

ENQUIRE WITHIN

Question: *Do you think that the Roman Catholic adoption agency should be granted exemption from the Equality Act and be allowed to refuse to consider gay people as adoptive parents?*

Answer: The map shows the legal status of adoption by same-sex couples in Europe.

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that homosexuals are in a disordered state and so you can see why they would not want to place a child in a household which was run by a same-sex couple.

Two issues emerge-

- 1) is a same-sex home a good place for a child to grow up in?
- 2) is it right for legislation to dictate policy against the conscience of religious people or institutions?

1) If you look at history, there have been lots of successful single-sex parents. Many children are brought up well by a single parent. Mother and grandmother parenting has been a factor for many children, including myself. There are examples of women having children naturally and then entering a same-sex relationship and bringing the children up successfully. What seems to be important is that children are brought up well and are loved by responsible people.

In order to be considered as adoptive parents, all candidates undergo rigorous scrutiny, and this is taken very seriously by the agencies. If there were any sign that a same-sex couple would be bad for a child, they would be weeded out at an early stage. If they pass the scrutiny, and appear to be suitable in every way, then it would be harsh to deny an opportunity on the grounds of being gay. That is precisely what the legislation is designed

to prevent- a discriminatory practise on the grounds of sexual orientation.

In the past, many same-sex partners have been tacitly gay. What is now happening is that openly gay couples are requesting to become adoptive parents. The point of the new legislation is to offer lesbian and gay citizens protection from those who would discriminate against them in the provision of goods and services. From my

perspective, that can only be a good thing and I think that anyone with a request for exemption would have to make a really good case.

2) The case of the Roman Catholic Church is that it would be against the tenets of their faith to comply with the Law, so why not allow them an exemption. They only have 4% of the adoption service anyway, and when they are approached by gay couples, they politely

refer them to other agencies who will deal with them.

The argument sounds persuasive but it has flaws in my opinion. For a start, the Catholic agency is working with the agencies of the State in the form of Local Authorities. The LAs refer children to the RC agency, as they do to other voluntary agencies, and so it is right that everyone should be treated in the same way. What happens if one agency demands exemption on the grounds that it doesn't want to work with black or Asian parents, or Muslims? Equality is equality.

In addition, it is contradictory for an agency which does not believe in placing children in same-sex households to refer such couples to other agencies. This suggestion is a collusion with something which they consider intrinsically disordered and seems morally unacceptable.

It is time for the churches to catch up with the modern world.

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.