



Reformed Church of Box Hill

INC.

TO:
Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

22 March 2012

FROM:
The Session
Reformed Church of Box Hill
PO Box 217
Box Hill
Melbourne 3128

SUBMISSION: MARRIAGE EQUALITY AMENDMENT Bill 2010

We the undersigned do hereby lodge our opposition to the proposed amendment to the Marriage Act being considered by Parliament at this time, specifically that put forward by Senator Hanson-Young.

First

We believe that the title of the amendment to the Marriage Act is misleading and incorrect. Federal Parliament removed all inequalities in law, and provided appropriate protections regarding property issues in 2011 for all relationships. There is no issue of equality. Furthermore, since same sex couples are unable to naturally bear offspring, to redefine marriage to include same sex couples would be a discrimination against heterosexual couples. Historically, the very idea of marriage has been understood for millennia as being the exclusive domain of heterosexual couples, and we would argue that it is not an institution appropriate to homosexual practice. It is bound up with the securing of family relationships that extend through the generations and which have been central to the very constitution of human society. To set this very important institution at risk for a very small portion of the population (less than 2%) is not in the national interest.

Second

All men and women are free under law to enter into whatever relationship they deem desirable, so long as in so doing they do not under law endanger others, or in any way demean another.

If the legal definition of Marriage is to change in order to incorporate same sex couples, we would argue that heterosexual people would no longer have the right to enter into an institution understood to be only possible for heterosexuals, and in effect, if marriage is now understood as a lifelong sexual contract between any two adult human persons with no specification of gender, then the allowance of same sex marriage will render *all* marriages "gay marriages."

Third

We maintain that it is not the place or right of civil governments to create legislation in friendships or relationships that do not involve children.

Civil laws must protect the people of our current society, particularly the vulnerable, and continue to lay a foundation for a healthy future society. As such, marriage requires legislation of the relationship in which children are born, raised and developed for the future. They need protecting.

The effort to redefine marriage, seeks to set down in law, relationships based on love and caring for each other, without consideration for the place and well-being of children. We believe this to be detrimental to the future well-being and development of our nation and society, and contrary to the Biblical view of marriage as the place for healthy intimacy between a man and a woman, and the relationship which best serves, best nurtures and best protects children. The State should not take a greater interest in regulating partnerships than in the well-being and interests of the concrete needs of children.

Fourth

We further believe that the Biblical view of marriage not only protects the welfare of children in Australia, but also promotes moral integrity, since the Bible shows it to be foundational to a healthy society.

Sexual differentiation as male and female is an aspect of all humans made in God's image (Gen 1:26-27). On the basis of sexual differentiation God established marriage as a unique, exclusive relationship between a man and a woman.

Jesus affirmed that marriage is established by God and is a lifelong relationship between a man and a woman which requires sexual faithfulness (Matt 19:4-6).

The Bible describes marriage as a covenant (Prov 2:17; Ezek 16:8; Mal 2:14) reflecting the mutuality of the relationship. The New Testament ideal of marriage is of a relationship of love, of giving and receiving throughout life (e.g. Eph 5:22-33). In the New Testament, the creational norm of monogamous marriage is strongly reaffirmed (Matt 19:3ff, Eph 5:28-33; 1Tim 3:2,12; Titus 1:6), and this became the norm in Western culture.

Marriage offers a special intimacy and communion (Gen 2:20-25), and it is the relationship in which children are to be born and raised. God's design is that sexual union is not only an expression of the communion of marriage but also the way in which children are conceived. The obvious connection between sexual union and procreation is central to current discussions about marriage. It is because of this connection that marriage is essential to the common good and so should be subject to State laws. The introduction of same sex marriage completely severs the connection. It is difficult to see any reason why the law should take an interest in same sex relationships, beyond regulating relevant property concerns (which it already does).

Same sex marriage should not be legalised since God's order of marriage is a social good which protects the identity, security and flourishing of children.

Fifth

We reject the notion that the Marriage Act as it currently stands, discriminates against those who choose same sex relationships. As noted above, we maintain that the Marriage Act has as its primary purpose the protection and well-being of children that might be born to couples.

Sincerely,

Rev Albert Esselbrugge
(Elder, Chairman of Session)

Mr Paul Geluk
(Elder, Vice Chairman)

Mr Ronald Paoa
(Elder)

Mr Richard Geluk
(Elder)

Mr Simon Young
(Elder)

Mr William VanDeventer
(Deacon)