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Plans to legalise homosexual marriage in Scotland

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has called on the next Scottish Government to legalise same-sex marriage.¹ This issue will be very important in the forthcoming elections to the Scottish Parliament. Christians need to defend traditional marriage.

It is clear that homosexual activists are clamouring for the revolutionary change, which would abolish the traditional definition of marriage and impose a radical new definition on the whole of society.

Detailed plans

Marriage law is devolved to the Scottish Parliament. However, the minority SNP Government said that introducing same-sex marriage would affect so many areas of law, including tax and immigration for example, that Westminster would have to legislate.²

Campaigners such as those at the Equality Commission or the Equality Network³ reject this argument and are demanding that Holyrood leads the way and legalises homosexual marriage. These groups have detailed plans for how to achieve their aim. For example, they said recently that if the next Scottish Government does not give in to their demands, a Committee Bill or a Bill lodged by a single MSP at the Scottish Parliament could be used instead.⁴

'Civil partnerships are not enough'

Tony Blair's Labour Government introduced civil partnerships in 2005, but stopped short of introducing full same-sex marriage. Civil partnerships give homosexuals all the legal rights and privileges of marriage, but it is a separate scheme and those registering do not get a marriage certificate.

Campaigners say that civil partnerships are not enough. The coalition Government at Westminster has already bowed to pressure and is 'formally looking' at redefining marriage. Pink News, a prominent homosexual news website, claims that David Cameron and Nick Clegg would like to allow homosexual marriage and heterosexual civil partnerships.⁵ But this would cost £5 billion according to homosexual lobby group Stonewall.⁶

The coalition Government is also consulting on allowing same-sex couples to register civil partnerships in churches for the first time. This would only apply to England and Wales. Civil partnerships, which are not marriages, are currently restricted to register offices and secular venues in the UK. But Equalities Minister Lynne Featherstone's proposals would allow, though not compel, churches in England and Wales to perform civil partnership registrations.

Definition of marriage

The definition of marriage, as being between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others for life, is not arbitrary. It didn't just appear out of thin air. Nor is it a recent development or a definition peculiar to our own society. It is a definition which can be seen across all manner of human cultures. It is a definition which stretches back in time through all of human history. It is a definition which accords with nature, with the complementary characteristics of men and women and with the safe and secure rearing of children. This is what Christians believe.

No matter what the law says, true marriage will always be between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others for life. Law cannot change reality, and law cannot change true marriage.

Damaging consequences

We cannot ignore the biological fact that a woman's egg and a man's sperm are needed to make a baby. All sorts of scientific cartwheels and somersaults are available for lesbians and homosexuals – but even then, the basic components of egg and sperm have to be used to start the process. Children are, biologically, meant to be created by a man and a woman coming together in a one-flesh union. And it ought to be no surprise to learn that study after study shows that kids do best when raised by their biological mother and their biological father. Whatever the law says, children need a mother and a father. No matter how many MSPs vote to change the legal definition of marriage they cannot change biological reality.

But the law can change the way people think. Law can change how our society values marriage. Law can change how our society perceives marriage. And law can influence people's choices, bringing heartbreak and injustice in its wake. Law can even become coercive and can take away liberty from those who disagree.

Teaching in schools

Changing the law to allow same-sex marriage would certainly affect schools in Scotland. Think what schools will be told to teach your children or your grandchildren. Homosexual lobby group Stonewall has already issued a teachers' pack to primary schools this year recommending pro-homosexual storybooks for reading in class, including the controversial book *King and King*. This book describes a story of two princes who "marry" each other and has been at the centre of legal action when used in schools in the USA.

Not only does Stonewall recommend *King and King*, its teachers' pack even advocates primary school children acting out such books as school plays. One head teacher on the accompanying DVD says pupils should be taught to be resilient to the values of their parents and grandparents.⁷

It looks likely that the next Scottish Parliament will vote on redefining marriage sooner rather than later. Christians will want to pray and to ask their candidates what they believe about this issue.

Tips for action

- ▶ Contact candidates for the Scottish Parliament. Ask them: "Are you in favour of changing the definition of marriage so that homosexual couples can get married?"
- ▶ Inform parents and others you know that if homosexual marriage is legalised, schools in Scotland will be obliged to teach it to children.
- ▶ Inform others of your concerns via letters to newspapers or by using social networking websites.

Tips for prayer

- ▶ Pray that the MSPs in the new Parliament from across the political parties will be emboldened to oppose same-sex marriage.
- ▶ Pray for the protection of marriage and family life in Scotland.
- ▶ Pray for wisdom for The Christian Institute and others working to uphold traditional marriage.

References

- ¹ Equality and Human Rights Commission, Press Release, *New Scottish Government Called Upon To Address Equal Marriage For Same Sex Couples*, 17 March 2011
- ² *Pink News*, 5 May 2010
- ³ See <http://www.equality-network.org/Equality/website.nsf/policiesall/425EE774EF2A8895802575FA003EACCC?OpenDocument> as at 1 April 2011
- ⁴ Equality and Human Rights Commission, Press Release, *New Scottish Government Called Upon To Address Equal Marriage For Same Sex Couples*, 17 March 2011; *Holyrood Magazine*, 10 December 2010, see http://www.holyrood.com/index.php?option=com_holyrood&func=article&artid=4430 as at 4 April 2011
- ⁵ *Pink News*, 16 February 2011
- ⁶ *Pink News*, 20 September 2010
- ⁷ *The Mail on Sunday*, 13 March 2011



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