

Emu Plains Anglican Church

St Paul's

2 April, 2012

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Dear Senate Committee,

I write to convey my strong opposition to the legalisation of same-sex marriage. At the conclusion of this letter I urge you to promote that no change be made to the Marriage Act 1961.

The foundation of my opposition to same sex marriage is based on a Biblical world view where God has revealed himself through His prophets and finally and fully in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. In the course of this revelation, marriage between a man and a woman, to the exclusion of all others, entered into for life, is presented as a profound aspect of our experience of life and new life: life, in that this is the foundational human relationship from which all others take their bearings (it reflects the character of God himself as Father, Son and Spirit - diversity within unity); new life, in that what unfolds in the Bible is that this relationship is a 'live in' illustration of the relationship God offers with the Lord Jesus Christ, where He is the groom, and His people are as His bride.

The Marriage Act 1961 as it stands is consistent with a Biblical world view. A change to the Marriage Act to include same sex relationships will compromise the essential 'difference' between the two parties united in marriage in the Biblical world view.

I don't expect all others to hold the same view. Nor would I claim that we are a Christian country. However, there are a significant number of us within Australia, who wish to uphold the biblical world view and marriage as it is currently defined within it. We will do this regardless of the Marriage Act 1961. However, it will be much harder to do so if that Act is changed to include same-sex relationships. Such relationships will be 'normalised'. They will be advanced as an acceptable alternative through schools. Those who disagree with such unions will themselves be vilified (at present, is there any word apart from 'homophobia' to label those who disagree with same sex sexual unions after thoughtful reflection rather than irrational fear?).

What may be argued as advancing equality may only be implemented by disadvantaging those who hold a considered view of marriage as it is currently defined. Given alternate loud voices, it is challenge enough at present for those who wish to commend to their children biblical consistency. Equality ought to continue to be promoted and commended, however, not at the expense of the differences that exist between people that can not be erased. Sexuality is one such difference, and the complimentary nature of men and women

relationally, physically, sexually and in parenting children has long been recognised (in the order of centuries) and across cultures, as against very recent attempts (in the order of years) to dismiss such differences.

It cannot be ignored that marriage is a landmark from which society takes fundamental bearings. That is why those who have promoted the agenda of same sex marriage do so with such vigour. Can the identities of men and women withstand the removal of any distinction? From the same biblical world view I have stated above, I think not.

Alas, the heightened *individualism* that has grown and permeated our society for the last thirty or forty years will continue down this path. You can't lobby for individual rights without it coming at the cost of our collective or societal interests. Why not? Because people are fundamentally self-interested, and will use such 'rights' in order to serve themselves rather than serve others. Society, by its very existence, and even the individuals within it, will benefit far greater when we promote values and laws that recognise our *interdependence*.

Political engagement is not my primary responsibility as a pastor and teacher serving the Lord Jesus Christ. However, it is out of love not just of God, not just of those that hold the same view as me, but of our society as a whole, that I commend the position stated in this letter to your committee. I urge you to conclude and promote that no change be made to the Marriage Act 1961.

Kind regards,

Roger Cunningham
Senior Minister