



Current Issues: Marriage

# same sex 'marriage'

The costs and consequences  
of redefining marriage

**Christian Concern**

*Speaking of Jesus Christ in public life*

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# About Us

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Christian Concern exists to speak of Jesus Christ in public life – in the media, in the courts and to Government. We take a stand on vital issues including Christian freedoms, God's precious gift of life and His pattern for marriage and family.

Our sister organisation, the Christian Legal Centre, supports those who face challenge in their workplace or public service as a result of their Christian faith.

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**Christian Concern**  
& Christian Legal Centre

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## Introduction

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The plan to redefine marriage	4
Why is marriage important?	4
What do Christians believe?	5

## Redefining Marriage

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Aren't all relationships the same?	7
Why stop there?	8
How would our language change?	9
What about the children?	10
What about public wellbeing?	12

## Freedom of Belief

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Is religious freedom safe?	14
Will churches be next?	15
What about previous court rulings?	16
What about free speech?	17
What would happen in schools?	18

## Legal Rights

---

Is there a right to same-sex marriage?	21
What about Civil Partnerships?	21
Has a promise been broken?	22

## Democracy

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What does the public want?	25
Help us to stop same-sex marriage	26

# Introduction

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## The plan to redefine marriage

Prime Minister David Cameron announced at the 2011 Conservative Party conference that he supported redefining marriage to include same-sex couples. The Government is now planning to introduce such proposals by 2015. The plan has sparked a huge, passionate and on-going national debate.

This leaflet examines some of the issues, including the meaning of marriage, the nature of different relationships, the challenges to religious freedom and the effect that same-sex marriage may have on children and on society at large. What is the truth about same-sex marriage?

## Why is marriage important?

Marriage is an exclusive, voluntary and life-long commitment between a man and a woman. It has enjoyed a long and privileged status in most societies because of the unique social benefits that it offers.

The strength of marriage lies in the complementary nature of men and women, and how they support, encourage and complete one another. Marriage is also strongly geared towards the procreation of children. It offers children two natural parents committed to each other for life, as well as a male and female role model. There is no better environment for children to prosper.

*“Marriage as it has been understood and appreciated since time immemorial is a universal human institution, the way in which every advanced society conspires to obtain for each child the love, attention, and resources of a mother and a father, because we know this to be the optimum environment in which children thrive and flourish.”<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Edmund Adamus, Director for Marriage and Family Life, Diocese of Westminster, speaking at the World Congress of Families Marriage Colloquium in London, 23 May 2012.

Because marriage encourages stability within families, and gives children the best environment for reaching their potential, the whole of society benefits.

## What do Christians believe?

Marriage is recognised by Christians as a gift from God, ordained to bring a man and a woman together for life in mutual service.

Marriage gives couples the chance to experience intimate companionship within a lifelong, covenantal relationship. It offers the right environment for sexual expression and the best conditions for raising children.

Jesus affirmed the belief that marriage comes from God, saying:

*“Haven’t you read”, he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’”<sup>2</sup>*

The Apostle Paul stated in Ephesians that marriage actually reflects Christ’s union with the church:

*“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.*

*After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church - for we are members of his body. “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.*

*This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.”<sup>3</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> Matthew 19v4-6

<sup>3</sup> Ephesians 5v25-23

Marriage is a witness to the unfailing love of God for humanity. Ordained by God, marriage reflects heavenly realities, in particular Christ's union with the church. Therefore the attempt to redefine marriage is actually an attempt to redefine truth itself.

Furthermore, there is no mandate or model in the Bible for homosexual relationships. Homosexual acts are condemned as sinful in both the Old and the New Testament. Paul wrote in Romans:

*“Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.”<sup>4</sup>*

Introducing same-sex marriage would legitimise sinful behaviour and wrongfully equate homosexual acts with a holy union that God has blessed.



# Redefining Marriage

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## Aren't all relationships the same?

Those who support same-sex marriage argue that same-sex relationships are equal to heterosexual relationships, and therefore should be treated the same. Aren't all relationships the same?

In fact, heterosexual and same-sex relationships are profoundly different.

