

The Equality Act and Cancel Culture – Looking at the Horizon

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“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” – John 16:33 NIV

As the Equality Act continues to make its way through the US Senate, Jesus’ words remind us to lean on Him as we face significant trials. Jesus plainly told the disciples that they would face trials and tribulations in this world. He didn’t do that to fuel their fear and anxiety. He wanted to prepare them. He wanted to show them the importance of living in complete dependence on God. When things did get tough, they could remember Jesus’ words and all that He taught them along the way.



That is the intent of this newsletter, to prepare you for what may be on the horizon, whether it comes through the Equality Act or through the waves of cancel culture that seem to be flooding the globe. In this world we will have tribulation, but take heart, Jesus has overcome the world! He can equip us to do the same.

As we watch the progression of the Equality Act in the US, we can see similar laws working their way through the legal systems of many western nations. A ban on conversion therapy in Victoria, Australia carries penalties of up to ten years in prison and/or fines up to \$200,000. Canadian Parliament continues to debate Bill C-6, a conversion therapy ban that also carries significant prison and financial penalties. Other nations or regions have already implemented similar conversion therapy bans including Brazil, Ecuador, and Mexico City. Germany has banned conversion therapy for anyone under 18. Twenty states in the US currently ban conversion therapy for minors. The United Nations is working on the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Mandate, a detailed plan to pressure nations to implement bans on sexual orientation and gender identity therapy that helps people overcome unwanted LGBTQ issues. **Most bans expressly forbid therapists and caregivers from helping people move from an LGBTQ identity towards a heterosexual identity that embraces one’s birth gender (cisgender), while specifically supporting therapy to help someone move from a heterosexual or cisgender identity to an LGBTQ identity.**

Culturally speaking, “conversion therapy” means any therapy, spiritual direction, or support of any type that helps people explore the possibility of moving away from an LGBTQ identity towards a heterosexual identity, and/or the possibility of moving away from a transgender identity to embrace their birth gender. (Individuals who embrace their birth gender are referred to as cisgender.) As earlier mentioned, people who support conversion therapy bans openly support assistance to help someone explore the process of moving away from a heterosexual or cisgender identity towards an LGBTQ identity. **The term “conversion therapy” itself is misleading.** LGBTQ advocates have created the term which fuels suspicion among non-believers who see the thought of converting anyone as wrong, and inspires mockery among the LGBTQ community as they perceive someone trying to convert them from gay to straight as utter nonsense. Proponents of conversion therapy bans regularly claim that those who practice it use force, coercion, shock treatments, nausea

inducing drugs and violence. Shock treatments may have been used into the 50s for a wide variety of mental health issues; however, no reputable therapists today use shock treatments or any other such harmful practices in the care of anyone seeking to overcome LGBTQ issues. **Proponents of conversion therapy bans seek to establish guilt by association. They seek to discredit appropriate care from trained therapists, pastoral caregivers, and peer support offered to willing participants by falsely claiming harmful practices.**

What are the chances of the Equality Act passing the US Senate and being signed into law by the President? It depends on who you ask. Throughout this process, this author felt like he was watching breaking news coverage of a natural disaster or a traumatic event. During such news casts, it's not unusual to hear one specific detail one moment, and a contrasting detail the next. Initially, reports of the chances of the act passing in the Senate were evenly divided. A recent review of the prognosis at www.govtrack.us, which describes itself as "the leading non-governmental source of legislative information and statistics", cites Skopos Labs which gives the act a 24% chance of being enacted. The President has said that passing the Equality Act was his number one legislative priority within the first 100 days of taking office. If it passes the Senate, he will surely sign it into law.

