

# When is the news not the news?

As many members would know the representation of religion in the media has long been an interest for me, and while there are many issues of concern, one matter now, namely same-sex marriage is clearly illustrating a media focus on one side that is sometimes bizarre but is also contributing to the general detriment of good public debate and the ability to have reasoned discussion on the very issue that people say is so important today.

I believe it is becoming a concern for avid readers of some of our newspapers and on-line services and viewers of certain programs like Q & A on the ABC. The general view promoted in the media now is almost an implicit rightness of same-sex marriage and if one opposes marriage revisionism you are more likely to be spoken of in derogatory and inflammatory tones and in our theological context labelled Christian clowns and spouters of 'evangelical claptrap'.

In an article "A media stampede on same-sex marriage can only harm society" by Dr Andy Mullins published

on-line on July 4, 2015 in a dedicated section from mercatornet.com: Conjugality (true nature of marriage and the challenges it faces today), Dr Mullins observed: "In yesterday's issue of *The Age* [3rd July 2015], in Melbourne, three of the first five pages, including the lead article on the front page, were devoted to the same sex marriage issue. The content was almost totally in favour of same-sex marriage. The previous day, all day, the mobile version lead item on the ABC news website, which normally changes several times in the course of a day, was a piece about "conservatives" in the Liberal Party blocking the same-sex marriage lobby. In fact 82 of 123 Liberal members are publically opposed to gay marriage. Such inflammatory journalism is not in the interests of our society. An obvious rule of life is that one does not make important decisions when emotions are inflamed. It appears that news services are seeking to emotionalize this issue either by dint of policy or by a lack of editorial leadership, or both."

One article supporting marriage

that was allowed to 'balance' the dominance of one view during that week was written by Eric Abetz and while it was not a specifically religious piece, it provoked considerable reaction on-line in this context, again sadly illustrating the general intolerance of people toward a current view, even when a religious viewpoint was not the original focus. The aspect that few seemed to understand was that the article was attempting to provide an outline of news and information that as Dr Mullins notes, is normally not provided in the mainstream media. It raised the question for me as to where can Australians and Australian Christians find a wider source of information and news in this debate? Perhaps hopefully in our Christian press? The following article is reproduced within this context. It is important to note that the US Supreme Court decision so proudly announced in the Western world was actually 5-4. What would have been the reaction if the decision had not gone the revisionist way?

Peter Bentley



The media seeks to normalise same sex relationships, while portraying the Christian viewpoint as out of date.