Same-sex relationships:

- Do not offer the complementary roles of male and female, father or mother.
- Cannot produce children.
- Cannot provide the best environment for raising children (any such union will always deny a child either a mother or a father).
- Are not nearly as stable as heterosexual relationships, since 'open' relationships and a high degree of promiscuity are often the norm for homosexuals.<sup>5</sup>

In contrast, heterosexual relationships are unique in that they have the capacity to create life, and thus continue to replenish society with new lives. Heterosexual marriage therefore innately revolves around children and provides the ideal environment for raising children. Marriage itself is heterosexual by nature.

If marriage is redefined to also include homosexual relationships, then it would no longer be marriage as we know it. 'Marriage' would simply no longer mean the same thing. It would be undermined, weakened and redefined for everybody, including for those who are already married.

This 'new' marriage would lack many of the key ingredients currently found in marriage. It would no longer reflect the complementary roles of male and female, would no longer be geared towards the creation of new life, and would no longer offer the ideal family structure. Marriage

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<sup>5</sup> A 2011 review of 11,000 homosexuals (by the US Center for Diseases Control) found that 68% of partnered gays have two or so casual sexual partners outside their primary relationship each year i.e. they are 'open'.

would no longer be about children but rather would revolve around the demands and wishes of adults who are seeking social approval for their lifestyle.

Forcing two very different types of relationship into one mould is in fact profoundly illiberal. Such an attempt to force uniformity where there is none is in fact totalitarian. It is a denial of everything that is unique, beneficial and specific to heterosexuality.

## Why stop there?

There are advocates of same-sex marriage who also support changing the law to recognise polygamy.<sup>6</sup> If marriage is reduced to a contract between two people who claim to love each other, then what about three people? Where do we draw the line?

Evidence from around the world suggests that once marriage is redefined to include same-sex couples, pressure grows for further redefinitions.

### **For example:**

- Since the legalisation of same-sex marriage in 2001, Dutch legislation has made it possible for three-way relationships to be registered as “civil unions”.
- Serious attempts have been made in British Columbia to use same-sex marriage legislation to justify the legalisation of polygamous marriages.
- In 2009 Mexico City introduced same-sex marriage, and is now already in the process of considering proposals to introduce two-year fixed term marriage contracts. This would create temporary marriages which would come to an end once the two-year period is over unless the partners agree to renew their marriage.
- Following the introduction of same-sex marriage in the Netherlands, from 2001 – 2009 it was possible for a marriage to be “converted” into a registered partnership and then annulled without a court order if the parties chose to separate. The process is known as a “flash divorce”.

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<sup>6</sup> Andrew Lilico wrote a comment piece for Conservative Home on 16 Feb 2012 arguing that marriage was just a contract and therefore there was no reason to stop polygamists from entering such contracts.

For many homosexual activists, all sexual choices are seen as equally valid, and they want to redefine both marriage and society according to their own sexual beliefs.

Leading homosexual campaigner Peter Tatchell, describing the early days of the Gay Liberation Front, stated:

*“Despite our differences, we shared a radical idealism – a dream of what the world could and should be – free from not just homophobia but the whole sex-shame culture, which oppressed straights as much as LGBTs. We were sexual liberationists and social revolutionaries, out to turn the world upside down.*

*GLF’s strategy for queer emancipation was to change society’s values and norms, rather than adapt to them. We sought a cultural revolution to overturn centuries of male heterosexual domination and thereby free both queers and women. GLF’s gender agenda has been partly won.”*

Same-sex marriage is only one step towards the fulfilment of this agenda. Such activists want to challenge and alter every social belief about marriage, sexual behaviour and even gender, and reshape society according to their own radical ideology.

## How would our language change?

If same-sex marriage is introduced, then our language, which helps shape the national consciousness, will quickly start to change.

In countries where same-sex marriage has been introduced, historic terms such as “husband” and “wife” and “mother” and “father” have been eliminated to cater for same-sex couples.

