

GFC'S Response to Bill C4

On December 7, 2021 the Canadian Federal Senate unanimously approved a law that was recently passed in the House of Commons to criminalize a process that is known as “conversion therapy.” According to the Law, conversion therapy is defined as any “practice, treatment, or service designed to

- *Change a person's sexual orientation to heterosexual;*
- *Change a person's gender identity to cisgender;*
- *Change a person's gender expression so that it conforms to the sex assigned to the person at birth;*
- *Repress or reduce non-heterosexual attraction or sexual behaviour;*
- *Repress a person's non-cisgender gender identity; or*
- *Repress or reduce a person's gender expression that does not conform to the sex assigned to the person at birth”*

As Elders of a local church in Canada, we feel that it is our duty to respond to this law. Our response is not to be interpreted as an expression of hostility towards the government or the LGBTQ+ community. Rather, we desire to clarify what we mean when we use terms like “conversion” or “salvation” as these are part of our common vernacular. We believe firmly in the practice of evangelism because it is our goal to “go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation” (Mark 16:15). A big part of that is sharing with people the indisputable truth that their life can change by the power of God (John 3:3; 1 Corinthians 1:30) and we have no intention of altering that message in light of this new Bill.

In an attempt to clarify what the issues are, we make the following statement:

Affirmations

We affirm the truth and authority of God's Word in all matters of life including that of gender and sexuality (Isaiah 40:8; Matthew 5:17-19; Luke 16:17; 2 Timothy 3:16).

We affirm that human sexuality is defined by God alone and it is heterosexual (Genesis 1:27, 1:24, 2:18).

We affirm that homosexuality, transgenderism, or any deviation from God's design for sex is a sin (Deuteronomy 22:5, 23:1; Leviticus 18:22; 1 Timothy 1:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

We affirm that sin, if left unrepented of, will be punished forever in Hell (Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Colossians 3:5-6).

We affirm that Jesus came to this earth, died on a cross, and rose from the grave so that anyone who sins can be saved from that punishment and go to Heaven. This includes all of us for “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23). It therefore includes homosexuals, transgender people, or anyone struggling with their sexual identity (John 3:16; Romans 5:8-9; Romans 6:23; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

We affirm that, once someone believes in Jesus, their life is converted or radically changed forever. In the words of 2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.” In fact, their life becomes so different that Jesus referred to it as being “born again” (John 3:3).

We affirm that this change results in a renewed outlook on sex and a return to God’s original design for it. We affirm further that there are many former practicing homosexuals who have been saved and subsequently repented of that sin and lifestyle. They can testify to the fact that, while they may still struggle with same sex attraction, they now have the power to overcome it out of love for Christ. Romans 6:6 says, “Our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin.”

We affirm that the church has historically taught these doctrines for centuries ever since Canada first became a nation.

We also affirm that, to our knowledge, the government has never before outlawed these doctrines or chosen to take such an aggressive stand against them.

We affirm that, while it is part of our duty as Christians to submit to the governing authorities (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17), our greatest responsibility is to submit the Word of God.

We affirm that God is going to hold people in government accountable who disregard His Word on this issue (Psalm 75:7; Isaiah 33:22; Acts 17:31; Revelation 20:11-15). They will be held responsible for all the confusion and emotional distress that they are creating in our society.

Denials

We deny that the government has either the right, or the jurisdiction to reinterpret or change what the Bible says about sexuality (Matthew 5:18-19).

We deny that the government has the right to keep the church from openly teaching what God has revealed in His Word on this matter. When it does so, the church has no alternative but to break the law because “We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

We deny that homosexuality, transgenderism, or anything that deviates from heterosexuality is acceptable to God (Deuteronomy 22:5, 23:1; Leviticus 18:22; 1 Timothy 1:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9).

We deny that a person can change the gender that was assigned to them at birth. Any attempt to do so is unnatural and against the law of creation (Genesis 1:27).

However, we also deny that a Christian has the right to say any of this with a spirit of hatred. Instead, we want to “do all things in love” (1 Corinthians 16:14) and “let our speech always be seasoned with grace” (Colossians 4:6). This includes what we say to those who disagree with us in the LGBTQ+ community.

We deny that conversion therapy practices such as shock treatment, reconditioning, lobotomies, or the use of drugs should ever be used to help those who are struggling with their sexual choices. All such practices are harmful and should be avoided at all costs. We want to be clear that, when we use the term “conversion,” this is not what we are referring to. We are referring to the power of God alone to change a person’s life through faith in Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit.

We also deny any findings which say that it is unethical to try to change a person’s sexual desires. Ethics is the branch of knowledge that deals with human morality and the only one who has the right to determine what is moral is God alone.

We deny that Bill C4 is good for the nation of Canada. Instead, we believe that it will restrict free speech among its citizens and open the door to the persecution of Christians if it is not amended.

We deny that this bill is helpful to those in the LGBTQ+ community. Indeed, we affirm that it is potentially very harmful. Since gender dysphoria is often the source of emotional distress among transgender people, it seems obvious that the best way to help them is to address their feelings rather than encouraging irreversible surgery. This is especially true if they believe gender identity is fluid and can shift back and forth. Open, humble, and gracious dialogue on this topic must be available to those of this persuasion. It is neither responsible nor kind to leave a suffering individual to suffer further emotional distress without honest, supportive counselling available which explores the ramifications of both sides of an issue.

CONCLUSION

In closing, we want to quote the words of the Apostle Paul in First Corinthians 6:9-11:

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Paul reminds us here that every sinner needs spiritual conversion. We all need to be washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In order to show us this, Paul relates this to several non-sexual sins like idolatry, covetousness, and drunkenness then he relates it to several sexual ones like fornication, adultery, effeminacy, and homosexuality. He does that in order to remind us that God can save us from both. He can deliver us from every form of evil because our Lord has triumphed over all of it through the cross.

This is a truth that must be upheld by the church today and we write this document in the confidence and hope that it will.

Sincerely,

The Elders of Grace Fellowship Church Chilliwack