The national magazine of

FamilyVoice AUSTRALIA

VoxPoint

November 2016



Ian Miller

Passing on the baton

Ros and David Phillips welcome incoming FamilyVoice national director Ashley Saunders (p3)

Also inside:

- *Haters, rocks and Bill Shorten*
- *Plebiscite block allows more time*
- *A voice to our nation*

Editorial

Haters, rocks and Bill Shorten



On 30 August, Anglican minister Rev Ian Powell hesitantly approached Bill Shorten as he was leaving a Canberra church service to mark the opening of the newly elected federal parliament. Mr Powell was concerned about Mr Shorten's opposition to a marriage plebiscite and his bitter attack on those who believe marriage is a complementary union.

Ian Powell apologised for interrupting, saying, "I like you!" Bill Shorten said: "Thank you for that!" But there the pleasantries ended.

"You described people who weren't in favour of changing the definition of marriage as 'haters who come out from under rocks'," Ian Powell said. "Can I ask you not to speak like that?"

Bill Shorten was not amused – accusing Mr Powell of misquoting him. "Don't hector me!" he said.

But the record shows Ian Powell was correct. During an exchange with Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull in June, Bill Shorten had said: "I don't believe that people's relationships and love for each other need to be submitted to a public opinion poll … I don't want to give the haters a chance to come out from underneath the rock and make life harder for LGBTI[1] people." [2]



Bill Shorten with Rev Ian Powell

Afterwards, Ian Powell told reporters: "We'd like our leaders not to speak 'the speak' that makes it vicious and intolerant. People differ on this and I know it's a passionate issue.

"It was a brutally unfair way to summarise people who differ with him. If we're going to have a sensible, intelligent, tolerant discussion, our leaders need to model that rather than taking cheap, nasty, untruthful shots at people." Indeed!

But is it true, as Bill Shorten claims, that public debate before a people's vote rather than a parliamentary vote is likely to trigger more homosexual suicides?

There is absolutely no evidence for such a claim. There was no evidence of an increased number of such suicides in Ireland before last year's referendum on same-sex "marriage". The suicide rate for Ireland has been decreasing. It reached its lowest point in 2015!

And while it is true that there are significantly higher levels of depression and mental ill-health in the LGBT community, there is no valid evidence that the main cause is stigma or "homophobia".

A 2016 study by Björkenstam et al found that in Sweden – one of the world's most gay-friendly societies – married same-sex couples have nearly three times the suicide rate of their heterosexual counterparts.

A 2014 Queensland study of gay suicides by Skerrett et al found that relationship problems, not family rejection or "homophobia", were the most common contributing factor.

Research shows that it is life experiences rather than genes or hormones in the womb that lead to same-sex attraction in adults. These life experiences – which may sometimes include sexual grooming, bullying or family dysfunction – could also lead to depression and other signs of mental ill-health.[3]

Bill Shorten now calls same-sex "marriage" opponents "haters" – but he held that view himself only a few years ago.

In May 2011, Bill Shorten was a federal government minister. He attended a community cabinet meeting in Adelaide's north, where he approached us as we were standing with FamilyVoice SA director David d'Lima. We were waiting to give then PM Julia Gillard an open letter in support of natural marriage signed by over 30,000 Australians.

Mr Shorten introduced himself, saying he agreed with us. He said the case for changing the meaning of marriage had not been made. He asked us to send him details of letter signatories from his Victorian electorate so he could assure them of his support. We were delighted.

But later, FamilyVoice Victoria director Peter Stevens was rebuffed when he tried to arrange a meeting with supporters in Bill Shorten's Maribyrnong office. The minister's views seemed to be changing.

But he supported a people's vote. Just three years ago, Bill Shorten was advocating for a plebiscite on same-sex "marriage", in preference to a parliamentary vote: "I would rather that the people of Australia make their view clear on this than leave this issue to 150 people," he said.[4]

We have a simple message for Bill Shorten: "People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw rocks!"

David and Roslyn Phillips

1. Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex.
2. Bill Shorten confronted by Anglican rector over gay marriage comments", ABC News, 30/8/16.
3. David Phillips, "Are homosexuals born that way?", *VoxPoint*, February 2012.
4. Miranda Devine, "Suffer the little children for Shorten's shame", *Daily Telegraph*, 11/10/16.

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We seek to honour God's name and advance His kingdom.

We promote God's wise ways for a healthy society where marriage is honoured, human life is respected, families can flourish and fundamental freedoms are enjoyed.

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Plebiscite block allows more time

On 11 October, federal opposition leader Bill Shorten announced that his party would not support a vote by the Australian people on the meaning of marriage.

For now, the bill for a plebiscite on 11 February 2017 is "dead in the water". Federal Labor, Greens, Nick Xenophon's team and Derryn Hinch all oppose a people's vote on same-sex "marriage" – even though the Liberal-National government took the policy to the July election and won. A majority of senators have chosen to ignore the government's mandate.

But a bill to legalise same-sex "marriage" is very unlikely to pass the House of Representatives. As Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce said on ABC TV's *Lateline* (11/10/16), "Bill Shorten has basically decided that there won't be a vote on marriage for at least three years."

Mr Joyce pointed out the hypocrisy of Labor's leader. "Back in 2012, and back 2013, [Bill Shorten] said quite clearly that [the meaning of marriage] shouldn't be a decision for 150 people, that is the parliament – that it should be something that was decided by the Australian people," Barnaby Joyce said. "He's [now] made a different decision…

"We have the capacity for a civil debate. It is ridiculous to say we don't. We're having a debate right now and it's civil and if we don't believe that we can have a civil debate on the marriage issue then how on earth are we going to have a civil debate on the referendum for indigenous recognition? This really belittles … the Australian people."

FamilyVoice national director Dr David Phillips said the good news is that there is now more time to spread the true marriage message.

"The mainstream media and even social media like Facebook have made it very hard to communicate with Australians on this issue.

"Their bias and censorship are unbelievable. But we should not despair. There are other, more direct, ways of putting the case – and we now have up to three years to do it.

"I believe there is a key reason Labor and the Greens oppose a vote by the people," he said. "They fear that, in the privacy of the polling booth, Australians may ultimately decide to keep the man-woman, complementary meaning that marriage has always had."

Ashley Saunders takes up the baton

Ashley Saunders – married to Lindsay, with four children – will embark on his new role as national director of FamilyVoice Australia on 5 December.

Outgoing director Dr David Phillips says: "I believe that God has given Ashley the gifts he will need to take this unique ministry into the future. He has uniquely relevant experience in law, politics and Christian ministry."