- In Canada, the introduction of same-sex marriage resulted in all official documentation and legislation being amended to eliminate the terms “husband” and “wife” and to replace “natural parent” with “legal parent”.
- Following the introduction of same-sex marriages in Massachusetts, marriage certificates have been changed to read “Party A” and “Part B” instead of “Husband” and “Wife”.

- One year after same-sex marriages were legalised in Spain, birth certificates were changed to read “Progenitor A” and “Progenitor B” instead of “Mother” and “Father”.

Any attempt to change our language to fit homosexual rights ideology will be an attempt to force society to accept such ideology as the norm.

Removing words such as “husband and wife” or “mother and father” undermines God’s design for the family.

## What about the children?

Redefining marriage would give society the false impression that same-sex marriage was equal to heterosexual marriage in providing the best environment for children.

Homosexual rights groups often claim that same-sex parenting is a valid alternative to traditional parenting, yet the evidence suggests otherwise.

Heterosexual marriage can provide a child with two natural, biological parents, as well as two parents of the opposite sex.

The importance of both biological parents to the happiness, prosperity and well-being of children is demonstrated overwhelmingly by the educational, social and anthropological evidence.

The Government itself has stated that children do best when raised by “both birth parents”.<sup>7</sup> Yet children raised by homosexual couples are always deprived of at least one biological parent, and either a father or a mother figure will always be absent.

Many studies have linked the absence of a natural parent with severe social, physical and emotional problems including low academic achievement, poor health, drug, alcohol and cigarette abuse, poverty, crime and sexual abuse.

Studies also show that children brought up in traditional families, and therefore exposed to the complimentary role models of both mother and

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7 See the Coalition’s paper entitled Social Justice: transforming lives (March 2012).

father, do significantly better in every aspect of their lives compared to those raised in single parent or 'alternative' homes.

Studies also indicate that homosexual parenting is associated with a number of negative outcomes, and that children raised by same-sex parents are more likely to experiment sexually, experience gender confusion and engage in homosexual conduct themselves.<sup>8</sup>

Sociologist Patricia Morgan, who has written the largest review of such research ever published in Europe, concluded that:<sup>9</sup>

- Evidence from around the world shows that the (heterosexual) married family is the most successful child rearing environment.
- Many studies indicate significant differences between homosexual and heterosexual parenting outcomes for children; in particular, children are more likely to become involved in homosexual behaviour themselves if raised by homosexual parents.
- Gender confusion seems to be rife with daughters of lesbian mothers in particular.

Other studies have found that:

- An absence of nuclear family arrangements exposes children to a higher risk of sexual abuse. One study found that: "the risk of abuse and neglect is likely to be exacerbated where substitute individuals fill the roles of biological parents" and that "pre-schoolers in step-parent – natural parent homes . . . are estimated to be 40 times as likely to become abuse statistics as like-aged children living with two natural parents".<sup>10</sup>
- Children from married heterosexual couples perform much better at school than those from families led by cohabiting heterosexual couples and homosexual couples.<sup>11</sup>

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**8** Walter R. Scumm, "Children of homosexuals more apt to be homosexual: A reply to Morrison and to Cameron based on an examination of multiple sources of data" *Journal of Biosocial Science*, Cambridge University Press (2010), Volume 42 pp: 721-742 and Stacey, J. & Biblarz, T.J. (2001). (How) does the sexual orientation of parents matter. *American Sociological Review*, 66, 159-183.

**9** Morgan, Patricia, "Children as Trophies: Examining the Evidence on Same-Sex Parenting".

**10** Daly, Martin and Wilson, Margo, "Discriminative Parental Solicitude: A Biological Perspective" *Journal of Marriage and Family*, vol. 46, May 1980.

**11** Sarantakos, Sotirios, "Children in Three Contexts" *Children Australia*, volume 21, 1996, pages 23-31.

The unique benefits of traditional marriage for children should be protected and provided for in public policy. The Government should take into account the welfare of society as a whole, particularly where children are involved, when making any decisions about marriage.

## What about public wellbeing?

Many would like to present homosexuality as being a happy and healthy lifestyle. Yet studies have demonstrated that homosexual practices are seriously harmful to the physical and mental health of those involved.

