



If Marriage Goes, Religious Freedom Falls

Rt Rev David Cook

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Today, I attended a Heads of Churches meeting to discuss our response to the gathering momentum for the next session of Parliament to change the Marriage Act to allow for same sex marriage.

God has spoken, a serious reading of Scripture makes clear that marriage is an exclusive union between a man and a woman (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:5, Romans 1:18 -32, 1 Corinthians 6:9-20).

The recent ALP national conference has made it compulsory, from 2019, for all Labor party politicians to favour same sex marriage. That is incredible! Those promoting toleration, now in the majority, have become the promoters of intolerance, to disagree, from 2019, is to be expelled from the ALP. I cannot imagine the horror which this policy brings to my ALP friends.

Because we are easy going, inclusive, diverse Aussies, we want to give everyone a fair go. Remember that no gay or lesbian couple is discriminated against under Australian law. Yet, corporations now employ Diversity Officers to ensure that no one holds discriminatory views on this issue, freedom of opinion in the workplace is thus limited.

In the UK, Canada and the US, those in the "marriage industry" (chefs, reception house owners, photographers, etc) are being sued for

refusing, because of conscience, to be involved in single-sex marriage ceremonies.

The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Hobart, Bishop Julian Porteous has had to defend himself for distributing a booklet by the Australian Catholic Bishops, "Don't mess with marriage". The Director of Australian Marriage Equality, Rodney Croome is quoted as saying "The booklet likely breaches the Anti-Discrimination Act and I urge everyone who finds it offensive...to complain to the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner". The booklet simply sets out the plan of God for marriage and family.

I commend Commissioner James Condon, the leader of the Salvation Army Eastern Territory, for his clear leadership, and his support of traditional marriage and yet because of it, the Sallies have lost considerable corporate support.

These curbs of freedom are not future, they are already happening.

Freedom of conscience, religious expression, freedom of trade and association are now under threat in Australia and with the relentless drive for this legislation to succeed, the State will inevitably become more interfering in

the Church. These curbs of freedom are not future, they are already happening.

It is estimated that 2.5% of the population identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, yet they seem to have an influence far beyond their number in the media.

Have you heard of the Uluru Bark Petition? I hadn't until today. Aboriginal elders and leaders across our nation will come to Canberra on 11 – 13 August and present their petition to Senator Joanna Lindgren, grandniece of Neville Bonner, the first indigenous member of the Australian Parliament. The petition signed by representatives of 21 clans has six clauses, two of which state as follows:

Clause 3: Although Aboriginal people come together as one nation through many different self-governing language and kinship groups with unique cultures and traditions, the sanctity of marriage between man and woman

continues to be held in honour among all.

Clause 5: It is therefore an affront to the Aboriginal people of Australia to suggest another definition of marriage.

Brethren, are our pulpits, by comparison, silent on this issue? Our people seem complacent and I notice that some believers have the rainbow wash across their Facebook page and are unwilling to identify with God's word on this issue.

We need to pray, preach, teach our people and then encourage all to write to our representatives telling them where we stand, as citizens of Australia, on the issue of marriage.

I would rather be writing about the gospel than writing about single gender marriage, but for the sake of our children, for the sake of freedom in our beloved land, we must speak up now.

Don't be free and easy when it comes to the changing of the precious central building block

of a civilised society: marriage.

I fear that the support for same sex marriage among those 59% who register their support, has not been sufficiently thought through, our hearts go out to the emotional pleadings and yet our minds need to be engaged.

Think about the implications. "Don't ever take a fence down until you know the reason why it was put up." – G K Chesterton

...for the sake of our children...we must speak up now.

The Right Reverend David Cook is the Moderator-General of the Presbyterian Church of Australia



Source:

<http://www.presbyterian.org.au/index.php/resources/moderator-s-comments/75-column-63-by-rt-rev-david-cook>

Key Links for Action:

acl.org.au (Please sign the petition to the Senate.)

australianmarriage.org (Please donate to support the ad campaign.)

fava.org.au (Please use the online form to write to your MP.)

marriagealliance.com.au (Please join the campaign.)