Ashley Saunders

Ashley Saunders was born and raised in Newcastle, NSW. He began his career as a solicitor and partner in a law firm, later serving as an alderman in local government and on the NSW State Executive of one of the major political parties.

After training for the Christian ministry, he has served as senior pastor in Baptist churches in NSW and Queensland. He comes to the FamilyVoice ministry with a sense of God's calling to be a Christian voice in society for family, faith and freedom.

Mr Saunders met the FamilyVoice team in Adelaide in October. "I am looking forward to working alongside people who are passionately dedicated to preserving the best of what this country has to offer," he said.

"There is a sense in which every generation stands at a crossroad needing to choose the direction it would take – and FamilyVoice Australia has a significant role in advocating wise choices that will not only well serve this generation but also future generations. Whether through its parliamentary submissions or publications, FamilyVoice has a message of hope, as well as caution, for the nation as a whole."

Coming to a school near you?

Like the Safe Schools Coalition, a new program called 'Building Respectful Relationships' has a very deceptive name.



Bill Leak, *The Australian* (19/10/16)

Building Respectful Relationships is being taught in several Australian states. In 2017 it will be rolled out for Victorian students from kindergarten to year 12.

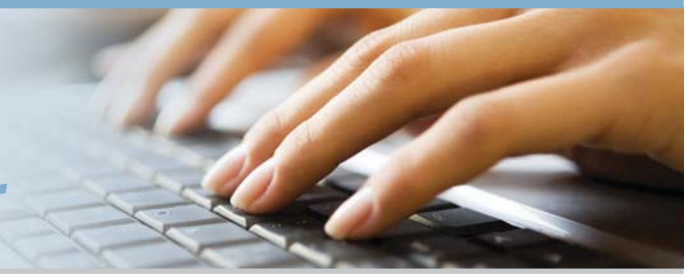
The NSW Education Department is now reviewing the program's content following parental complaints. FamilyVoice has sent relevant resources to Department Secretary Mark Scott to assist his inquiry.

A *Herald Sun* report (19/10/16) said the program will teach children that men and boys are conditioned by society to be "heterosexual", "emotionless" and encouraged to exert dominance over women. It will teach "gender fluidity", normalise transgenderism, and blame males for domestic violence. The glossary of definitions for pupils in grades 1 and 2 includes terms such as transphobia, homophobic bullying, hegemonic masculinity, gender nonconforming, cisgender and heteronormativity.

Victorian opposition education spokesman Nick Wakeling said: "The Respectful Relationships curriculum has moved so far from its original purpose it may as well be a radical gender studies course more at home in university halls rather than Victorian classrooms."

FamilyVoice research officer Ros Phillips advises parents to contact their local school principal and MP to express their concerns.

Letters to the editor



Editors' note: Below is a small selection of the many letters we have received after announcing our coming retirement on 4 December 2016. Thank you to all who have written – your emails and letters have been a great blessing.

Thank you, David and Ros

It was with considerable sadness that we learned of your impending retirement. But it was with enormous thankfulness for your faithful labours over so many years.

We have been constantly amazed at the amount of great work you have done in battling to uphold Christian values in this land. You have both done so much, and you will be sorely missed. You deserve to be nominated for Australians of the Year many times over, although the powers that be may not agree!

We have prayed for you and FamilyVoice staff over a long time, and will continue to uphold Ashley Saunders as he takes over. He has huge shoes to fill!

Philip and Barbara Wigg
Inverell, NSW

Well done good and faithful servants. Be blessed by the Lord.

Bishop Paul Barnett
Epping, NSW

Congratulations to you both on your faithful service over 40+ years of FamilyVoice Australia! We wish you well in your next chapter, as the good Lord never leaves chapters unwritten.

Thank you for being guardians of families and family values in Australia.

Hon Paul Green, MLC
Parliament House, NSW

Fare thee well. I've been most impressed and inspired by all the good work you have done. God bless you!

Michael Allam
Canberra, ACT

It is no surprise that you are at last deciding to pass on the baton. You have been faithful in much for so long, and I rejoice that you have both enjoyed the energy and health to maintain your witness as you have done, in the face of many obstacles.

You have given outstanding leadership and enabled FamilyVoice to achieve credibility in an ever widening range of issues that have come forward. Thank you to both of you, good and faithful servants. May you have strength now to enjoy a quieter pace while others take the load.

Dr John H. Court
Glenelg, SA

Thank you for your 40 years of leadership in communicating with state and federal politicians on a range of policy matters. Your research and advocacy to ensure an informed voice for family, faith and freedom plays an important and valued part in parliament, whilst also helping to keep many people informed about what is currently being debated in state and federal parliament.

I look forward to continuing my relationship with FamilyVoice Australia under the new leadership of Ashley Saunders.

David Fawcett
Senator for South Australia

Well done. You have been obedient to our master and sacrificed much for all of us. May the Lord bless and encourage you mightily. Thank you.

Kym Golding
Head of Schools, Adelaide Christian Schools

You are an amazing couple and have made an outstanding contribution to the political scene not only in South Australia but to the whole nation. I count it a privilege to have worked with you for a number of years.

It will be a wrench for you both to leave in December, but I trust you will enjoy a wonderful retirement for many years to come.

Pastor John Ridley
Grange, SA

I am sorry to hear that you have decided to retire. Over the few years that I have been associated with FamilyVoice, I have found both of you to be an inspiration to our cause.

Your writing was always to the point and easy to understand, even to copy and pass on to others. I think copying is the best compliment that one can give in thanks for work done. I sincerely hope that you will retain some contact with FamilyVoice in the form of encouragement and sharing your wisdom with us.

Robert Bom
Rockhampton Qld

Thank you for your many years of faithful service with FamilyVoice. The incredible amount of time it takes to run such and organisation is hard to grasp. We wish you God's blessing in your "retirement". However, we suspect that you will be pretty much as busy next year as this!

Glen and Joy Vonhoff
Manyung, Qld

May the Lord bless you as you prepare to step down from this ministry and spend precious times with your family and each other. We pray that Ashley and his wife will know the same blessing and anointing on their ministry as you both have had.

Geoff and Cherryl Amery
Culla, Vic

Thank you for your leadership and great inspiration! You both have been like beacons to me and my ministry. I am delighted to hear that a wonderful successor has been found to take your place. Enjoy your retirement!