One study found that a typical homosexual lifestyle shortens the life expectancy of those involved by up to 20 years.<sup>12</sup>

Another study found that, at the age of 21, homosexuals were at a fourfold increased risk of major depression and conduct disorder, a fivefold increased risk of nicotine dependence, a twofold increased risk of other substance misuse or addiction and were six times more likely to have attempted suicide.<sup>13</sup>

A study by Dr Dean Byrd found that homosexual practices led to “a reduced lifespan, suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, depression, and domestic violence”.<sup>14</sup>

Dr Byrd found that male homosexual sex causes anal cancer, syphilis, gonorrhoea, herpes simplex virus, and AIDS infection.

STD rates in the homosexual community have greatly increased as homosexuality has been normalised and promoted in Western society.

The Health Protection Agency has documented that homosexual men remain the group most at risk of becoming infected with HIV in the UK

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**12** Nathaniel S. Lehrman, M.D. “Homosexuality: Some Neglected Considerations”, *Journal of American Physicians and Surgeons*, Volume 10 Number 3. The paper can be found at: <http://www.jpands.org/vol10no3/lehrman.pdf>

**13** Fergusson DM et al. Is sexual orientation related to mental health problems and suicidality in young people? *Arch Gen Psychiatry*. 1999; 56: 876-80.

**14** Dr A. Dean Byrd, “The Family in the Third Millennium: A Compendium of Scholarship and Opinion Supporting Family as the Fundamental Unit of Society,”<sup>14</sup> 2005 <http://www.narth.com/docs/needboth.html>

and new diagnoses in this group alone have increased by 70 per cent in the past 10 years.<sup>15</sup>

Homosexual practices have been proven to be potentially destructive to the participants. Yet if same-sex marriage is introduced then it will likely lead to more homosexual behaviour.

An accumulation of research from around the world has found that the practice of homosexuality increases in frequency in societies which endorse it.

*“Extensive research from Sweden, Finland, Denmark, and the United States reveals that homosexuality is primarily environmentally induced. Specifically, social and/or family factors, as well as permissive environments which affirm homosexuality, play major environmental roles in the development of homosexual behaviour.”<sup>16</sup>*

Public policy should take public wellbeing into account and not endorse or promote behaviour which has so many negative health outcomes.



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<sup>15</sup> [http://www.hpa.org.uk/webw/HPAweb&HPAwebStandard/HPAweb\\_C/1296683749074?p=1287147958032](http://www.hpa.org.uk/webw/HPAweb&HPAwebStandard/HPAweb_C/1296683749074?p=1287147958032)

<sup>16</sup> “Legalizing Same-Sex Marriage Will Increase Prevalence of Homosexuality: Research Provides Significant Evidence” by Dr Trayce Hansen. See: [http://www.drtraycehansen.com/Pages/writings\\_legalizing.html](http://www.drtraycehansen.com/Pages/writings_legalizing.html)

# Freedom of Belief

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## Is religious freedom safe?

Many are concerned about the threat to religious freedom should same-sex marriage be introduced in the UK.

In response to these concerns, the Government has claimed that religious freedom will be protected as same-sex marriage will only initially be allowed on civil premises, and not in churches.

The Government is therefore claiming that same-sex marriage will only affect ‘civil marriages’ rather than ‘religious marriages’, and that Christians do not need to be concerned about religious freedom.

Unfortunately, the Government’s distinction between ‘religious’ and ‘civil’ marriage is misleading since there is only one form of marriage, namely ‘legal’ marriage, which can take place on either civil or religious premises.

If marriage is redefined to include same-sex couples, then under both domestic and European anti-discrimination and equality laws, the partners to such a marriage will, as a starting point, be entitled to exactly the same rights as heterosexual couples, including the right to have their ceremonies conducted in churches.

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) recently quoted a non-binding resolution by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe which said that, should same-sex marriages be legalised, it will place the State under an obligation to “ensure that [the] rights and obligations [of homosexual couples] are equivalent to those of heterosexual couples in a similar situation.”<sup>17</sup>

Under Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights, unlawful discrimination occurs when persons in similar situations are treated differently without an objective and reasonable justification.

