

SHOULD THE LAW LET CHRISTIANS WITH DEEPLY HELD BELIEFS AGAINST GAY SEXUAL ACTIVITY DISCRIMINATE ON THAT BASIS?

I believe Christians condemning gay and lesbian activities as a grave sin are insulting the love exhibited by same sex couples living together. I don't know why we are so tolerant of such condemnations. In some ways, condemning love is worse than condemning skin colour. That is the reason after all racism is so bad - it lacks love.

People say that beliefs should be respected when they held deeply. But who decides how deeply they are held? Who decides what deeply held beliefs need to be taken account of by the law and which ones are not to be? What about people who pretend their beliefs are deeply held? What if the beliefs are obviously wrong - such as that a gay person is bad enough to go to Hell forever? Is it not wiser to call beliefs that are too silly to deserve refutation delusions? And what happens when a person deeply believes the registrar should officiate at her and her girlfriend's wedding and the registrar does not? Does the deepest belief come first? It could be argued that as the lesbian's belief in her love is more fundamental than the registrar's religious belief that same sex relationships are wrong that her belief comes first. Belief in love has to come before belief in religion which might be proven false or which the person might turn away from. Love and life matter more than religion or religious faith. Faith matters more than specifically religious faith. The law of the land must recognise that religious belief alone is not a reason to let the holder of the belief discriminate against others or get exemptions from obeying the law. If it is, then only strong belief, should be a reason. But the state cannot be an arbiter of how strong or believable a person's faith is. It would mean that the state would have to examine the evidence for why a religious belief seems to be true and be a complete violation of the secularism.

The law will be arbitrary in what "deep" beliefs it protects. To protect a person's deep belief that homosexuality is wrong is homophobic because the person's deep belief that atheist books should not be published without a theological rebuttal will not be respected. And yet as Christ said God comes first meaning that if there is a choice between protecting belief in God and protecting belief that homosexuality is a sin then choose protecting belief in God.

When a law comes in, it not only tells you what to do but it implies other things as well. For example, if any deep beliefs are to be respected then all are - period. A door is opened even if there are restrictions for the restrictions are not logical.

Notice that to say that your deeply held beliefs must be heeded by the law is to say that deeply held beliefs are sacred. But that makes no sense. Why stop with deeply held beliefs? Why not just any belief? If it is about how deep a person feels about belief then it is not about protecting belief but prejudice and hysterical immaturity. Beliefs should only be sort of sacred if they are true or if they are fact-based or in so far as they try to be fact-based. Some say that facts should be sacred not beliefs. I would say facts should be more sacred than beliefs. If you have to honour facts or belief and have to choose, then honour facts instead of belief.

In reality, those who protect the deeply held beliefs of religious people who want exemptions in the law so that they can discriminate against people are enablers of bigotry. They have a bit of it in themselves which is why they want to protect it. Also, "You can't give offence. You can only take it."

When people say that deeply held beliefs are to be protected by the law they are talking about religious beliefs. You never hear of a historian saying he finds those who deny the existence of Jesus to be offensive and that they must be silenced by the law. To protect some beliefs is to give those who say they hold them a privileged position in the law. Christians were able to suppress atheists by making the law discriminate against and evil penalise those who espoused atheism. If you are going to be offended then be offended by attempts to stifle free speech. Those who want it stifled want us to be afraid to speak our minds. We cannot trust anything we are told except in a society that encourages free inquiry. And expressing opinions helps us work out the truth and sometimes when an opinion is wrong there is still a little truth in it. The mathematical calculation giving the wrong result it can still be half right with regard to the equations.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/10914768/Christian-beliefs-need-balancing-with-equality.html>

The main thing about conscience is that it should be about obeying the law of the land for the common good. For example, if the law commands registrars to perform same sex marriages - even if they think it is wrong - then the registrars should obey. Conscience cannot be an excuse for disobedience. Obeying the law takes precedence over any other moral difficulties the person may have with obeying the law. We all have to compromise our consciences and the law. For example, you pay your taxes though they might be used to wage an unfair war. We all compromise so why can't registrars and doctors who are anti-abortion? The law has the right to make registrars and doctors do things they claim are wrong - period!

