

# Bigotry

The word bigot is often used. The Deputy Prime Minister was due to use it in a speech on 11 September 2012. Instead he and his officials sought to limit the damage its use would cause. To the seasoned observer their attempts failed. It is not hard to see why. Think of what normally happens.

## System

Shortly before a minister gives a speech a copy is usually released to the press. The text the minister will use is supplied. The speech may be drafted by someone else but the minister, who reads and edits it beforehand, makes it his own. This happens before it is released to the press. Thus the likelihood that Mr Clegg did *not* intend to call those opposed to a redefinition of marriage bigots is very slim.

## Sense

What is a bigot? Defining the term will help us see, first, why some were offended by what Mr Clegg planned to say; and secondly, what this incident teaches us about our culture today.

The *Chambers Dictionary* defines a bigot as a person who is blindly and obstinately devoted to a particular set of ideas, creed or political party, and dismissive toward others. Three points features stand out.

*First*, a bigot is *blindly* devoted to an idea. There is no reasonable explanation for his belief or attitude. It is mere prejudice.

*Secondly*, a bigot *obstinately* clings to his view. His thinking is unyielding and even wrong-headed. He is not open to reason.

And *thirdly*, a bigot simply *dismisses* the views of others. Often he may do so in a sneering way.

## Serious

Bigot is a serious charge. To assert someone is blind, obstinate and dismissive is no small matter. The claim is made for one of two reasons: either because it is true; or because it makes a person look silly.

Are those who oppose the redefinition of marriage blind, obstinate and dismissive? No doubt there are some who are. Generally, however, those who see changing the way we define marriage as dangerous and destructive do so for good reasons.

## Sensible

Their reasons include recognizing that, since the earliest of days, marriage has been (1) the union of a man and a woman; (2) the lifelong commitment of a man and a woman to each other; and (3) an exclusive sexually intimate relationship. Christians point to another fact. It is (4) iGod and not mankind who defines marriage. Marriage is not a social construct (something invented by people). Rather it is God-given.

These claims are not based on some blind, irrational hunch. They are rooted in revelation.

Our first parents accepted God's design. Later God gave his written word in which both his creative act (the woman was formed from and for the man, and both for each other) and his plan (one man one woman for life) are described. He has given this word to all people for all time.

## Solid

There is, then, a sensible foundation for the traditional concept of marriage. Furthermore, there are solid reasons to reject same-sex intimacy as a valid life-style choice. These include, behavioural, biological, historical, medical, sociological and theological arguments. Perhaps chief among them is the fact God declares such couplings an abomination. They incur his displeasure and wrath.

Mr Clegg and his speech writer are profoundly wrong. They have not (and cannot) provide a cogent and compelling reason why traditionalists may be called bigots. On the contrary, they reveal an illiberal intolerance toward those with whom they disagree.

## Spurn

If this analysis is right (we believe it is) then our country is in serious trouble. Those who reject God's rule will find God rejects them. That no one - not even a politician - should ever want.