Pastor Victor Soo
Northcote, Vic

Thank you for your wonderful service to the Australian community with your tireless work over four decades. I am delighted that you have found a successor in Ashley Saunders. Please pass on to him my best wishes and God's blessing as he takes over this role in December. My sincere thanks and best wishes for the future.

Eric Abetz
Senator for Tasmania

Congratulations and thank you for your astonishing achievements over so many years and for your management, leading to the appointment of a talented and faith-filled successor. It has been inspirational and encouraging to have been involved with you in a small way.

Pat Gartlan
Battery Point, Tas

Thank you for all your great articles in your magazine. Your hard work and dedication over many years has been a mighty blessing to the whole of the Commonwealth of Australia.

You are a beacon for the Light of God. Have a happy retirement, and God bless you.

Kevin Grainger
Bassendean, WA

Wow! You leave big boots to fill. We praise God for all you have achieved and will pray for Ashley.

Bishop Tony and Mrs Judith Nichols
City Beach, WA

A voice to our nation

by Dr David Phillips

from *Courage in a Hostile World - the story of FamilyVoice Australia*

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VoxBrief November 2016

FamilyVoice AUSTRALIA

My wife Ros and I were driving along in our rental car during a 1990 holiday in New Zealand. We were enjoying the majestic scenery when suddenly we saw it – a large billboard saying: 'Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD!' (Ps 33:12)

It challenged my thinking: What does it mean for a nation to serve God?

Since committing my life to Christ as a university student, I have known the life-changing liberty of knowing God's forgiveness through Christ's atoning death. My life has been enriched through the indwelling power of his Spirit and his gift of eternal life.

Individual people can have a personal relationship with their heavenly Father through his Son, empowered by his Spirit – but communities? How can a nation have a relationship with God?

As I reflected on the question, I recalled that God says a lot about nations in the Bible. He promised Abraham that his descendants would become a great nation and be a blessing to all the nations of the earth.[1] Moreover God declared a change to his name: from Abram, meaning *exalted father*, to Abraham, meaning *father of many*, as a reminder of this promise of nationhood.[2]

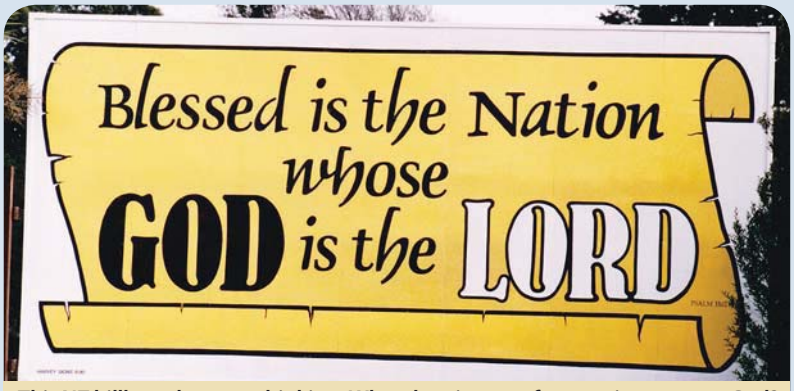
Through Moses, God declared that his people would become 'a kingdom of priests and a holy nation'.[3] As a *holy nation*, Israel would be separate from other nations and dedicated to serving him.

But God's vision for the nations was much broader than Israel. Through the prophet Isaiah, God declared: 'Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my inheritance.'[4]

Modern Egypt, which Ros and I visited in early 2012, shows little evidence of God's blessing. Alexandria was once a thriving centre of Christian scholarship, but today is in the grip of Islam. Since the revolution on 25 January 2011 and the election of an Islamist president in June 2012, Egypt slid further into poverty, unemployment and food shortages.

God calls his people to be 'a light for the nations'.[5] Jesus reinforced this destiny in the Sermon on the Mount when he said: 'You are the light of the world.'[6] After His resurrection, Jesus gave his disciples the Great Commission to 'disciple the nations'.[7] Ultimately, God's vision is to embrace all the nations of the world.

What does it mean to disciple the nations?



This NZ billboard got me thinking: What does it mean for a nation to serve God?

Discipling nations

The apostle Paul engaged with civic leaders at every opportunity. In his speech to the Greek philosophers gathered at the Areopagus in Athens, he affirmed that God had formed every nation on earth, 'that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him.'[8]

In letters he wrote of Christ's authority over nations being 'far above all rule and authority and power and dominion'.[9] And he gave top priority to prayer for governments of nations: 'for kings and all those in authority'.[10]

Paul used his privileged status as a Roman citizen to influence Roman rulers on numerous occasions – before the Roman magistrates in Philippi,[11] before Claudius Lysias, the Roman tribune in Jerusalem,[12] before Antonius Felix, the Roman governor of Judea,[13] before Porcius Festus, who succeeded Felix as the Roman governor of Judea[14] and before King Agrippa.[15] Paul's final appeal to Caesar was no doubt in part motivated by the opportunity to influence the powerful ruler of the dominant Roman Empire.[16]

Certainly the Great Commission includes proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom of God, inviting people to respond in repentance and faith in Christ and mentoring them as they start a new life in him. The great missionary movement over the past two centuries has seen extraordinary growth of the Christian church.

But is there more to discipling nations?

In *Discipling Nations: The Power of Truth to Transform Cultures*, Darrow Miller argues that God's truth not only breaks the spiritual bonds of sin and death, but can free whole societies from deception and poverty.[17]

In exploring this question we should consider how Jesus taught us to pray. He told us to start praying like this:

> Our Father in heaven,
> hallowed be your name.
> Your kingdom come,
> your will be done,
> on earth as it is in heaven.[18]

What are the implications of these familiar words?

Honouring God's name

My dictionary says 'hallow' means 'honour as holy'. Biblical scholar William Barclay relates it to the Greek word *hagios*, meaning 'holy' or 'different' or 'separate'. He suggests the petition means: 'Let God's name be treated differently from all other names.'[19]

Barclay also says that in biblical thought, 'name' means much more than simply the name by which a person is called. It refers to 'the *nature*, the *character*, the *personality* of the person'. So the petition means: *Let God be given the unique honour that his nature and character deserve*. Barclay asks whether there is an English word to describe this – and adds: 'There is such a word, and the

word is *reverence*.'[20]

How then can a nation uniquely honour or revere God?

We can approach this question indirectly by asking: How can a nation honour anything or anyone? More particularly, what does the Australian nation honour?