Thus, where same-sex couples have been given the right to marriage, it

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17 Gas and Dubois v. France, March 2012 (no. 25951/07)

will be difficult for the Government to argue that there is a reasonable justification for allowing some couples to marry in churches and not others.

The Government will therefore be open to legal challenges on their proposed policy of restricting same-sex marriages to civil premises. It is not possible to predict what the ECHR would decide if this policy was challenged in court.

The Church of England response to the Government's same-sex marriage consultation states:

*“If the proposal to redefine marriage were to be implemented, it must be very doubtful whether limiting same-sex couples to non-religious forms and ceremonies could withstand a challenge under the European Convention on Human Rights.”<sup>18</sup>*

Due to this uncertainty, Government assurances regarding religious freedom on this issue are groundless and are *essentially misleading*.

## Will churches be next?

If same-sex marriage is introduced on civil premises, then the door is open for such ceremonies to be allowed in churches. Many will campaign for this on the basis of ‘equality’.

Civil Partnership ceremonies were initially only allowed on civil premises, but within a few years of their introduction they were permitted to take place in churches. The same is likely to happen with same-sex marriage ceremonies.

Should same-sex marriage be allowed in churches, the Government may attempt to introduce a voluntary system for churches in order to protect religious freedom.

However, there are bound to be legal ‘test cases’ brought against those churches that do not want to provide such ceremonies, and churches could lose such legal challenges, as the ECHR may well overturn any

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18 A Response to the Government Equalities Office Consultation from the Church of England, pg 10

conscience protections introduced by the Government on the basis of Article 14.

Therefore, further down the line, churches may be forced to host same-sex weddings. This would signal the effective end of religious freedom in the United Kingdom.

## What about previous court rulings?

Since same-sex marriage was introduced in Canada in 2005, there have been several hundred proceedings in courts, human rights commissions and employment boards against Christians who do not want to facilitate or promote same-sex marriage. Public employees have been disciplined, businesses have been sued and churches have been threatened with sanctions over their Christian beliefs on marriage.

This will also happen in the UK if same-sex marriage is introduced. Previous cases confirm that, whenever there has been a clash between sexual orientation rights and religious freedom in equality law, the courts have always ruled in favour of sexual orientation rights.

This has led to many Christians being penalised. For example:

- Lillian Ladele, a civil registrar, was forced to resign after being disciplined by Lambeth Council for refusing to officiate at same-sex partnerships. She lost her case.
- A Christian couple, Owen and Eunice Johns, were rejected as potential foster parents by Derby Council after stating that they would not promote homosexuality to a child in their care.
- Gary McFarlane, a relationships counsellor, was sacked for mentioning, on a staff training day, that he may have a conscience objection to providing sex therapy to homosexual couples because of his faith.
- Dr Sheila Matthews was dismissed from her role on the local authority's adoption panel after requesting to refrain from voting when homosexual couples were being considered as potential adoptive parents.
- Andrew McClintock, a Christian Magistrate sitting on the Family Panel at Sheffield Magistrates Court, was forced to resign because he

was not allowed to opt-out of cases which would require him to place children in the care of homosexuals.

- Several Catholic adoption agencies have been forced to permanently close after refusing to place children in the care of homosexual couples, against their religious ethos.

These precedents are likely to be followed by the UK courts in any legal clash between those who support same-sex marriage and those who do not wish to facilitate it for reasons of belief and conscience.

## What about free speech?

The introduction of same-sex marriage will give such significant State sanction to homosexual practices that anyone who disagrees with same-sex marriage publically will be severely penalised. This censorship has already begun.

Those who want to retain the current legal definition of marriage are already facing significant harassment and censure, not just from isolated activists but from major public bodies.

In May 2012, Christian Concern and the World Congress of Families organised a marriage colloquium with a range of high profile speakers who were to debate the introduction of same-sex marriage.

Yet the Law Society, and then the Government run Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, both cancelled the event from taking part on their premises at the last moment, claiming that the debate breached their 'diversity' policies.

