gender of those seeking to establish a lifetime commitment in the eyes of Oludumare. In marriage, as in life, Ifa seems always to be "right on." The primary focus is always on Character. So, it is clear that it is the **Character** of the individuals which will ultimately determine whether or not they fulfill their Destiny and eventually join the Council of Elders to sit at the feet of Oludumare....not their chromosome makeup.

I am sure there are many who will disagree with our position, just as they have disagreed with our initiation of Gay men and Lesbian women as Ifa priests. In answer to their violent criticism I would suggest the following:

- 1. There is not a single sacred Odu from Africa that references gender or sexual preference as criteria for initiation or marriage.**
- 2. In Ifa God speaks through His/Her/Its creation, not through some intermediary with "divine inspiration" or political power!**
- 3. Examination of that Creation would show only infinite diversity in culture, behavior and individual preferences.**
- 4. It seems quite clear that had Oludumare so desired, it would have been ultimately simplistic for Him/Her/It to simply design us a**

particular way.

5. It is incumbent upon Ifa Practitioners to begin to devote more effort in stripping away the unexamined pervasive Christian morality that infects our practice.

Marriage is meant to be a lasting union between two individuals who love and care for each other. Individuals who accept not only the responsibilities of marriage, but the responsibilities to their community and the world they are part of. Successfully carrying out these responsibilities will ultimately be a matter of Character, not skin color, nationality or gender.

Blessings,

Oluwo Philip Neimark

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