Historian Russel Ward, in his influential book *The Australian Legend*, proposed that the greatest honour in Australian culture is given to *mateship*, from the spirit of the original ANZACs.[21] Rightly or wrongly, this view is reflected in the introduction to the book *Their Spirit, Our History* published by the Australian War Memorial:

> ANZAC Day is the day that Australians remember those who fought and died in all wars… Each year on 25 April we remember, in particular, the landing on Gallipoli in 1915 and honour the spirit of the original ANZACs. This spirit, with its human qualities of courage, mateship and sacrifice, continues to have meaning and relevance for our sense of national identity.[22]

National identity – is that what lies behind the celebration of Anzac Day? Of all the public holidays in the Australian calendar, it is Anzac Day that seems to resonate most strongly with the Australian heart – and it is growing.

Paradoxically, Australia commemorates a military defeat, whereas most other countries commemorate victories. Somewhere in the Australian heart, is there a memory of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross – an apparent defeat transformed into the unexpected victory of his resurrection?

The traditional Dawn Service ceremony includes distinctively Christian elements – a hymn, prayer or Bible reading and the raising of the Australian flag with its four crosses of Saint Andrew, Saint Patrick, Saint George and the Southern Cross. These elements celebrate Australia's Christian heritage and provide opportunities to honour God's name.

We can now envisage, even though through a glass darkly, how a nation can honour God's name. Symbols of our national identity and celebrations of our nation's history can touch the Australian heart and have the potential to honour and revere Almighty God.

As I ponder these things, I wonder: How can we involve our children and grandchildren in the celebration of Australia's heritage that honours God's name?



A veteran in the Sydney ANZAC Day Parade in 2013 greets onlookers

Advancing God's kingdom

When we pray, 'Your kingdom come', what do we expect the coming of God's kingdom to look like?

Curiously, although the core of Jesus' message was the coming of the kingdom of God, he never defined it. He said it is like a mustard seed, like a treasure in a field, like a wedding banquet – but what is it? And why did the disciples never ask what Jesus meant by the term 'kingdom of God'?

Biblical scholar John Bright explains in his book *The Kingdom of God* that the disciples didn't ask – because they already knew![23] 'The Kingdom of God lay within the vocabulary of every Jew. It was something they understood and longed for desperately.'[24]

While the term 'kingdom of God' does not occur in the Old Testament at all, the idea of the rule of God over his people is a constant theme. In particular, the people eagerly looked forward to a messiah: 'For unto us a child is born … and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.'[25] Bright writes: 'the hope of Israel was the hope of the coming Kingdom of God.'[26]

Abundant hope for the coming kingdom gripped the minds of Judeans following the Roman conquest of Jerusalem in 63 BC. Most Jews felt like slaves in their own land – subject to their oppressive Roman rulers. They still felt as their forebears had after returning from exile in Babylon centuries earlier: 'Behold, we are slaves this day; in the land that you gave to our fathers to enjoy its fruit and its good gifts, behold, we are slaves.'[27]

In their distress, the Jews remembered how God had rescued his people many times in the past. When enslaved in Egypt, God called Moses to lead them to freedom.[28] When attacked by the Philistines, God anointed David as king to secure Israel's borders.[29] When they were exiled in Babylon, God moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to restore them to their land.[30] The Jews of Jesus' day longed for God to rescue them again.

The angel told Joseph that Mary would bear a son who should be called Jesus, 'for he will save his people from their sins',[31] and the implications were national. New Testament scholar Tom Wright explains:

> That, to any first-century Jew, didn't just mean that individuals could turn to him and find personal forgiveness, though that would obviously be true as well. Read Isaiah 40 and Lamentations 4 again and see. Exile is the payment for sin, so forgiveness of sin means the end of exile.[32]

When Jesus started his ministry proclaiming, 'The time is fulfilled', and 'the kingdom of God is at hand', what would people have expected? The answer is clear, as theologian David Seccombe explains:

> Jesus' listeners would have heard him announcing the end of their exile. Moses had warned that rebellion would lead to exile and scattering. Restoration must begin with reconciliation to God, but this would entail the end of foreign domination and the return of the scattered people. It also meant a new king, a new order, a new temple, a new peace and a new environment.[33]

National salvation from foreign domination was at hand – but how?

How God's kingdom comes

Some Jews expected a sudden and miraculous *appearance* of the kingdom of God, following an announcement in the temple: 'Your God reigns!'[34] Other Jews expected to fight 'the last great war against the forces of darkness … with the help of the angel armies of God… The final victory would bring about the fulfilment of God's promises to Israel, and they would rule the world.'[35]

What actually happened was neither of these. Tom Wright suggests that Matthew's Gospel was written to say:

> This is it! This is what we've been waiting for – even though we would never have thought it would be like this! … But now that it's happened, we can see that this is where it was supposed to be heading all along.[36]

In fact, Wright suggests that all four gospels 'are trying to say that *this is how God became king.*'[37]

Luke's two-volume account, in his gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, portrays a clash between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Caesar. His account of Jesus' birth is set against the background of the Roman emperor Caesar Augustus asserting his authority by requiring a census.

Luke's account ends with the tables turned – Paul is in Rome, the seat of the emperor's power, 'proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance'.[38]

Between these bookends, Jesus faced a politically explosive question: 'Is it lawful

for us to give tribute to Caesar, or not?'[39] Wright highlights the danger:

> Everybody knows that [Jesus] is leading a kingdom-of-God movement. In his day, in Palestinian Judaism, that meant political independence; and political independence meant, beyond a doubt, no longer being under Caesar's heel. People had been crucified, in living memory, for staging anti-tax rebellions…
>
> No doubt many of his hearers were hoping that he was going to lend his powerful support to their anti-Roman revolution.[40]

His profound reply, 'render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's', avoided a charge of treason.[41] But he was nevertheless accused (falsely) before Pontius Pilate of 'forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar'.[42] Wright says:

> As well as all the other elements in the gospel story, we must recognize this for what it is, a telling of the story of Jesus as the clash between the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of the world.[43]

John's gospel explains that the clash of kingdoms, at its core, was over truth and power.

The power of truth

When on trial before Pontius Pilate, Jesus spoke about his kingdom saying, 'For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth.' Pilate's cynical reply, 'What is truth?', exposed his own insecurity.