Conservative MP David Burrowes, who publically supports the Coalition for Marriage, a campaign group formed to defend the current legal definition of marriage, has received hate mail and even a death threat for his stance. He said:

*"I myself have been subjected to hate mail, to accusations of homophobia, and to a death threat as well, which is just extraordinary when one is affirming what the law is as it stands and has done historically for hundreds, if not thousands, of years."*

Further recent examples include:

- Adrian Smith, a housing manager from Manchester, was demoted and had his salary cut significantly by his employers after he questioned whether same-sex marriage was an ‘equality too far’ on his private Facebook page, out of working hours.
- A Christian bus driver, Arthur McGeorge, is currently under investigation by his employers, and could lose his job, for circulating a Coalition for Marriage petition at work during his lunch break.
- A Christian blog writer was put under investigation by the Advertising Standards Agency just for displaying a pro-marriage advert by the Coalition for Marriage.
- Anglican Lay Reader Peter Gowlland was suspended for two months by All Saints Church in Sanderstead for suggesting that congregation members should sign the Coalition for Marriage petition.
- Celebrity singer Will Young was widely applauded after saying on BBC Question Time that clergy who preached too strongly against same-sex marriage should be sent to prison.

These examples show how Christians with biblical views are already facing remarkable restrictions on their freedom of speech, before same-sex marriage has even been incorporated into law.

## What would happen in schools?

The introduction of same-sex marriage would have serious implications for education, as children would be taught in schools that such relationships are equivalent to heterosexual marriages. Large numbers of parents and teachers do not agree with this yet they would be severely penalised if they objected.

Following the introduction of same-sex marriage in the US state of Massachusetts in 2004, children as young as six now have homosexual marriage promoted to them as a valid alternative to heterosexual marriage.

In 2006, a federal judge ruled that since same-sex marriages were legal, schools have a duty to portray homosexual relationships as normal to children, and that teachers have no obligation to notify parents or allow

them to opt-out of such classes.<sup>19</sup>

Aidan O'Neill QC has provided the Catholic Church in Scotland with a legal opinion suggesting that, should same-sex marriage be introduced, equality laws mean that teachers would be forced to emphasise the validity of same-sex marriages, and that parents would be powerless to prevent this.<sup>20</sup>

Teachers in the UK are already being penalised if they do not agree with the promotion of homosexuality, and this would accelerate if same-sex marriage was introduced.<sup>21</sup>

Conservative MP Peter Bone has warned:

*“It is simply inconceivable in today’s world where political correctness runs amok in our institutions, that there would not be profound consequences for those who hold traditional views.*

*Parents who object will be treated as bigots and outcasts... discriminated against and persecuted because they hold views that have been enshrined in our laws and have been the cornerstone of our society for 2,000 years.*

*And what of the teachers who object to teaching about same-sex marriage. Will they face disciplinary action? How will it affect their careers?”*

Promoting homosexuality in schools at a young age may actually encourage harmful homosexual experimentation by vulnerable young children.

Some children could become confused that they may be homosexual, just because they have close friendships with children of the same sex.

Dr Lisa Nolland has warned:

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<sup>19</sup> David Parker and others v William Hurley and others United States, District Court of Massachusetts, February 23, 2007: [http://www.massresistance.org/docs/parker\\_lawsuit/motion\\_to\\_dismiss\\_2007/order\\_motion\\_to\\_dismiss\\_022307.pdf](http://www.massresistance.org/docs/parker_lawsuit/motion_to_dismiss_2007/order_motion_to_dismiss_022307.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> Daily Telegraph, 10 June 2012

<sup>21</sup> Christian teacher Kwabena Peat was suspended after complaining about homosexual indoctrination at a school training day.

*“This deliberate sexualisation of children and young people is egregious; it is flying in the face of what we know of the principles of child development. It eroticizes vitally important non-erotic same-sex intimacy and bonding which is requisite for proper gender development, and plants into young minds sexual issues which they have the neither the cognitive, psychological nor moral capability to handle.”<sup>22</sup>*



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22 Dr Lisa Nolland, 'Problems with Gay Marriage', 6 March 2012

# Legal Rights

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## Is there a right to same-sex marriage?

