

WHAT LEGALISING SAME SEX MARRIAGE MEANS FOR CHRISTIANS IN AUSTRALIA

10 reasons why we encourage you to vote 'No'

By James Macpherson

Australians are being asked to vote on whether marriage should be redefined to include homosexual couples. The Australian Christian Churches urges all Christians to vote "no" at the upcoming postal plebiscite, because we believe there is a lot more at stake.

1. Upholding the Biblical Definition of Marriage

The Biblical view of marriage is a lifelong, exclusive union between a man and a woman. This definition is made crystal clear in Genesis 1 and 2 which lays out God's blueprint for human sexuality. It is endorsed by Jesus in Matthew 19v5 and by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 5v21.

Redefining marriage to include homosexual couples is completely contrary to clear Biblical teaching. This is an important consideration for Bible believing Christians, yet it is only one reason we should vote "no" to same sex marriage. People need to realise that same sex marriage will profoundly change Australian society and impinge upon our freedoms.

2. Legalising Same Sex Marriage Means Christian Ministers Will Eventually Be Forced to Conduct Gay Weddings

Our politicians currently agree that pastors will not have to perform homosexual weddings, but gay activists are already insisting such exemptions should be dismissed.

Editor at Large for *The Australian* newspaper, Paul Kelly, wrote that even if exemptions for Christian ministers are made law, only "a fool" would believe such exemptions can last.

What is given as an exemption will come to be viewed as an anomaly and eventually a loophole that must be closed, he said.

This is already happening overseas. For instance, gay marriages were legalised in Sweden in 2009, with exemptions for ministers, but in June this year Sweden's Prime Minister, Stefan Löfven, said priests should be forced to perform gay weddings.

3. Legalising Same Sex Marriage Means Christian People Will Lose Their Freedom of Conscience

Whilst politicians promise that ministers will not have to be involved in gay weddings (for now), they are offering no such protections for the overwhelming majority of Christians who are not credentialed ministers.

Freedom of conscience means citizens should have the right not be compelled by the State to participate in things

they believe are morally wrong.

Legalising gay marriage means Christian business people would be forced to participate in gay weddings, with threat of legal action, if they refused to do so.

There are dozens and dozens of examples – from countries where gay marriage has been legalised – of anti-discrimination laws being used to fine, fire or bankrupt Christian business people for doing no more than politely declining to participate in a homosexual wedding.

Same sex marriage, presented as a shield to protect homosexuals from discrimination, will be used as a spear to go after Christians in the marketplace who do not wish to participate.

4. Legalising Gay Marriage Threatens Our Ability to Teach the Bible

Teaching traditional marriage will become hate speech if gay marriage is legalised.

If this sounds far-fetched, consider the case of Hobart Archbishop Julian Porteous who, in 2015, was dragged before Tasmania's Anti-Discrimination Commission for teaching the Christian view of marriage.

This is shocking when you consider that Archbishop Porteous was taken to court for upholding the legal view of marriage.

If a Christian is marched before the courts for speaking against gay marriage when gay marriage is illegal, what happens to a Christian who dares to teach a Biblical view of marriage when gay marriage is the law of the land?

In February this year UK evangelist Gordon Larmour was imprisoned overnight and charged with "abusive behaviour aggravated by prejudice relating to sexual orientation". His crime was to have shared the story of Adam and Eve when asked his view of sexuality by a gay activist. Larmour was eventually cleared of any wrong-doing, but only after a six-month legal ordeal.

In 2015 Pastor Barry Trayhorn, an ordained Pentecostal Minister in the UK, was disciplined for hate speech whilst leading a chapel service for prisoners at the local jail. During the chapel service Pastor Trayhorn read from 1 Corinthians 6v9-11: "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 then Pastor Trayhorn said: “You may want to complain about this, but this is the word of God. God loves you and wants to forgive you”

A homosexual prisoner complained that Pastor Trayhorn’s Bible reading had violated the Prison’s Equality Policies. Pastor Trayhorn was found guilty of making “provocative statements that breached the prison’s code of conduct”. He has lost his job working in the prison.

5. Legalising Gay Marriage Means Christian Schools Will Be Threatened With Closure Unless they Teach Children LGBT Lifestyles

Australian parents have been horrified by the Safe Schools program which encourages primary school students to imagine they are homosexuals and instructs students on anal sex and “penis tucking”.

If gay marriage is legalised, such lessons will be insisted upon for all schools and Christian schools that refuse to teach LGBT lifestyles will be threatened with closure.

This is not conjecture. It is already happening in Western countries that have legalised gay marriage.

In June of this year, a private Jewish girls school in North London was one of seven faith-based schools threatened with closure for refusing to teach gay and transgendered lifestyles to students.

The Education Department said Vishnitz Orthodox girls’ school had failed its duty to give students “a full understanding of fundamental British values” because they had not taught children LGBT lifestyles.

The Department acknowledged that the school’s academic results were outstanding and that the school taught respect for all people but that none of this was an excuse for not teaching homosexuality. The school has received its third and final warning to comply before being deregistered.

6. Legalising Gay Marriage Means Christian Organisations Will Eventually Be Forced To Employ People in Homosexual Relationships

Earlier this year the Victorian State Government attempted to pass a law that would make it illegal for Christian organisations (including Christian Schools) to refuse to employ people living in homosexual relationships. The proposed law was defeated by just one vote.

