

Media Release:

MARRIAGE SUNDAY and MARRIAGE WEEK UNITES CHRISTIANS AROUND MARRIAGE

Tens of thousands of Christians will next weekend celebrate traditional marriage by teaching, preaching and praying on a biblical view of marriage, on **Marriage Sunday 10 September**, marking the start of Australian Marriage Week.

Hundreds of Australian churches across dozens of denominations, from Catholic and Orthodox through to Anglican, Baptist and Pentecostal, will take part.

Australia's most loved tennis champion and Christian leader not afraid of controversy, **Margaret Court**, has led the call for Christians across the country to reflect on the biblical foundations and sanctity of marriage on Marriage Sunday.

"Our nation is at a crossroads but we know God is sovereign. With Marriage Sunday starting off Marriage Week, we are urging church leaders to teach and preach on God's design for marriage but also to pray about the future of marriage – to put our faith and trust in Him," she said.

"Marriage Sunday is an opportunity for churches to stand in unison on the written word of God and stand up for what they believe," she said.

"I have witnessed and experienced outrage, vitriol and abuse for simply believing what the Bible says on marriage," Rev Court said, "but on Marriage Sunday, I encourage Christians to stand together without fear of being persecuted for their beliefs."

Rev Court said she welcomed calls for a National Day of Prayer and Fasting by **Australian Christian Churches President, Ps Wayne Alcorn**, and reiterated that Marriage Sunday was broader than any one movement or denomination.

Christian marketplace leader and founder of Christian Federation, **Peter Kentley, backs Rev Court's call**. He says a growing number of leaders from many different mainline denominations have recently come on board with their support for Marriage Sunday, including Anglican, Catholic, Baptist and Pentecostal.

"I have been delighted by the level of support across denominations, not only for traditional marriage but for Marriage Week and those prepared to preach, teach and pray for marriage on Marriage Sunday," he said.

He also highlighted the fact that many **Australian Indigenous leaders**, including **Indigenous Elder Ps Brian Lampton**, as well as church leaders from non-English speaking churches, have also joined the call for preaching, teaching and praying about marriage on 10 September.

Mr Kentley said that the national postal vote had united Christians of every denomination, tribe, tongue and church, around marriage and Marriage Sunday was an opportunity to strengthen God's view of marriage.

"Almost all the major churches and denominations are now singing in unison on this one because, ultimately, we take our take our 'lyrics', our values and our instruction from the same Bible," he said.

He pointed out that **Marriage Week Australia** had been celebrated annually for almost a decade but "by the grace of God, it happens to fall this year in a week that is extremely important for the future of our country."

About Marriage Week

Marriage Sunday kicks off National Marriage Week. However Marriage Week is nothing new. It was first established in Australia nine years ago after **Dennis and Ann Outred**, then national coordinators of the Alpha Marriage Course, felt God calling them to establish a week around the ancient Hebrew festivals, to encourage, honour and promote marriage within the church and to celebrate marriage as a blessing from God.

"**Marriage Sunday kicks off Marriage Week** and creates an incredible opportunity for churches everywhere to talk about marriage according to God's design, plan and purpose," Mr Outred said.

"Marriage Week is all about encouraging married couples in their walk with God together, that their marriage might reflect that mystery between Christ and his church that St Paul writes of in Ephesians chapter 5."

The first pilot of Marriage Week ran in Sydney in 2008 with the support of Christian broadcaster, Hope 103.2. It has taken off in subsequent years when Christian radio stations in other capital cities and regions took up Marriage Week as an opportunity to talk about marriage, to promote traditional marriage and encourage those who are married.

According to Mr Outred, every Christian AM, FM, and Digital broadcaster, has joined Marriage Week, including Vision Christian Radio nationally, Hope 103.2 in Sydney, LightFM in Melbourne, Sonshine in Perth, 95five in Brisbane, as well as dozens of regionally-based radio stations.

Although Marriage Week falls this year in the same week the postal survey is being mailed, Mr Outred says it wasn't set up to be political but for churches to affirm God's design for marriage, to celebrate marriage and encourage married couples.

- Marriage Week Web Site: <https://marriageweek.org.au>
- Marriage Week Resources: www.christianfederation.net.au/elections.php
- Marriage Week Prayer Centre: www.christianfederation.net.au/prayer.php

~ ENDS

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