Without realising it, Pilate actually proclaimed to the world the truth about Jesus when he ordered the notice to be placed on the cross. Following standard practice for a condemned criminal, Pilate ordered the notice to state the charge that had led to the extreme verdict of crucifixion. In Aramaic, Latin and Greek, it said:

JESUS OF NAZARETH
THE KING OF THE JEWS

Earlier, the soldiers had mocked him, dressing him in a royal purple robe, placing a crown of thorns on his head and saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' In so doing they too had unwittingly acknowledged the truth, that he was indeed the promised King of God's kingdom.[44]

Jesus emphasised the central importance of *truth* throughout his ministry. He challenged people to say truthfully 'yes' or 'no' instead of using slippery weasel-words.[45] He told a Samaritan woman that true worship of the Father would be characterised by truth, not location.[46] He said 'the truth will set you free'.[47] And he contrasted this with the nature of the devil who 'has no truth' and is 'a liar and the father of lies.'[48]

Wright comments:

> The point about truth, and about Jesus and his followers bearing witness to it, is that truth is what happens when humans use words to reflect God's wise ordering of the world and so shine light into its dark corners, bringing judgment and mercy where it is badly needed.[49]

International Bible teacher Vishal Mangalwadi explained in an interview with the Centre for Public Christianity how Jesus' insistence on truth had a key role in shaping Western civilisation.[50]

Born, raised and educated in India, Vishal understands the cultures produced by Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim and Christian beliefs. He observed that the pursuit of truth is uniquely a Judaeo-Christian tradition.

> Christianity won the classical world – the Greco-Roman world – because that world was built on myth, like India and Hinduism… Christianity triumphed over the classical world because Jesus and the apostles unleashed the power of truth. So when Jesus says to his disciples that you will be my witnesses, they were not story-tellers or myth-makers; they were not mystics; they were not meditators; they were not coercing Christianity with the power of the sword. They were witnesses: this is what we have seen; we know what we heard … that Jesus died for our sin, was buried, rose again and ascended into heaven. They were witnesses of these facts.
>
> Christianity was based on empirical observations – what has been seen. It was truth. Christianity won by unleashing the power of truth. All the universities in the West were established by the church, because the church was committed to seeking truth. Our Hindu cultures didn't start … the university movement because those religions were based on mythology.[51]

Jesus' death on the cross was a double victory, achieving forgiveness of sins for those who trust in him and healing of nations that embrace truth as a founding principle.

The servant king

Jesus' encounter with Pilate dealt not only with truth but also with power.

Pontius Pilate, as governor of Judea, had the awesome power of the Roman Empire at his disposal. When Jesus was on trial before Pilate and didn't answer some questions, Pilate became frustrated. 'Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?' he said.

Jesus denied his claim to power, saying, 'You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above.'[52]

Here again is the clash of two kingdoms – Pilate claiming the supremacy of Caesar and Jesus asserting the sovereignty of God. The clash is particularly poignant as the Jews demand the death penalty 'because



Statue of the first Roman emperor Caesar Augustus (63BC to 14AD) who called himself the 'Son of God'

he has made himself the Son of God'.[53] Of course, Jesus was widely recognised throughout his ministry as the Son of God – in the angel's message to Mary, during his temptation in the wilderness, by the disciples, and by Jesus himself.[54]

The significance of the title 'Son of God' in the Roman Empire is often overlooked. None other than emperor Caesar Augustus adopted the title 'Son of God' for himself, as explained by Sir Ronald Syme, widely regarded as the 20th century's greatest historian of ancient Rome.[55]

When Jesus was called the Son of God, he was using the same title as the highest office in the Roman Empire. In today's world it was the equivalent of being called president, prime minister or king. The clash of kingdoms is palpable.

When Pilate finds no guilt in him and suggests releasing him, the Jews argue a direct conflict between Jesus and Caesar: 'If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar.'[56]

Who won this clash of kingdoms? God did! He demonstrated his sovereignty through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. This was not the military victory over the Roman occupation that many Judeans expected. Nor was it the miraculous appearance of the messiah that others expected.

No, however unexpectedly, God's kingdom was established through the obedience of his servant:

> Christ Jesus, who … emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant … humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.[57]

Vishal Mangalwadi comments:

> Australia has a prime minister rather

than a king as the main leader because of a revolution that Jesus began. When he put on the robe of a servant, took a basin of water, started washing the feet of his disciples and he said this is a new kingdom. Amongst the Gentiles, the rulers lord it over them, but I'm starting a new kingdom where whoever wants to be the greatest should become your servant. The kings of England began to lose their power. Servants began to increase their power. The first servant – *prime minister means first servant* – became the most important office and he didn't rule with a battalion of soldiers but with a battalion of civil servants. All of this comes from the Bible.[58]

We can now begin to visualise, again through a glass darkly, how to recognise and advance the kingdom of God inaugurated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. His reign in a nation will be characterised, at least in part, by a profound commitment to truth over myth and to servanthood over compulsion.

As the fall of the atheistic world of Communism has shown, a nation built on lies and deception cannot stand. Neither can one relying on fear and force.

Can we envision how God's kingdom can be best advanced in 21st century Australia?

Doing God's will

One thing we do know about God's kingdom coming is that it fulfils the next petition in the Lord's Prayer: 'your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven'. God's reign is characterised by God's will being done on earth.

It is clear from the Gospels that Jesus expected his disciples to obey his commands. For example, Jesus said: 'If you love me, you will keep my commandments.'[59] And they did.

Why does God want people to obey his commandments?

The answer is clear for the commandment: 'Honour your father and mother'.[60] As the apostle Paul observed, this is the first commandment with a promise: 'that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.'[61]

David Klinghoffer comments on this promise in his book *Shattered Tablets: Why We Ignore the Ten Commandments at Our Peril:*

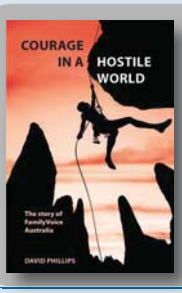
> When children honor and revere parents, that makes it much more likely that the parents – the father in particular – will pass on beliefs about God and the ways in which He asks us to walk…
>
> James Dobson, for one, has it right in his book *Dare to Discipline* when he points out that, on Earth, in many ways, parents in their child's eyes stand in for God Himself. This, too, of course, is a priestly role. 'Young children typically identify their parents … and especially their fathers … with God. Therefore, if Mom and Dad are not worthy of respect, then neither are their morals, their country, their values and beliefs, or even their religious faith.' He argues the point persuasively in the arena of sex. If parents don't impress their ethical values on their children, no one will. And society will suffer, for sexual indiscipline has consequences outside the bedroom: 'When a man is devoted to one woman and one family, he is motivated to build, save, protect, plan, and prosper on their behalf. However, when his sexual interests are dispersed and generalized, his effort is invested in the gratification of sexual desires.' Providing historical confirmation of this, Dobson cites the research of a British social anthropologist, J. D. Unwin, who studied how eighty different civilizations rose, declined, and ultimately fell. Unwin found that, as a rule, while the rise to prosperity and power was associated with a culture of sexual restraint, the end was always preceded by a drifting toward sexual libertinism.
>
> Respect for parents, in other words, is a necessary condition for moral education, which is a necessary condition for a society's thriving, perhaps for its very survival. To put it another way: 'Honor your father and your mother so that your days will be long upon the land that the Lord your God gives you.' A culture like ours that so discourages parents who want to engender respect in their children, a culture that doesn't even consider what the impact will be on its own longevity — the longevity of American civilization — has written for itself something that looks very much like a suicide note.