The Queensland Labor Government was intent on enacting a similar policy this year, but removed it from their platform when it became public.

If gay marriage enjoys the same legal status as heterosexual marriage there will be no grounds to deny employment in a Christian organisation to someone on the basis of their homosexual relationship.

We love homosexual people but we emphatically reject the idea that Christian organisations should be forced to employ

people who are opposed to Christian values.

It is ironic that whilst politicians are wanting to force the Church to employ people who are opposed to Biblical teaching, those same politicians do not believe the Greens, for instance, should be forced to employ people who are opposed to action on climate change or that the Australian Labor Party should be forced to employ people who are opposed to union membership.

7. Legalising Gay Marriage Means Gender Will Be Radically Redefined In Law

The basis of the same sex marriage argument is that gender is inconsequential. If gay marriage is legalised, the biological truth of gender will be radically redefined in law.

Already Facebook asks users to select from 71 gender options. The so-called Safe Schools program teaches students that male and female are mere social constructs. The media champion parents who raise gender-neutral children.

Earlier this year, the conservative UK government proposed legislation that would make it possible for a person to change gender on their birth certificate by simply filling out a form. There would be no requirement for a consultation with doctors, or even sex change surgery. A man who identified as a woman would be able to change his birth certificate and legally become a woman by simply filling out a form. If he decided he didn’t like being a woman and wanted to be a man again, he could simply fill out another form and switch back.

Equalities Minister Justine Greening, reflecting on the progress that had been made in gay rights (including gay marriage that was legalised in the UK in 2014) described the redefinition of gender as “the next step forward”.

People should be in no doubt that legalising gay marriage is not about respecting two people’s right to love each other. It is about radically redefining marriage, gender and parenting.

8. Legalising Gay Marriage Means Mothers and Fathers Will Be Radically Redefined in Law

In August this year, CNN reported that Trystan Reese, a transgender man living in Portland, Oregon, had given birth to a boy with his male partner, Biff Chaplow.

The news item described Reese as “a man who has a uterus and has the capacity and capability of carrying a baby”.

People who insisted that Reese was not a man with a uterus but rather a woman (since only women have uteruses and only women have the capacity and capability of carrying a baby) were called bigots.

This is a direct consequence of same sex marriage (legalised in Canada in 2005) which insists that gender is irrelevant to marriage and therefore to parenting.

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9. Legalising Gay Marriage Will Remove Any Principled Argument Against Further Redefinitions of Marriage

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If marriage can be redefined to suit a particular group, such as LGBT, why can it not be redefined further to suit other groups, such as Muslims who want polygamy?

When the US Supreme Court legalised gay marriage in 2015, one of the dissenting judges, Chief Justice John Roberts, contended that “much of the majority’s reasoning” in support of same-sex marriage “would apply with equal force to the claim of a fundamental right to plural marriage”.

Chief Justice Roberts told the court: “There is no reason at all why the two-person element of the core definition of marriage may be preserved while the man-woman element may not. Indeed, from the standpoint of history and tradition, a leap from opposite-sex marriage to same-sex marriage is much greater than one from a two-person union to plural unions, which have deep roots in some cultures around the world.”

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10. Legalising Gay Marriage Means Christians Found to Be Members of Churches That Teach a Biblical View of Marriage Risk Losing Their Jobs

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In 2012 Victoria’s Deputy Chief Psychiatrist, Kuruvilla George, was forced to resign from his job when it became known he believed children needed a mother and a father. Prominent politicians, including members of the Greens, argued that such views precluded him from being able to care for gay people in the community.

Earlier this year LGBT activists campaigned on social media for IBM to sack their Sydney-based managing partner, Mark Allaby. Allaby’s crime was to perform volunteer work for a Christian organisation that holds a Biblical view of marriage. Activists argued that since IBM was a supporter of gay marriage they should not employ someone who wasn’t.

Bear in mind that Dr George lost his job and Mark Allaby was threatened with losing his whilst gay marriage is illegal in Australia! If gay marriage is made the law of the land we can expect Christian people to be pressured to disassociate themselves with churches or face losing their jobs.

It is already happening in Western countries where gay marriage has been legalised.

In 2016 there was a social media campaign to have Chip and Joanna Gaines, the stars of the HGTV home renovation show Fixer Upper, dropped from the network when it became known they attended a church that taught a Biblical view of marriage.

Two years earlier, the same television network cancelled a show when they learned the brothers who fronted the program, Jason and David Benham, attended a church that taught a Biblical view of marriage.

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CONCLUSION

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The one thing that supporters of gay marriage and opponents of gay marriage agree upon is this: legalizing gay marriage will dramatically change Australia.

The Rudd Government changed more than 80 pieces of legislation to remove discrimination under law against gay people. The Rudd Government was right to do this. We do no support discrimination against people based on their sexuality.

But the postal vote on same sex marriage is not a vote about discrimination; it is a vote about whether or not marriage should be redefined and with it the norms and freedoms we currently take for granted.

We urge you - if you value freedom of conscience, freedom of speech, freedom of association and the freedom to educate children according to Christian values – to vote no.

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