The dangers of redefining marriage



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Redefining marriage is a dangerous idea. It redefines everything from parenting and kinship bonds to sexual morality and acceptable religious doctrine.

G.K. Chesterton warned "This triangle of truisms – father, mother and child – cannot be destroyed; it can only destroy those civilisations which disregard it."[1]

The destroyers are at the gates. To resist them, we must reassert the truth of marriage and the harms of homosexual "marriage" – specifically that it would:

- ***force future children to miss out on either a mother or a father;***
- ***impose radical homosexual education on all of our children;***
- ***silence conscientious objectors with the big stick of anti-discrimination law;***
- ***radically deconstruct the bonds of parenting and kinship, and the very notion of male and female.***

What defines marriage?

Marriage is a social and religious recognition of pre-existing biological reality. All of our marriage laws and customs exist to reinforce this biological foundation, helping bind a man to his mate for the sake of social stability, and, above all, for the sake of any child they might create.

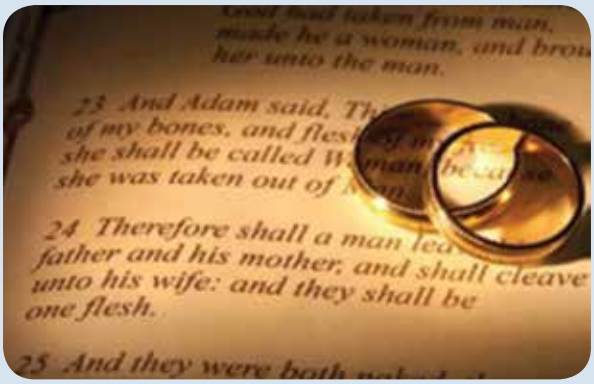
Not all marriages create children – but typically they do, and the institution exists for the typical case. Married couples who cannot have children are still fully married because they fulfil the twin criteria of marriage: they bring together the two great halves of nature, male and female, in a "one-flesh" union. They are still able to give adopted children the mother and father relationship they need.

A homosexual couple does not bring the two halves of nature together in a one-flesh union. They cannot give a child, even an adopted child, the mother and father relationship a child needs.

This is not a religious argument. Atheist philosopher Bertrand Russell understood the child-centred reason for marriage: "It is through children alone that sexual relations become of importance to society, and worthy to be taken cognizance of by a legal institution."[2]

Homosexual relationships obviously cannot create children, so society has no *institutional* interest in regulating such friendships. They are of importance to the individuals involved, but such relationships are not *marriage.*

A recent observation of this came from the Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court, John Roberts, in his dissenting judgement on same-sex "marriage" in June 2015:



> *"Marriage … arose in the nature of things to meet a vital need: ensuring that children are conceived by a mother and father committed to raising them in the stable conditions of a lifelong relationship."*[3]

The ancient legal codes of Hammurabi and King Dadusha in Babylon nearly 4000 years ago elaborate social conditions for valid marriage similar to our own, including the need for a formal contract and a public ceremony.

King Dadusha would have understood the Bishop of London's sermon, from the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, at the 2011 Royal Wedding of William and Catherine:

> *"First, [marriage] was ordained for the increase of mankind... Secondly, it was ordained in order that the natural instincts and affections should be hallowed and directed aright... Thirdly, it was ordained for the mutual society, help, and comfort that the one ought to have of the other."*

The Bishop's basic rationale is anthropological, not theological: that marriage exists to nurture a new generation, to discipline the feral instincts of males to constructive ends, and to be what John Locke called "the first society" of husband and wife, mother, father and child.

Homosexual and bisexual relationships are recorded in history, but never an institution of homosexual marriage – since it served no vital social purpose. As early as Homer we find the word "gamos" to describe the man-woman relationship which we recognise as "monogamous marriage". The Romans gave us the word "matrimony", made up of "mater", meaning mother, and "monium", meaning state or condition. So matrimony is the institution built around motherhood.

