

Submission to Senate Enquiry
An alternative Christian perspective
In favour of Same-Sex Marriage
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The view of the Australian Christian Lobby is that Marriage is between a man and woman and is forever. This view is usually based on two verses of Scripture. The first is Genesis 2:24 .This view is from the creation myth of Adam and Eve and is used to justify the view that marriage is between a man and a woman. However, as it is a creation myth it is just a story of the creation of a man and a woman and that the relationship reflected the cultural view of the time. In regards to the view that men and women get married in order to have children there is nothing in the first part of the story to imply that these two people will even have children. After all there is an expectation that they will live for ever and do not need progeny to replace them or continue the family line.

In the second story from Mark's gospel (10:1-12) Jesus is concerned that women are being treated as property and are easily discarded through the divorce laws of the time. Jesus wanted people to take marriage seriously and for men to treat women well. It is not about the nature of marriage. It is also worth noting that we do not view marriage as forever either as we recognise that marriages do break down and under secular law and in the view of most religious institutions divorce is a positive remedy for this situation.

The Catholic Church, in particular, comes at this debate from a view that sex between two people other than within the confines of marriage is wrong. However, this goes further in that they teach that couples who are not trying to have children or couples past their child-bearing age should not be indulging in sex as it is not for pleasure but only for pro-creation.

As such it makes sense that they oppose same-sex marriage as marriage is viewed as the means of producing off-spring and rearing them in a family atmosphere.

However, marriage in the Bible does not reflect the two texts mentioned. Marriage is often a man and a number of partners. The man is providing for women who have no means of supporting themselves. Hence a rich man like King Solomon had a number of wives and many concubines. These were women who had no other means of support. As women were property, as noted in the Ten Commandments, men were free to divorce at will hence Jesus admonition to treat women as human beings and marriage seriously.

This practice was reflected in many societies. Where women had no rights men often had more than one wife in order to provide a means of survival for them and to ensure enough children were produced to ensure the survival of the tribe.

In this day and age marriage is quite different. Women can own property in their own right and are equal in the relationship to men. Marriage is about love. Women do not have to take their partner's name and the married couple are free not to have children.

Another argument put up by the Christian Lobby is that marriage belongs to the church. This is not sustainable historically nor does it reflect the current situation in Australia. The law allows for people to marry through a civil celebrant or a secular agency such as the Registry Office. As such the law has secularised marriage and as such the state rather than the church dictates the nature of marriage.

This latter point reinforces the motion put by The Honourable Andrew Wilkie that religious practitioners should have the freedom to refuse to marry people who do not fit into their definition of marriage. Equally, ministers of religion such as me should have the freedom to marry same-sex couples as we find no biblical or theological objection to conducting such ceremonies. Also Civil Celebrants should not be restrained by religious mores which have no bearing on their conduct of a civil ceremony.

In conclusion, I urge the senate committee to report in favour of adopting Same-Sex marriage. It will end an unjust and unnecessary discrimination. It will improve the mental well-being and acceptance of GLBTI people and will create a boost to our economic conditions.

Roger Munson