In other words, this commandment — to honour your father and mother — is for the good of the nation. And this is true of all God's commandments — they are all for our own good, and for the good of our families, our community and our nation.

Through his death and resurrection, Jesus inaugurated the kingdom of God. Full of grace and truth, Jesus offers salvation to sinners and healing to nations.

As I consider the future ministry of FamilyVoice Australia — a Christian voice for the natural family, the Christian faith and democratic freedom in Australia — my prayer is this:

> May our heavenly Father's name be honoured and revered.
>
> May his kingdom come and his will be done in Australia as it is in heaven.



Dr Phillips's book can be purchased online from* FamilyVoice Australia *at* shop.fava.org.au *or by phoning 1300 365 965.

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Qld: Another bad abortion bill

FamilyVoice has made a second submission on Queensland abortion law following the introduction of yet another bill by Independent state MP Rob Pyne. An inquiry rejected his first bill.

The FamilyVoice submission pointed out that science shows human life begins at conception. Yet right now in Queensland, babies capable of surviving outside of the womb are being aborted.

The Health (Abortion Law Reform) Amendment Bill 2016 would make this tragedy even worse by effectively legalising abortion right up until birth. Moreover the bill's ban on any form of protest within an exclusion zone of at least 50 m around an abortion facility is draconian, breaching fundamental freedoms of speech, association and religion.

Vic: Faith and freedoms under attack

Two hundred people at a FamilyVoice meeting on 3 October heard four expert speakers explain dangerous new moves by the Victorian Labor government.

Mark Sneddon, who heads a Melbourne social policy think tank, spoke on the injustice of the Equal Opportunity Amendment Bill. "The law should encourage people to live and let live," he said. "[But] if passed, this one will have quite the opposite effect."

The bill would remove religious exceptions regarding employment, so that Christian groups and schools would have to prove it is an "inherent requirement" of a job to be a Christian or support Christian values and behaviour.

No such restriction is placed on political groups. The bill is unfairly discriminatory, and should be rejected, he said.

National: Porn harms kids inquiry goes ahead

The Senate inquiry on the harm to children from online pornography lapsed with the July federal election. It was reinstated in September – to the relief of FamilyVoice Victoria and Tasmania directors Peter Stevens and Jim Collins, who have worked tirelessly with others to alert MPs to porn harms.

The FamilyVoice submission noted that child consumption of online porn is at disturbingly high levels. Most children now have smartphones and tablets which enable 24/7 access.

Pornography is warping boys' sexual expectations and girls are being pressured to engage in sex acts that are damaging their bodies. Police say porn is triggering child-on-child sex abuse in schools and kindergartens. FamilyVoice urged the federal government to implement ISP-level filtering to reduce children's exposure to harmful material.

NSW: Welcome, Aaron Wright

FamilyVoice NSW director Aaron Wright began his new ministry on 1 October. Aaron is married to Larissa and they have four young children. They live in western Sydney.

Aaron has 20 years' experience working in media, including 2UE and 2GB – with a recent focus on Christian radio. He is deeply concerned about current attacks on religious freedom in NSW. "There are moves to ban Christian churches from meeting in school halls and council venues if they promote biblical teaching on marriage and sexuality," he said.

"It is a wake-up call for NSW Christians. I want to see them resourced to stand up for their beliefs and to reclaim our state's Christian heritage."



New NSW director Aaron Wright

WA: Fighting for freedom

Over 100 people at a FamilyVoice WA dinner on 15 October heard former SAS captain Andrew Hastie MP tell why he is now fighting a different battle – to support our fundamental freedoms.

Andrew said Christians have always faced opposition when speaking up for good and just causes. In the 1880s Rev John Gribble faced fierce opposition from government and business when he spoke out against the exploitation of WA Aboriginal people as slave labour.

Andrew's military service has taught him that societal change does not come quickly or easily. It is wrought though key social, political and religious institutions, including FamilyVoice. He encouraged Christians to get involved in a political party – as a vital way to "love thy neighbour" with good policies to shape our nation.

SA: 'Gender identity' bill defeated

"An amazing thing happened in the SA parliament on 22 September," said FamilyVoice SA director David d'Lima. "A bill sponsored by the Premier, allowing people to change the sex on their birth certificate merely by presenting a GP's letter saying they have had counselling, was defeated by key MPs from both major parties.

"The vote was close, but we were delighted that even government ministers supported our call to reject the bill. People can already change the sex on their birth certificate if they have had hormone treatment and/or surgery. This bill would have made a mockery of what it means to be a man or a woman."

Tas: Step forward for free speech

FamilyVoice Tasmania director Jim Collins has welcomed a proposed amendment to the state's controversial Anti-Discrimination Act.

The change would provide a "religious purpose" exception to section 17(1), which bans conduct that offends, humiliates, intimidates, insults or ridicules someone on the basis of their race, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and other things.

"The Hodgman government deserves praise for this step in the right direction," Jim Collins said. "But the amendment would still allow someone to take offence at innocuous remarks of a non-religious nature – triggering stressful litigation similar to that experienced by Tasmania's Archbishop Porteous.

"We already have other laws, such as s19 of the Act, that prohibit real 'hate speech'. I urge the government to repeal section 17(1)," he said.

Prostitution reality: Simone's story

Simone Watson naively thought that working in an up-market brothel would be a good way to solve her money problems. Twenty years later, she still suffers from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Simone is now president of NorMAC – Nordic Model Australia Coalition. She recorded an interview with VoxPoint *(edited below) on 31 August 2016.*



Robert Craft

Simone Watson: needed drugs to survive

How long were you in the sex trade and how did it affect you?

Over six years with gaps in between. Only a year in total but it caused lasting, deep damage.

We're told many women get into prostitution because they have a drug habit they need to pay for. Was that your experience?

