

# **Consultation of Christian Churches**

Submission to Parliament Portfolio Committee on  
Home Affairs

“Civil Union Bill”

Date 17<sup>TH</sup> October 2006-10-16

Time 09h00 – 13h00

Venue: Committee Room V454 , Fourth Floor, Old

Assembly Wing

This presentation is done by Rev Barry Isaacs an Executive Representative of the organisation. This organisation consists of over thirty seven denominations that has members of all races and cultures within the city of Cape Town

In 1994 a new nation was born. The all inclusive South African nation was born as a result of a previous unjust regime. This regime had at its disposal many vehicles that it used to further its cause. These vehicles (organs of state) included, State owned companies, the Broadcasting Corporation and even the church. Today we find that the dawn of democracy has not only challenged but also changed the responsibilities and functions of these vehicles. Today the church has an independent voice. It is no longer a vehicle of the state. Today it is a vehicle of democracy. The church has at its heart the very responsibility of submitting and guaranteeing the ideals of the constitution. The Bible instructs us to pray and submit to the leaders of our land.

The constitution of our land (which represents the highest form of authority) also in the same manner now protects the rights and responsibilities of the church. These rights and responsibilities are afforded to all in this beautiful country. They include freedom of expression, freedom of religion and the right to advocate your beliefs in a manner that does not deny others the same privileges. As ours is the most progressive constitution in modern day, we know that we will be faced with challenges that would attempt to discredit the usefulness and practicality of it.

For many years the pre 1994 communities and Faith Based Organisations found that it fought a colossal battle against an unjust "Apartheid". Like many other organisations that were birthed, experience and skills was garnered specifically towards a non racial society. Today we see an immense lack of experience and skills for fighting other issues on society. We are desperately in need of fighting skills in our war against crime, unemployment xenophobia and more importantly values.

Our beloved President Honourable Thabo Mbeki as recent as this year made an urgent appeal to the church to actively get involved in our battles against these issues specifically "our war against moral degeneration and values". On numerous occasions he has invited the church in public domain to exercise its rights and responsibilities with regards to values in our nation. This plea has not only come against a backdrop of moral degeneration and unparalleled crime, but also as an encouragement to what is believed to constitute 72% of our nation. We believe that because of our influence and impact in the communities and every sector of society, it is vital that the voice of the church be heard in context. As a representative of churches, I today represent a constituency of over thirty seven interdenominational and cross cultural, "Christians" (See Attachment).

As every other groupings the church now forms part of the new inclusive citizenry of South Africa. We now find ourselves on the same playing fields as organisations who represent gender issues, xenophobic issues and human rights issues.

Our presentation today is not against homosexuals or gender issues. As the church representing three million people in this province we wish to have our legitimate and rightful voice to be heard. In line with our president's plea, to protect and maintain national values, we would like to advocate our position with regards to the "Same - Sex Marriage Bill.

We wish to voice our opinion in line with the amount of those whom we represent. By example we feel that the voice of the masses (72% of population) should place

value to the issues at hand. By virtue of the majority we represent regionally and nationally we exercise our opinion accordingly.

We believe that marriage :

We know from creation design that sexual relations are meant to be between a man and woman (Genesis 2). The idea of endorsing same sex marriage, either morally or as a political right, is never entertained anywhere in scripture. Nor has it until very recently ever been entertained in any significant part of the Christian church.

In addressing the issue of same sex marriage, it is important that we distinguish between some different related concepts.

1. First is that of 'gender confusion'. This is a psychological problem often caused by a childhood failure to develop close relationship with a parent of the same sex. It does not need to manifest as homosexuality, but leaves a person more vulnerable to homosexuality. Such people need love, help, teaching and counselling.
2. The second is that of homosexual temptation. Everyone experiences some form of sexual temptation. For some people this temptation leads to homosexuality. Some people struggle with such temptation and they need love and support from others.
3. The third concept is homosexual practice (relationships and/or physical sexual relationships). This is considered by the church to be unnatural behaviour.
4. The fourth concept is political activism to promote tolerance and acceptance of homosexuality. This is also very serious sin. Not all homosexuals do this. This article is dealing with this issue of political activism. It is not addressing in any depth the previous three issues. Obviously homosexual rights activism will create an environment, which will encourage more gender confusion, homosexual temptation and homosexual practice.

The word 'marriage' is a major boundary we need to defend, but there are other issues as well. Marriage is a special and unique institution and not just a legal term. We must oppose not only the misuse of the word 'marriage', but anything that undermines the uniqueness of the institution of marriage as defined in the 'Christian Biblical Context'. For example, civil unions and 'registered partnerships', which give similar legal rights and responsibilities to marriage, based on a sexual relationship, undermine the institution of marriage in a number of ways.

1. Firstly, marriage is an institution uniquely ordained by God and uniquely recognised in all human cultures. Any other sexual relationship, given legal recognition, undermines the uniqueness of marriage and should be opposed.

2. Secondly marriage alternatives encourage the idea that sexuality and relationships are primarily there for the benefit of adult pleasure, rather than as a sacred commitment for the benefit of the natural family.
3. Some argue that opposition to religious belief is a religious viewpoint and religious people should not impose their views in law on others.

#### Our Submission in opposition to the "Same Sex Bill"

1. It is not just religious people who are opposing the Same Sex Marriage agenda. Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) opinion polls found that four out of five South Africans agreed with the statement that "Sexual relations between two adults of the same sex are always wrong" (HSRC,2004). An even greater proportion likely disagrees with the creation of special rights and recognition of so called 'homosexual marriage' or 'civil unions'. Religious people often lead the opposition to public immorality, but they are supported by the overwhelming democratic majority. Therefore, in opposing homosexuality we are not imposing a minority religious viewpoint, but demanding democratic recognition for a majority viewpoint. Rather it is a minority who are trying to impose their will on the rest of us
2. We believe that it is impossible for law to be neutral. All law is based on enforcing some kind of belief whether based on a formal religion or an ideology. It is a question of whose beliefs form the law. Should our law be based on the common beliefs of Christians and other moral and religious people or should it be based on the ideas of a group of sexual revolutionaries? Why should Christianity, which forms the views of the majority of South Africans, be disqualified from the political and legal arena? This is a view promoted by the constitutional court who led the ruling in favour of 'same-sex marriage'. If we give in to the lie, then our entire legal and political landscape will be corrupted by the exclusion of God's viewpoint.
3. Christians by asking for morality in law, are not asking for any sort of special privilege for themselves outside of the democratic process. They are still doing everything according to the same democratic political procedures open to everyone else, Christian or not. We are using the democratic process to advance our views.
4. Fourthly, the view that we should not impose our beliefs ignores the issue that as Christians we are not just expressing an opinion. We are promoting absolute truth. The teachings of the 'politically correct' and gender revolutionaries are lies incompatible with truth. Our view of marriage and morality is obviously reflected in the creation design. Theirs is not. Marriage can only be between a man and a woman. It is not just a religious opinion. If for example, the government was to pass a law changing one of the laws to say that 'One plus one equals three', that would not make that statement true. It would just show everyone how foolish the government is being. You don't need to be a Christian to see that.

responsibility of maintaining values within the context of a democratic society. As spiritual leaders in this city we are praying continuously for our government and leaders of this great city.

Representing the Consultation of Christian Churches.

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