Homosexual lobby groups often claim that our current legal framework deprives them of their “rights”. Yet it is important to note that there is no “right” to same-sex marriage in law, nor can a “desire” be classified as a “right”.

The ECHR and the High Court of the Family Division have emphasised time and time again that the ban on same-sex marriage falls within the exceptions offered by UK equality legislation, whereby certain ‘discrimination’ is justified to the extent that it exists to protect a legitimate and proportionate aim.

The ECHR recently ruled that governments are not required to legislate for same-sex marriage as “the protection of family in the traditional sense is, in principle, a weighty and legitimate reason which might justify a difference in treatment.”<sup>23</sup>

The Government therefore can decide what rights to give same-sex couples, in the same way it has to decide what rights to give cohabiting heterosexual couples and those in any other arrangement which falls short of conventional marriage. In making this decision, the welfare of children and society as a whole must clearly be the primary considerations.

## What about Civil Partnerships?

Same-sex marriage is not an equality issue and is not a necessary step because same-sex couples can already obtain almost every material right of marriage by entering a Civil Partnership.

The homosexual Labour MP, Ben Bradshaw, has said:

*“This is not a priority for the gay community, which already won*

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<sup>23</sup> Gas and Dubois v. France, March 2012 (no. 25951/07)

*equal rights with civil partnerships. We've never needed the word "marriage".*<sup>24</sup>

The importance of retaining the unique definition of marriage was a central issue to the previous Government's decision to maintain a clear distinction between marriage and same-sex relationships during the formal introduction of Civil Partnerships.

When the introduction of Civil Partnerships was debated in 2004, the Government spokesperson for the Department of Constitutional Affairs and the Parliament Under-Secretary of State at that time, Lord Filkin, summarised the Government's take on homosexual marriages as follows:

*"My Lords, the Government believe that marriage should be possible only between people of opposite gender in law. The concept of homosexual marriage is a contradiction in terms, which is why our position is utterly clear: we are against it, and do not intend to promote it or allow it to take place."*<sup>25</sup>

In recognition of the unique benefits conferred by traditional marriages on society, the Government refused to grant "marriage status" to homosexual couples, stating in paragraph 1.3 of their consultation document that: "It is a matter of public record that the Government has no plans to introduce homosexual marriage."<sup>26</sup>

## Has a promise been broken?

During House of Lords debates on the Civil Partnership Bill 2004, there was much opposition to the new legislation on the grounds that it undermined conventional marriage by creating striking similarities between the rights conferred on civil partners and married couples:

*"The fact that marriage is so important is sufficient reason to oppose this Bill. The Bill sends out the message that marriage—as*

<sup>24</sup> Daily Mail, 14 April 2012

<sup>25</sup> Hansard, HL Debate, Gender Recognition 11 February 2004 vol 656 cc1093-5 <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/2004/feb/11/gender-recognition>

<sup>26</sup> Civil Partnership: a framework for the legal recognition of homosexual couples: a consultation, June 2003 <http://www.equalities.gov.uk/pdf/Civil%20Partnership%20-%20a%20framework%20for%20the%20legal%20recognition%20of%20homosexual%20couples.pdf>

*the fundamental foundation for raising children—can be equated to a homosexual relationship. Marriage is profoundly undermined by this Bill” (Baroness O’Cathain)<sup>27</sup>*

*“The traditional family provides the basis for a stable society and the procreation of children. The Bill rests on the view that marriage and homosexual partnerships are equivalent or the same, but I do not believe that they are” (Angela Watkinson (Upminster) (Con))<sup>28</sup>*

In order to address these concerns, the House debated at length whether or not homosexual marriages were desirable and a positive change to our law in the future. After much debate, the Lords expressed the unanimous view that marriage status could not be conferred on homosexual relationships due to the distinct importance and value of traditional marriage in our society.

