



FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND (Continuing) Public Questions, Religion & Morals Committee

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Statement on Same-Sex Marriage

The Free Church of Scotland (Continuing), through its Public Questions, Religion & Morals Committee, has submitted a response to the Scottish Government's Consultation on the Registration of Civil Partnerships and Same Sex Marriage. The Committee feel that this subject is of such importance that it warrants a further statement which in addition to being sent to the Government is being made public.

We wish to state that in contributing to the consultation we do not condone it. To seek approval for legislation favouring a lifestyle clearly condemned in the Word of God is irresponsible; it indicates a Government which has forgotten its calling as the servant of God (Romans 13:4) and a nation which though in covenant with God has badly lost its way.

The Government is proposing to redefine marriage to suit a vocal and aggressive minority. Yet marriage was not invented by man but appointed by God, who made us male and female. It is designed for one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24; Ephesians 5:31), providing mutual help, enabling procreation and preventing promiscuity. As a divine institution marriage is above legislation: no government has any business in attempting to re-write it. Instead the Government should protect and promote it as God gave it to us, recognising it to be at the very heart of a healthy society as has been the case in Scotland for centuries.

We are of the view that what is being contemplated represents a further step in a scheme to 'normalise' homosexuality. First homosexual activity was legalised, then a law preventing local authorities from promoting homosexuality was repealed, next civil partnerships were introduced for same-sex couples and now the intention is to permit same-sex 'marriages'. For some the process will not be complete until every trace of our traditional, God-given values has been removed.

Behind the proposed change in the law is the Government's commitment to 'equality'. We submit that there can be no equality between heterosexual marriage based on a natural attraction and homosexual unions based on what the Bible terms "vile affections" (Romans 1:26). Moreover if 'equality' is everything then why should the Government stop at same-sex marriage? What about incestuous and polygamous marriage? The logic being followed means that it will be difficult to withstand calls to legalise these too. This is the result when governments mistakenly adopt a secular or morally-neutral approach to such matters.

We respectfully point out that moral matters are not to be decided by popular or parliamentary majorities but by the unchanging law of God. The Holy Scriptures are the only authoritative rule of faith and life and they declare all homosexual conduct to be sinful. "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination." (Leviticus 18:22) Making same-sex unions equivalent to marriage mocks the God who made marriage honourable and a symbol of the union between Christ and His bride the church (Hebrews 13:4; Ephesians 5:32). Such unions will not bring happiness to those involved but sorrow and shame. We do not say this out of hatred but in love to our fellow men and with a regard for the truth, which we should all have an interest in.

Marriage ought to be about more than just the fulfilment of personal sexual desire. Same-sex marriage would result in unions where there is either no husband or no wife and where any children would have either no father or no mother. The complementary roles of loving headship and loving submission operating in traditional marriage for the mutual benefit of the couple and the good of the family would not be possible. To establish

such a perverse arrangement in law could only destabilise our society and harm some of its most vulnerable members. The First Minister has pledged to do all that he can to make Scotland a better nation but the consequences for any country carrying out this experiment are frightening. Indeed history suggests that they could be fatal.

We are concerned about the possible repercussions for our religious and civil liberties if same-sex marriages are made lawful. From recent precedent we believe that the Government will enforce the acceptance of these unions as normal through the education system and in public bodies generally and that those who in conscience disagree will be penalised. Any safeguards in the legislation will not prevent complaints against those who speak out. The police will investigate and the courts will be involved.

If the Government attempts to coerce the church into accepting same-sex marriage in any way, shape or form then by the grace of God it will meet with strong resistance. The Free Church (Continuing) requires her office-bearers to uphold the doctrine and discipline of God's Word and expects her people to submit to the same. The Bible teaches unambiguously that sodomy is a sin worthy of divine punishment which needs to be repented of (Genesis 19:4-7, 12-14, 23-25; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11). This we are bound to preach, come what may. It also teaches that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only Head of the church and is to obeyed before men (Colossians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 7:23; Acts 4:18-20). This we are bound to practice, come what may. Thus we will never solemnise, bless, celebrate, register or otherwise approve same-sex marriages or civil partnerships.

We hereby call upon the Government to cease from a move which would further erode our nation's Christian heritage, won for us at great cost by the Protestant Reformation and secured to us by the Treaty of Union.

We hereby warn the Government that if it continues on its present course then the prospect is increasing moral disorder, family breakdown, disrespect for authority, conflict between church and state and divine judgment upon our land.

We hereby request a meeting with representatives of the Government to take this matter further. Meanwhile we pray that the Lord in His mercy will so guide those who handle our nation's affairs "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Timothy 2:2).