

TO Senate enquiry on marriage equity:

I am the Minister at Sandringham Uniting Church.

I see from the submissions already showing on your web site that many Christians have already written against marriage equality.

I do not agree with their view. There is no Biblical or other reason why two people who love each other should not be able to marry. Those who argue that the Bible forbids it are, in my opinion, wrong. If the Bible is against marriage equality then it can also be argued that it is in favour of slavery. In fact, there are a huge number of verses in the Bible which are in favour of slavery, including instructions about selling one's daughter into slavery. Those who argue on this basis are not reading the text and its context appropriately. They are also not taking note of prohibitions we now do not stick to, such as wearing clothing of mixed fibre, eating shellfish, planting different foods in the one plot ... or other actions which the Bible advocates but which are now illegal, such as stoning one's neighbours when they commit adultery

Jesus lived at the time when homosexuality was openly practiced by the Roman occupiers of Israel, but did not make one statement against the practice.

The other reason why I am in favour of legalizing same sex marriage is that currently gays and lesbians are known to be up to three times more likely to commit suicide as straight people. I do not want their blood on my hands. I do not want to be part of the homophobia that leads ordinary people to experience such depression that they see suicide as their only option. I do not want to be part of a society that imposes grief and pain on people when their child, other relative, or friend commits suicide, simply because they are gay or lesbian.

If gays and lesbians are able to marry, it will have no affect whatever on other marriages. It simply means that more people will be married. It may have an affect on some children: already many gays and lesbians have adopted children, and every study undertaken shows that they make excellent parents.

In summary, I see no reason why gays and lesbians should not be able to marry the person they love.

Rev Eileen Ray.