No. I wasn't on drugs and I had a happy childhood. It's a myth that you have to be a drug addict to enter prostitution. I began in the sex industry because I was short of cash and thought it would be an easy way to get some. But I found I needed drugs to survive – they were a way to dissociate from what was happening to me.

How long did it take before you needed drugs?

For me, it was after the very first day. I began working in an upper-class brothel in Melbourne where brothels had been legalised. I wasn't aware of the impact it would have on me. I discovered that whether you work in a terrible brothel, or a high-end brothel, or on the street, or independently as an escort – the men who buy sex don't respect women. It's disrespect across the board.

> **'It's compensated sexual abuse. The majority of women in prostitution have PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder).'**

Are there good clients?

Not really, although you get a few different types. They either don't care, or they think that they're the "nice johns", and that you're happy to see them all the time. And you have to pretend that you are.

Is that part of the job?

Absolutely. You've got to always have a smile on your face. In some countries they're trialling "john" schools. They explain that prostitutes don't enjoy what they're doing – and if you have to pay for sex, it's not really consenting.

What are the problems you see with "decriminalising" the prostitution trade – repealing all the laws against it?

Pimps become legal, and you end up with less control than you have in street prostitution – which is not fun itself! In a brothel, the pimps get to control more of your actions and your behaviour. Whatever the john wants, you have to do it.

What about condom use?

Condoms are required – theoretically. But men will pay more for you not to use them. If you're competing with a lot of other women, you agree not to use the condom.

Was it easy to leave that first brothel?

Not as easy as I thought. When I realised that I couldn't take the panic attacks, and I couldn't stand being around men at all, I told the madam I was leaving – and she shrieked at me. She later sent two burly men to threaten me into going back.

But you ran away?

Yes – and went to another brothel soon afterwards. I was told I would have much more autonomy and it would be more relaxed and safer. It seemed more upper class because you could have one or two glasses of champagne, and I was becoming more reliant on alcohol. It had a higher price tag, but I soon discovered that wherever prostitution happens, it's still prostitution. It's compensated sexual abuse. The majority of women in prostitution have PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder).

Do you have PTSD?

I do, like nearly 70 per cent of other prostitutes – even though I only did it for a total of 12 months, in the higher end of the industry that is supposed to be safe. I have flashbacks, anxiety and difficulty with interacting with other people for any length of time. Panic attacks are an absolute scourge, and I'm still getting them. I didn't have any before I went into prostitution.

Why don't the media report these prostitution risks?

Because the sex trade lobby says: "Sex workers' rights are human rights". It's an effective slogan. The general public have no idea that the majority of people in prostitution cannot access their human rights.

What about lonely or disabled people – do they have a right to use prostitutes?

No one has the right to sexually abuse others – and that's what most prostitution is. People think there are these terribly lonely people who seek out sexual acts, but most johns by far are partnered people. They want to do to a prostitute what they wouldn't dare to do to their wife or girlfriend – or they want variety, or they want power.

What is the Nordic model of prostitution law?

It was first adopted in Sweden in 1999 – now also in Norway, Iceland, Canada, France and Northern Ireland. Personal prostitution is decriminalised; sex buyers, pimps and profiteers are criminalised. The most important part is a wholistic exit program. The Nordic model provides treatment for drug addiction, along with personal support and help to train for a new career.

Swedish police have intercepted a call from sex traffickers saying: "Don't take them to Sweden. Take them to the Netherlands and Germany where it's decriminalised and legalised."

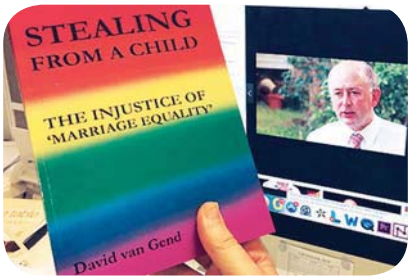
Under the Nordic model, not only do many men no longer want to buy sex, the traffickers don't want to go there. It would be great if we had the Nordic model here in Australia. ■

Stealing from a child

Dr David van Gend's printer pulled the plug on his new book on same-sex 'marriage', the day before its Brisbane launch on 30 September.

Despite this blatant attempted sabotage, the launch of *Stealing from a child: the injustice of 'marriage equality'* was a great success after another printer came to the rescue. Dr van Gend, a Toowoomba family doctor and president of the Australian Marriage Forum, has dedicated his easy-to-read, fully documented book:

- To the future child of same-sex "marriage", forced by our law to miss out on her mother or father.
- To future children of a "genderless" culture, subjected by law to "genderless" sex education.
- To all husbands and wives, degraded to "Partner 1 and Partner 2".
- To all mothers and fathers, debased to "Progenitor A and Progenitor B".
- To conscientious objectors against LGBT dogma, harassed by anti-discrimination law into silence.



Catholic Weekly

Dr van Gend quotes lesbian social historian E J Graff, "who says that 'same-sex marriage is a breathtakingly subversive idea', but we are assured that nothing will change".

He continues: "This book takes a hard look at the changes that will come with this subversive idea: how it redefines marriage and family for all of us; how it breaks a child's bonds of kinship and identity; how it usurps parental authority over their child's education; how it eats away at core liberties of speech, conscience and religion; how it serves that century-long ideological quest to deconstruct the natural family and subjugate it to the authority of the State.

"Those of us who once thought that 'marriage equality' was just about marriage now realise we were wrong. For the serious lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) activists, it is about capturing the legal high ground from where the entire 'rainbow agenda' can be implemented. This ranges from imposing radical 'Safe Schools' gender theory on our kids, to passing laws that let cross-dressing males use girls' bathrooms; from bankrupting bakers who don't want to write a gay 'marriage' slogan on a cake, to prosecuting pastors for teaching traditional values on marriage; from removing 'mother and father' from birth certificates to changing 'husband and wife' into 'partner 1 and 2'. Worst by far, laws for 'marriage equality' force future children to miss out on their mother or father while telling them it doesn't matter."

Dr van Gend says: "In the face of boycotts and intimidation, we can only stand firm and respond with conviction in defence of the child-centred model of marriage, and of our liberties of speech and conscience."

Thousands of copies of his book have been sold – some available from FamilyVoice office. Ironically, sales have been boosted partly by publicity resulting from the printer's boycott.

Will there be a duty to die?

Medically assisted suicide (effectively euthanasia) was legalised throughout Canada in June this year, after a 2015 Supreme Court ruling mandated it. John Stonestreet reveals the grim result (breakpoint.org, 11/10/16).

