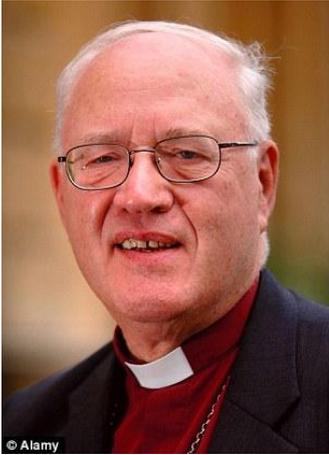


Gay weddings pave the way for polygamy, warns former Archbishop of Canterbury Lord Carey

- **Lord Carey said same-sex marriage laws could open the door for marriages between siblings**
- **He has been one of the most prominent campaigners against same-sex marriage**
- **Ministers are braced for an attempt to wreck the Marriage Bill next week**

By Steve Doughty



Lord Carey said 'equal marriages' could open the door for marriages between siblings

A former Archbishop of Canterbury yesterday warned David Cameron that his 'equal marriage' reforms open the door for multiple weddings and marriages between siblings.

Lord Carey said that same-sex marriage laws amount to a radical and disturbing upheaval which is likely to lead to unintended consequences.

Among them he listed the inclusion of polygamous and multiple relationships into the definition of marriage, and the right for two sisters living together to demand a legal wedding.

The intervention from Lord Carey, one of the most prominent campaigners against same-sex marriage since the Prime Minister first announced his plan in the autumn of 2011, comes as peers prepare to debate the new marriage law. Ministers are braced for an attempt to wreck the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill next week. A group of MPs have already written to members of the House of Lords urging them to vote down the Bill, on the grounds that in the supposedly free vote in the Commons they were warned by Downing Street that their careers would be at stake if they failed to back it. Lord Carey, 77, said that the Bill overturns the historic understanding of marriage as a platform for a man and a woman to raise children that has lasted since the dawn of Christianity. That, he argued in a paper published by the Civitas think tank, means that the doors will fly open for very different legal versions of marriage in the future. 'A reason why we should be worried by the redefining of marriage is the unintended consequences of such a step,' Lord Carey said.

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'Once we let go of the exclusivity of a one-man one-woman relationship with procreation linking the generations, they why stop there?

'If it is about love and commitment, then it is entirely logical to extend marriage to two sisters bringing up children together. If it is merely about love and commitment, then there is nothing illogical about multiple relationships, such as two women and one man.'

The former Archbishop, who stepped down from Lambeth Palace in 2002, cited the arguments of US academic and lawyer William Eskridge, a prominent advocate of gay marriage rights, who has maintained that it is illogical to limit the number of people in a relationship.

Instead he has proposed the scrapping of any laws that limit the numbers or sex of people entering a marriage.



Lord Carey was critical of the idea promoted by Home Secretary Theresa May that people who care about each other should have the right to marry. Culture Secretary Maria Miller (right) argued for the reform

Lord Carey said: 'In no way do I mean to be alarmist about the possibility of this happening in a large scale way, but it is happening in the United States and there is nothing to stop the trend continuing.'

He added that the idea promoted by Home Secretary Theresa May that people who care deeply for each other and want to spend their lives together should have the right to marry is 'a wholly inadequate understanding of marriage.'

The former Archbishop said: 'Those of us accused of being on the wrong side of history can only plead with the Government to respect our concern that extending marriage to same-sex couples is not only unwise, but also sets a dangerous precedent.'

Lord Carey's plea for rejection of same-sex marriage was published alongside a series of arguments both in favour and against the reform published by Civitas in *The Meaning of Matrimony: Debating Same-Sex Marriage*. Among contributors was Culture Secretary Maria Miller, the minister in charge of piloting the new law through the Commons.

Mrs Miller said: 'Much of the strength of marriage lies in its ability to change with the times. As society has changed, so marriage has changed, and become available to an increasingly broad range of people. 'In the 21st century marriage is an inclusive - not exclusive - institution. It is available to all adults who are prepared to make vows of life-long fidelity and commitment. Except, that is, if you happen to love someone of the same sex. I believe that simply isn't right.'