



MARRIAGE BELIEVERS COULD BE CRIMINALISED

Churches preach, pray and discuss marriage all the time. But if activists get their way, this routine work of churches, along with that of other faiths, could be disrupted by a new law.

The Government wants to outlaw so-called 'conversion therapy' which claims to turn 'gay people straight' using pseudo-science or psychological abuse. The Government's intention is for a clearly defined ban.

But leading activists are urging the Government to go very much further. They want to use the criminal law to require churches to accept LGBT theology.

In an [interview](#) with Civil Society News, leading activist Jayne Ozanne stated that charities which practise or advocate gay conversion therapy should be de-registered. Alarming, she says this includes churches teaching celibacy outside of marriage.

So churches teaching the historic Christian doctrine on marriage are engaging in 'conversion therapy'. They must be banned by law from doing so and deregistered as charities. So says Jayne Ozanne. An extract from the interview is provided (right). You can also check the full [interview](#) for yourself.

C4M wants faith communities and everyone else to be free to talk about marriage between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others for life. That will be impossible if a 'conversion therapy law' is as wide as LGBT activists want it to be.

Just because some are offended is no justification for banning one side of the argument.

Leading activist Steve Chalke, and some MPs, also want the criminal courts to adjudicate on sermons, prayer, Sunday schools and even pastoral care which contradicts the tenets of LGBT theology. This has immediate implications for people who believe in real marriage.

Steve Chalke says:

"[The Government] is in danger of missing the heart of the issue... most churches do not run... structured education sessions that can be easily identified as 'conversion therapy'... Instead, many churches

typically engage in...

- **Informal prayer** – Most people who share their sexuality with a church leader... are most likely to be 'offered' the chance to be prayed for...
- **Negative teaching** – ...they teach extremely negative messages in sermons, Sunday schools and youth groups which create a sense that LGBT people are evil, disgusting or even demonic".¹

A [recent House of Commons debate](#) showed that even MPs are muddling the ordinary work of churches (prayer, preaching etc) with coercive and abusive practices which in most cases are illegal already.

LGBT activists want to criminalise people who disagree with them. This includes churches which teach the historic Christian view of marriage, which until recently was the only marriage accepted in our law.

A catch-all 'conversion therapy' ban could outlaw the Christian view of marriage. It could mean a church minister being prosecuted for a sermon, prayer or word of pastoral advice on marriage.

Extract from the [interview](#) with Jayne Ozanne

Jayne Ozanne, chief executive of the Ozanne Foundation, a charity which works with religious organisations to eliminate discrimination based on sexuality or gender, believes charities which practise or advocate gay conversion therapy should be de-registered.

She said: "Given the harm that we know conversion therapy causes, I believe that it is imperative that those organisations that practise or advocate it are fully investigated by the regulators and if necessary, stripped of their charitable status. They are not providing a service for the public benefit, indeed quite the opposite."

Ozanne added that there needs to be clarity on what is meant by conversion therapy, in order to ban it.

She said: "I also believe that it is important that the charity regulators consider whether those organisations that teach young and vulnerable LGBT people that they have to be celibate for life are themselves providing a public benefit, or are – as many of us believe – inflicting significant harm at a key stage of a young person's development."

REFERENCE

¹ 'The 5 damaging practices that churches inflict on LGBT people', Steve Chalke, Open Church Network, see <https://www.openchurch.network/blog/the-5-damaging-practices-that-churches-inflict-on-lgbt-people> (accessed 24 March 2021)