Whether or not the Equality Act will ban conversion therapy, or make it illegal for pastors to preach against LGBTQ issues is another one of the issues that has shifted as more analysis is presented. Initially, it seemed that the act would make such things illegal. While the act does specifically state that conversion therapy is "discriminatory", "discredited", and "harmful"; it does not specifically ban such therapy or sermons. However, it does lay the groundwork to ban therapy and opens the door for discrimination lawsuits against churches and therapists that hold to traditional Scriptural interpretations. The belief that marriage should be between one male and one female would be identified as a "sexual stereotype" and discriminatory [Section 2(a)(2)]. **It is now expected that a nationwide ban on conversion therapy would be presented quickly if the Equality Act becomes law.**

The author of this newsletter is not a lawyer or legal expert. You are encouraged to do your own research and consult your own legal counsel where necessary. (You can find the full text of the Equality Act at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/5/text>.) However, the author has researched the Equality Act and has heard from others who have more extensive knowledge than he. **Here are a few of the primary concerns about the act:**

The Equality Act will amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to "prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, gender identity and sexual orientation, and for other purposes..." [Title Page, Introduction]. It will elevate the fluid and subjective traits of sexual orientation and gender identity to the same legal level of protection as the immutable traits of skin color and biological sexual identity.

The Equality Act will eliminate the protections from the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993. The Equality Act reads, "The Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 shall not provide a claim concerning, or a defense to a claim under, a covered title, or provide a basis for challenging the application or enforcement of a covered title." [Section 1107] In other words, ministries, Christian medical practitioners, and Christian employers will not be able to use the RFRA as a defense if charged with a violation of the Equality Act.

The Equality Act will eliminate freedom of conscience protection for medical personnel. The act uses the phrase "pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical condition" [Section 1106(a)(1-2)] to include abortion. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the 3rd Circuit Court have interpreted "related medical condition" to include abortion [<https://www.heritage.org/gender/report/11-myths-about-hr-5-the-equality-act-2021>]. Therefore, doctors can be required to perform abortions against their

religious convictions or face discrimination charges. If a doctor performs mastectomies on a woman who has breast cancer, he would also be required to perform a double mastectomy on a biological female who identifies as a transgender male or face discrimination charges.

The Equality Act specifically identifies “conversion therapy” as *discriminatory and harmful, setting the stage for conversion therapy bans.* The act reads, “The discredited practice known as ‘conversion therapy’ is a form of discrimination that harms LGBTQ people by undermining individuals sense of self worth, increasing suicide ideation and substance abuse, exacerbating family conflict, and contributing to second class status.” [Section 2(a)(7)] This statement ignores over 100 years of scientific research that shows a shift in one’s sexual orientation is possible and that sexual orientation is fluid. The statement also ignores countless men and women who can personally testify that they have experienced a shift in their sexual attractions and/or have overcome a transgender identity and now embrace their biological sex with improved emotional health.

The Equality Act will eliminate traditional gender separation in multiple areas including domestic abuse shelters, bathrooms and locker rooms; and demands that they open them up to either biological gender. The act addresses *shared facilities* and reads, “an individual shall not be denied access to a shared facility, including a restroom, a locker room, and a dressing room, that is in accordance with the individual’s gender identity...” [Section 1101(b)(2)] It also addresses *public accommodations* by stating, “any establishment that provides a good, service, or program, including a store, shopping center, online retailer or service provider, salon, bank, gas station, food bank, service or care center, shelter, travel agency, or funeral parlor, or establishment that provides health care, accounting, or legal services...” [Section 3(a)(4)] Homeless shelters will be required to allow a biological male who perceives himself as a female to share the same facilities as the vulnerable woman finding refuge in the shelter. Churches and secular gyms will likely have to open their locker rooms based on perceived gender or face discrimination charges. How this legally applies to a church bathroom during a religious service is unclear. Churches that merely hold religious services may be able to uphold their traditional boundaries; however, any church that operates a daycare or school, or rents out their fellowship hall or gym will likely be required to follow the mandates of the act [<https://www.brotherhoodmutual.com/resources/safety-library/risk-management-articles/religious-freedom/religious-freedom-equality-act/>].

