



This submission comes from The Reformed Old Catholic Church in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Church is a progressive, Episcopal led community of believers, who stand with the LGBTIA+ siblings both here and abroad. We welcome members who have been emotionally, mentally and spiritually injured by the judgements, teachings and lifestyle of the more conservative churches.

We strongly express our support for the objectives and content of the Conversion Practices Prohibition Bill. We support the banning of conversion practices and wish to advise great caution in allowing any exemption to the Bill for

religious beliefs. In our opinion, religious “freedom” should not result in the suffering of people we see as being made in the image and likeness of God. Sadly, many churches and religious institutions have hidden their homophobia and discriminatory attitudes behind their religion. We consider that any definition of religious freedom which enables such groups to hold homophobic views to be invalid.

We acknowledge that The New Zealand Association of Counsellors, released an important statement in 2020. [1] in the which they called conversion or reparative practice “pseudoscience”. They pointed to a 2014 New Zealand study by Lucassen, Clark, Moselen et.al. [2] that suggested almost half of lesbian and gay secondary school student population had seriously contemplated attempting suicide, and that nearly one fifth had attempted suicide in the 2013-14 period.

We note that the Bible states that every person is created in God’s image and likeness and thus is of infinite worth. We accept that this image and likeness is not affected by questions of race, ethnicity, gender or sexuality. Again, we note that expressed in the New Testament are what Christians believe are the two most important commandments; to love God and to love others. We believe that love and respect should always be more important than hatred and harm. We consider that wholly spurious grounds of religious or ‘Christian’ belief must not be used against LGBTIA+ people, that LGBTIA+ people should never have their spiritual identities damaged by ridicule, hatred or attempts to coerce them into being someone they can never be. We consider that permitting conversion/reparative therapy to remain lawful simply allows individuals and groups to actively practice hatred and induce trauma under the guise of ‘love’. Conversion therapy is not love.

Lastly we consider that clauses 5 and 9 should be deleted from this Bill and to simply note that churches once supported slavery, held antisemitic views and enabled the oppression of women. All of these were once underpinned by selected Bible verses taken out of context. We therefore ask that you do not enshrine in legislation the ‘right’ for a church, a religious institution or their leaders to preach homophobic views.

+ Raymond J. McIntyre  
**BISHOP**

[1]: <https://www.nzac.org.nz/assets/Ethics/Conversion-Therapy-2020.pdf>

[2]: Lucassen, M.F.G., Clark, T. C., Moselen, E., Robinson, E.M., & The Adolescent Health Research Group (2014) Youth’ 12. The Health and Wellbeing of Secondary School Students in New Zealand: Results for Young People Attracted to the Same Sex or Both Sexes. Auckland: The University of Auckland.