Each peer, including those who supported the Bill, re-iterated the importance of children being raised by natural parents and emphasised the crucial need to preserve conventional marriage and traditional familial arrangements.

The Civil Partnership Bill was nevertheless approved by a majority as much reassurance was given by Government officials that the new legislation would not devalue marriage or create homosexual marriage under another guise, but was designed to redress any economic disadvantages faced by those in homosexual relationships as a result of an absence of a legal recognition of their relationship.<sup>29</sup> Thus, the Lords stated that:

*“We continue to believe that the conventional marriage and family is the best environment in which to bring up children. Civil Partnerships, of course, differ from marriage. Marriage is a separate and special relationship which we should continue to celebrate*

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**27** Civil Partnerships Bill, HL Debate: 12th October 2004  
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmhansrd/vo041012/debtext/41012-11.htm>

**28** Civil Partnerships Bill, HL Debate: 12th October 2004  
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmhansrd/vo041012/debtext/41012-11.htm>

**29** See, Civil Partnership: a framework for the legal recognition of homosexual couples: a consultation, June 2003 pg.10 where the Government justified the introduction of Civil Partnerships on the basis that “homosexual couples face many problems in their day-to-day lives because there is no legal recognition of their relationships”.

*and sustain. To recognise Civil Partnerships is not in any way to denigrate or downgrade marriage....” (Baroness Wilcox)<sup>30</sup>*

It is evident that Parliament was persuaded to pass the Bill on the understanding that traditional marriage would remain unaffected by the new law and would continue to hold its privileged status in society. Unfortunately, these assurances have now proved false.



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**30** Civil Partnership Bill [H.L.] HL Deb 22 April 2004 vol 660 cc387-433  
[http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/2004/apr/22/civil-partnership-bill-hl#column\\_390](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/2004/apr/22/civil-partnership-bill-hl#column_390)

# Democracy

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## What does the public want?

What democratic mandate does the Government have for its plan to introduce such a radical measure as same-sex marriage?

When informed that same-sex couples have similar legal rights under Civil Partnerships, the majority of the British public are against changing the definition of marriage. 70 per cent support the view that marriage should remain “an exclusive commitment between a man and a woman”.<sup>31</sup>

The Government proposals have been met by significant opposition from members of the public, MPs and religious leaders across the board. Both the Church of England and the Catholic Church are opposed to the proposals.

A major petition against redefining marriage gained over half a million signatures in little over two months and is still growing.

In fact, introducing same-sex marriage was not contained in the election manifesto of any party.

Yet, despite such public opposition, despite the lack of any democratic mandate and despite the gravity of redefining the central institution of society, those advocating same-sex marriage are determined to force their proposals through.

The Government has consulted on the proposed changes, yet the wording of the consultation was biased and assumed that same-sex marriage would be introduced. Equalities Minister Lynne Featherstone and the Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg have both claimed that it is not a question of “whether”, but rather of “how” same-sex marriage is introduced.

The Government’s attempt to redefine marriage without any clear

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31 Marriage Survey, ComRes, 23-24 February 2012

democratic mandate is profoundly illiberal. Should the Government press ahead with its proposals, it will be imposing the ideology of homosexual campaigners onto the rest of society.

## Help us to stop same-sex marriage

Please join us as we do all that we can to stop the redefinition of marriage. We are still confident that these proposals can be stopped.

Christian Concern is a founding member of the Coalition for Marriage, a broad based campaign group which is resisting the introduction of same-sex marriage. Its website can be found at: <http://c4m.org.uk>

Please sign the Coalition for Marriage petition which supports the current legal definition of marriage, which is that between one man and one woman. The petition can be found on the website.

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# same sex 'marriage'

## The costs and consequences of redefining marriage

This booklet explains why marriage between one man and one woman is a unique human relationship. It explains why same-sex 'marriage' is a threat to authentic marriage. It unpacks how a redefinition of marriage would have wide ranging consequences affecting schools, churches and freedom of speech.

At a time when marriage is misunderstood and undervalued, it's important Christians are able to explain why this unique, God-given relationship is so important. This booklet has been written to help you do just that.

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