

To Whom it May Concern,

Please receive my position on the definition of marriage.

I am a Uniting Church minister who for over 30 years has begun the marriage service by declaring: 'Marriage is the life-long union between a man and a woman.' This liturgy then goes on to explain in beautiful prose why this is so - what the christian understanding of marriage is and how it relates to our understanding of God and humanity and creation. This is very deep stuff! Not just for now (and for Christians) but for always and including people of most world religions. With this huge perspective and insight, I am writing to voice my opposition to changing the definition of marriage.

I must confess to being angry, because I hear a few strident voices (even within the church) shrieking 'homophobic'. But I don't get it!

Surely if people with a homosexual orientation wish to publicly affirm their life-long love and commitment, our society can find ways of doing this without changing the definition of marriage. I may be misguided, but it seems to me that if society somehow accommodates the current definition of marriage to include same gender relationships or other types of relationship - then what has evolved is NOT marriage. It is something else. Society will have something fundamentally new to define it self by. It is not ridiculous to therefore ask: Will society someday be obliged to further redefine marriage as between simple consenting partners of any number and gender? And in this brave new world, what rights do children have?

For me, this debate is a bit like watching 'reality TV'. I just don't get it! But it's much more serious than that because legislation shapes families, the quality of relationships especially for children and even society's support of all it's minorities. There are social consequences, as have been measured in the few states that have moved down this track.

Lastly, I work with aboriginal people and it is possible that such legislation will only serve to widen the gap between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. Many Aboriginal people within the Uniting Church have argued that condoning same gender relationships and marriage is evidence of further cultural oppression for them.

Thanks for considering my view.

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