

Anne Champness

17/8/2009

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

Dear Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee,

Inquiry into the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2009

I fully endorse the submission made by Australian Marriage Equality in favour of the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2009.

I would like to quote Hannah Arendt, one of the most influential political philosophers of the twentieth century, who 50 years ago said:

'The right to marry whoever one wishes is an elementary human right compared to which "the right to attend an integrated school, the right to sit where one pleases on a bus, the right to go into any hotel or recreation area or place of amusement, regardless of one's skin or colour or race" are minor indeed. Even political rights, like the right to vote, and nearly all other rights enumerated in the Constitution, are secondary to the inalienable human rights to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence; and to this category the right to home and marriage unquestionably belongs.'

For most of my friends, family and acquaintances marriage is an important part in their pursuit of happiness. How could we deny this happiness to our sisters, brothers, children and friends? Or think about generously providing a 'watered down version'? How can we argue that Christian faith forbid this happiness?

Maybe, 'Faith is not what some people think it is. Their human dream is a delusion. (...) Faith is a living, bold trust in God's grace, so certain of God's favour that it would risk death a thousand times trusting in it. Such confidence and knowledge of God's grace makes you happy, joyful and bold in your relationship to God and all creatures. The Holy Spirit makes this happen through faith. Because of it, you freely, willingly and joyfully do good to everyone, serve everyone, suffer all kinds of things, love and praise the God who has shown you such grace. Thus, it is just as impossible to separate faith and works as it is to separate heat and light from fire! Therefore, watch out for your own false ideas and guard against good-for-nothing gossips, who think they're smart enough to define faith and works, but really are the greatest of fools. Ask God to work faith in you, or you will remain forever without faith, no matter what

you wish, say or can do.' (Martin Luther's Definition of Faith: An excerpt from "An Introduction to St. Paul's Letter to the Romans.")

Rather than quote faith it might be time to act it, compassionately, generously and equally.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Champness