Precisely how the Equality Act will affect churches is yet to be determined. Many people claim that the First Amendment to the US Constitution blocks the effects of the Equality Act for churches; however, a well-known insurance company used by many religious organizations acknowledges that churches may be required to follow the act during non-religious activities and when hiring non-religious personnel such as custodians and administrative staff. As Christian beliefs are legally identified as discriminatory and harmful, they would likely lose their First Amendment protection. **One thing is certain, this law will face many legal challenges that could take years to resolve.** There are Christian legal groups ready to file lawsuits against the law the moment it is enacted. Many scholars agree that the Equality Act is one of the gravest threats to religious freedom this country has ever faced.

Even if the Equality Act does not become law, Christians and conservatives will likely see their freedoms continue to pass away as the forces of cancel culture become stronger. Not even large corporations or famous celebrities are immune to the cancel culture that screams, “Agree with our political correctness or we will bring you to ruin!” Conservative businesses and organizations have faced boycotts and paid a heavy price for their values. Conservative celebrities have lost significant media roles. Social media giants seem to “fact check” conservative posts with much more scrutiny than liberal ones. They seem to have no qualms against canceling the accounts of conservatives with whom they disagree while allowing the account of dictators to remain [<https://nypost.com/2020/07/29/twitter-defends-blocking-trump-tweets-but-not-irans-ayatollah->

[khamenei/](#)]. Restored Hope Network, a network of ministries helping men and women overcome unwanted same-sex attraction and gender confusion, saw their social media page disappear for “violating community standards”. Other conservative ministries have suffered the same fate. **A retail giant has pulled books from conservative authors written to help people overcome unwanted same-sex attraction or understand gender confusion.** (The author of this article knows some of those authors personally, and can attest to their compassion and godliness.) **That same retail giant continues to offer Adolf Hitler’s *Miene Komfth* and Karl Marx’s *Communist Manifesto*.** Still other conservative ministries have had their videos pulled off of video hosting platforms or had their channel demonetized. The list of challenges to conservative organizations is much too extensive to include in a single newsletter. They include conservative organizations and industries losing their banking services, and attacks on the professional licenses of therapist who uphold Biblical principles.



How can we live for Christ in an era that makes living for Christ difficult? We must remember the words of Christ at the beginning of this article, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” [John 16:33 NIV] We must remember the words of Jesus when he told the disciples, “Look, I am sending you out as sheep among wolves. So be a shrewd as snakes and harmless as doves.” [Matthew 10:16 NLT] We must continue to draw nearer to Christ, and determine that we are living for eternity, and not for the here and now. **As we find**

refuge in Him, we are equipped and strengthened for the challenges of the day. We must determine not to compromise our faith and our convictions no matter the cost.

On the practical side, we can begin to research the companies that we do business with and be prepared to transfer to more Christian friendly companies if and when necessary. We can support conservative companies over those that use their profits to support liberal endeavors. One resource to help you find out where organizations stand on conservative values is www.2ndvote.com. **Another important step is to contact your US Senators and urge them not to support the Equality Act.** You can find out who your elected officials are at www.usa.gov/elected-officials/. If you are living in Michigan, you probably won’t be surprised to know that Senator Stabenow is in favor of the act, and that Senator Peters is a cosponsor. **Even if they are already a vocal proponent of the Equality Act, it is important to register your opposition now to provide more legal support later on if the law is challenged in the courts.**

Most importantly, do not give up. Remember, we are living for eternity. Jesus tells us many times in Scripture that persecution will come. He also tells us many times not to be afraid. In John 16:3, He tells us, “They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me.” That verse helps me to have compassion for those who would persecute us. Our persecutors are eternal souls who desperately need the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ or they will go to Hell. Sometimes those who oppose us the most are the very ones who most need the valuable message that we carry. They don’t know the peace that comes from a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. They don’t know the peace of living for eternity. We do. We must not compromise. We must continue to speak the truth in love and bring the message of salvation to a dying world. **That may be one of the most important lessons we’re supposed to learn in all of this. Christ alone can sustain us and give us a heart to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us [Matthew 5:44]. Jesus has been preaching that message for over 2000 years. He wants us to live that message every day.**