A rare aberration that proves the rule was the case of Emperor Nero – whom historian Tacitus described as "corrupted by every lust, natural and unnatural": "The emperor, in the presence of witnesses, put on the bridal veil. Dowry, marriage bed, wedding torches, all were there. Indeed everything was public which even in a natural union is veiled by night."[4] "Disaster followed," he wrote, referring to the subsequent fire of Rome. The fire led Nero to torture and execute Christians as scapegoats, including the first Bishop of Rome.

So is it any surprise that as homosexual "marriage" makes a comeback, Christian leaders like the Archbishop of Hobart, Julian Porteous, are again being thrown to the lions?

The truth is that marriage is given to us by nature and affirmed by every culture, because man and woman are uniquely empowered to nurture new life.

The first harm: forcing children to miss out on a mother or father

Marriage is a compound right under Article 16 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights:* "the right to marry and to found a family".[5] Therefore, same-sex "marriage" would involve both the legal recognition of an exclusive relationship and the right to form a family by adoption or artificial reproduction – but any child brought into that "marriage" would miss out on their mother or father or both.

Of course, there are already tragic situations where a child misses out on their mum or dad, such as the death or desertion of a parent – but that is not something we would ever wish upon a child, and it is not something a government should ever impose upon a child. There are also situations where broken families reform as a homosexual household. What we must not allow, however, is the situation where government deliberately facilitates the creation of motherless or fatherless families.

Some people raise the scenario of abusive parents and argue that it is better for a child to have two loving same-sex carers than dysfunctional biological parents – yet neither option gives a child what they need.

Others insist that because same-sex couples already have children by adoption or surrogacy, nothing is going to change with same-sex "marriage". That is not correct. A number of states prohibit same-sex couples from adopting or creating a child by surrogacy, but a federal law for same-sex "marriage" would overrule state prohibitions on same-sex parenting.



Same-sex 'marriage' would force a child to miss out on either their father or their mother, or both

As this debate forces us to choose between giving priority to children's rights or homosexual adults' claims, society is faced with an inescapable choice. Significantly, when 1200 Australians were asked to choose between these conflicting claims, they chose by a margin of three to one to prioritise to the rights of the child to both a mother and a father over the rights of two men to marry and start a family.[6]

What, then, do we make of the bland assurances that it doesn't really matter, that science shows there is "no difference to kids" raised by homosexual couples. Such claims are not true, either on the social science front or, more movingly, these testimonies of adults who were raised by lesbian couples.

US woman Heather Barwick said:

> *"A lot of us, a lot of your kids, are hurting. My father's absence created a huge hole in me, and I ached every day for a dad. Same-sex 'marriage' and parenting withholds either a mother or father from a child while telling him or her that it doesn't matter. That it's all the same. But it's not."*[7]

Melbourne woman Millie Fontana said:

> *"There's all this talk about equality for women, for gay people, for everybody, but where's the equality for children when it comes to this? I am in a position to explain to you the kind of damage it does to a child."*[8]

As far as the scientific evidence goes, sociologist David Popenoe states the obvious: "Few propositions have more empirical support in the social sciences than this one. Compared to all other family forms, families headed by married, biological parents are best for children."[9]

That is the settled science of forty years of research. Therefore, any institution that deliberately promotes an alternative model is, statistically speaking, disadvantaging the child.

Running counter to this established finding, a number of recent studies claim the children of lesbian couples do just as well as the children of married biological parents. On the whole these are poor quality studies, with a biased self-selection process, too small a sample size to be significant, no control group to exclude confounding factors, and so on.[10] They may create headlines, but are no scientific basis for public policy.

There are only eight studies in this entire field that meet the gold-standard criteria of random sample selection and statistically adequate sample size. Of these, four find no difference for children in same-sex households and four find detrimental effects for such children.

Significantly, the four that find no difference are deeply compromised by subsequent findings of corruption in their database.