Three elderly parishioners at a Canadian church were recently diagnosed with cancer. Now, that's bad enough. But what followed was even worse. The first thing they were asked after being told their diagnosis was, "Do you wish to be euthanased?"


John Stonestreet

While this story should upset us, it shouldn't shock us. Despite all the promises made by supporters of physician-assisted suicide, the so-called "safeguards" against pressuring vulnerable people to end their lives have proved to be inadequate and have often been watered down or eliminated over time.

Or, as Belgian law professor Étienne Montero observed, "What is presented at first as a right [to die] is going to become a kind of obligation."

Thus, in 14 years Belgium went from euthanasing terminally-ill adults, to killing chronically-ill adults, to offing adults who had lost their will to live, to finally disposing of children.

Canada seems literally hell-bent on catching up with Belgium in this regard. Physician-assisted suicide has only been legal there since this spring and it has already transformed the practice of medicine in Canada. And if some Canadian philosophers get their way, a willingness to kill your patients will be a prerequisite for practising medicine.

The only way to prevent the "right to die" from becoming a "duty to die" is to reject the "right to die" from the start. Anything else places the most vulnerable – the elderly and especially the disabled – on an already well-greased slippery slope.

Euthanasia moves in Australia

SA Labor MP Steph Key's Voluntary Euthanasia Bill was introduced in February 2016 but debate was adjourned on 20 October, possibly indefinitely, after most MPs indicated they could not support it. The Australian Medical Association attacked its "major flaws", saying the bill "effectively provided for state-sanctioned suicide".

A new Death With Dignity Bill was introduced the same day by former vet and Liberal MP Dr Duncan McFetridge, incorporating several alleged safeguards. However Paul Russell of the pro-life organisation *Hope*, has pointed out that serious flaws remain. "The bill is a recipe for elder abuse," he says.

The Victorian parliament may debate a euthanasia bill next year following a parliamentary inquiry's recommendation. In WA, Greens MP Robin Chapple says he will introduce a euthanasia bill after the state elections next March. The NSW Greens announced on 19 March this year that two Greens and two Independent MPs would co-sponsor a lower house bill to legalise assisted suicide. Peter Wellington, Speaker in the Queensland parliament, recently called for a parliamentary inquiry into end-of-life choices and voluntary euthanasia.

Same-sex 'marriage': questions your friends may ask

The excerpts below are from "What has God joined together? Jesus' good message about marriage for Australia" – a draft booklet produced by the Anglican Diocese of Sydney in October 2016.

If you oppose same-sex marriage, you are against equality.

We're for equality. We believe all people are made in the image of God. But equality is not found in the removal of gender diversity in marriage. All that does is devalue someone's gender.

Likewise, equality isn't achieved by letting anyone marry in any circumstance. Even those pushing for same-sex marriage would not want marriage opened to children or close relatives or more than two people.

As it is, marriage invites a single man and a single woman to enter into a lifelong commitment to each other.

Marriage is between two people – what's it got to do with anyone else?

Marriage is defined by God as a lifelong, exclusive union between a man and a woman for the benefit of the natural offspring of that union and for the flourishing of human society. That's in everyone's interest. And it affects our common future because it's between a man and a woman. It naturally allows for children to be born and to be raised by a mother and a father. Because that affects our common future, it's something we should all be interested in.

But marriage has changed before. Why shouldn't it change now?

The question is, has it changed for the better? In 1975 the Federal Government changed the law to allow for no-fault divorce. The legal institution of marriage in Australia changed at that point and the result has been widespread infidelity and divorce. And this has come at a big cost – emotional, psychological and economic. We opposed those legal changes then, and we've been shown right to have done so. In the same way, we oppose the idea of "open" marriages (non-monogamous marriages), "throuples" (polyamorous marriages) and "same-sex marriages" today.

Kids are irrelevant to marriage, because some married couples are childless.

While not every marriage results in children, every child has a mother and father. Man-woman marriages have the potential for children. God's design for marriage protects children by providing them with biological parents who, if everything goes the right way, will care for and nurture them.

If God loves people, why would he be against what makes them happy?

All people are made in God's image, and of course that includes same-sex attracted people. God welcomes all people into his family. Christians, when they're doing their job, welcome all people into their fellowships – straight, same-sex attracted and those who struggle with their gender identity. The conversation isn't about God's value for individual people and everyone's need for love. It's about God's good plan for marriage. The Bible teaches it isn't for everyone. In fact, it teaches that it's a good thing to be single. Jesus was. Paul was, too. They both lived great lives. But for those who do want to get married, they need to know that God intends it to be for a man and a woman, forever.



Won't a public discussion about same-sex marriage lead to greater youth suicide?

We certainly need to be careful about the kind of discussion we have. When Senator Penny Wong previously spoke in favour of the traditional definition of marriage (she has since changed her mind) she chose the following words: "On the issue of marriage I think the reality is there is a cultural, religious, historical view around that which we have to respect". These are calm, respectful words. They certainly aren't homophobic, given that she is a lesbian woman herself.

There is no evidence that public discussions overseas have led to an increase in LGBTI youth suicide. The Irish referendum points in the opposite direction, with the overall suicide rate falling in 2014-2015. LGBTI youth have nothing to fear from a respectful public discussion about same-sex marriage. This is an area where Christians need to take the lead by modelling what a respectful debate looks like.

Why do Christians keep talking about the consequences of same-sex marriage?

Christians are people who care about the future, not just the here and now. There are some obvious consequences of changing the marriage laws, especially when it comes to children.

For male same-sex couples, one of the main options for children is surrogacy. However, commercial surrogacy is illegal in Australia and in most other developed countries, which has led to a growing commercial surrogacy market in developing countries. In 2015, India had to enact legislation to ban foreigners from using surrogate mothers in the country. The potential for pay-for-baby arrangements has implications for the objectification and enslaving of women's bodies.

Introducing laws that provide for the increased use of surrogacy will, by their nature, facilitate the intentional severing of the parent-child biological bond. We have to ask if it is fair on the child who will never know both of his or her biological parents.

Isn't same-sex marriage inevitable? Aren't we behind the rest of the world on this?

In the 1920s progressives said communism was inevitable in Australia. Then in the 1950s conservatives said a war on communism was inevitable. As it turned out, they were both wrong. No one knows the future. In the Asia-Pacific only one country (New Zealand) has introduced same-sex marriage.

We're hearing about it a lot because of what the Supreme Court decided in the United States. But we don't have to go the way of America. We need to have an Australian conversation about this. ■