



News Release

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Church Society calls on House of Lords to put the brakes on Same Sex Marriage Bill

Lee Gatiss, Director of Church Society, has written to the Lords Spiritual to express concern about the *Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill* which will be debated in the House of Lords next week.

The debate may focus on the notions of 'rights' and 'equality.' As Christians, we support and should defend the legal equality (properly defined) of all those who experience same sex attraction, and recognise them as made in the image of God. What this Bill would actually achieve, however, is not a great advance for minority rights but a fundamentally-flawed redefinition of a basic institution for every single one of us.

The formularies of our church and the law of the land define and recognise marriage as the union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others for as long as they both shall live. It was designed thus by God to be a picture of the relationship between Christ and his people. It has been thus since the creation of the world. The new definition proposed by the Government removes the requirement for consummation from our legal understanding of marriage, and tampers with the very idea of faithfulness in what it says about adultery. It unravels something inexpressibly precious which societies at all times and in all places have perceived as unique and essential.

Moreover, the Bill does not merely 'open up' marriage to a new group of people, as many are portraying it. Rather, it enforces and compels everyone in our country to hastily accept the creation of an entirely new socio-legal structure for all of us, which possesses neither an underlying consensual basis or a democratic mandate, and is actually only sought by a small minority of the gay community. Such grand-scale societal re-engineering cannot be mitigated with a few small legislative concessions to Church of England clergy or to employees with conscientious objections to the theory of same sex 'marriage' — in which the Bill is woefully deficient in any case, and which would quickly be eroded not least by test cases attempting to push the boundaries even further.

It is always dangerous to tamper with the foundations of a structure. To undermine marriage by redefining its very meaning as this Bill proposes to do, will have a crumbling effect on our culture as a whole. This is certainly not the way to heal the social unrest and family breakdown which are now all too prevalent in Britain and which affect every parish church in the land.

The House of Lords exists precisely to put a brake on this kind of rushed, ill-conceived legislation which has not made an appearance in any election manifesto or Queen's Speech. Unless it is rejected by the Lords, we will all have to live with both the predictable and the many unforeseen consequences of this ideologically-driven false step for many decades to come. We must hope and pray that the Lords reject it, for the glory of God and the good of our nation.

Church Society Council

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For further information please contact:

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Church Society exists to uphold biblical teaching and to promote and defend the character of the Church of England as a reformed and national Church. For further information visit www.churchsociety.org