The most recent, and largest, peer-reviewed study (Sullins 2015[11]) finds that children raised in same-sex households have more than twice the rate of significant emotional problems compared with children raised by opposite-sex parents, and nearly four times the rate of those raised by their married biological parents. Based on these findings, no lawmaker should vote for a structure of parenting that is clearly detrimental to children.

Having said all that, social science shouldn't be the deciding factor. No "social science" really answers the question that must be asked: the question of the fundamental injustice and primal harm of wilfully depriving a child of their mother or father.

The second harm: imposing homosexual education on all of our children

If the law says same-sex "marriage" is normal and right, schools will have to teach that same-sex behaviour is normal and right. Children will have to be taught that the sexual behaviour of two men is no different to the relationship of the child's mother and father in marriage – and parents will have no say on the matter.

This is happening overseas.[12] After Massachusetts legalised same-sex "marriage" in 2003, school libraries had to stock same-sex literature, primary school children were given homosexual stories like *King & King*,[13] and some high school students were even given an explicit manual of homosexual advocacy entitled *Queer in the 21st Century.*[14]

In Australia, under the federally funded Safe Schools Coalition program created by the Victorian homosexual lobby, you can read the following at page 10 of the 2014 booklet, "OMG I'm Gay", (omitting the most explicit passage):

"I'm bisexual, so I ended up thinking of myself as having two virginities, my first time with a chick and my first time with a dude."

Parents who have objected to this program are already being sidelined and labelled "bigots", even when same-sex "marriage" is not the law of our land.

Three major arguments are used to justify these programs in our schools, and they are the same three arguments used to justify same-sex "marriage".

1. To combat bullying

The first argument is that there is a plague of gay-based bullying in our schools, and the best way to reduce that bullying is to celebrate homosexuality in the curriculum and affirm same-sex "marriage" in our laws. That is a doubtful proposition.

A large study published in the *British Journal of Psychiatry* in 2003, comparing 1000 homosexual and heterosexual adults, found no increase in bullying of gay men compared with heterosexual men, whether at school or subsequently, whether verbally or physically.[15] The researchers noted, "Reports that gay and lesbian people are vulnerable to such experiences because of their sexuality are often taken at face value".

There are many reasons to be bullied at school – for being too smart, too dumb; too

fat, too weak; or for being "gay" even when you are not gay. It is important to address all bullying in schools, but an alleged plague of gay-based bullying does not justify imposing radicalised sex-education on all children.

2. To combat suicide and depression

The second argument is that if we do not celebrate homosexuality in schools and celebrate same-sex "marriage" in our culture, we are culpable for depression and even suicide in young same-sex attracted people. That is an increasingly common argument – and it is outrageous.

Last year, *Sky News* presenter Peter van Onselen suggested the Coalition would have blood on its hands because of its decision not to allow a vote on same-sex "marriage" in parliament.[16]

The director of Australian Marriage Equality (AME), Rodney Croome, was critical of an Australian Marriage Forum television ad aired during the Mardi Gras, saying it was "actually harming the many Australian children being raised by same-sex couples".[17]

Do you see how this game works? If anyone makes the case for keeping marriage between man and woman, the mere act of raising such an argument is claimed to "harm" children. Can the gay lobby not see their argument for the emotional blackmail it is?

Nobody denies that same-sex attracted people suffer disproportionately from depression and emotional distress. But in my experience as GP, never once has their depression or distress been due to the "bigoted opinions" of straight society. It has always been due to something private and personal: perhaps the trauma of domestic violence from a lesbian partner, or self-disgust at their own compulsive sexual behaviour, or unresolved rage at childhood sexual abuse, or the spiritual grief of holding values that conflict with their unwanted sexual impulses.

We also know gay people have close to double the rate of substance abuse, both alcohol or drugs, compared with heterosexual people and this is associated with increased depression and suicide.[18]

The previously mentioned study in the *British Journal of Psychiatry* cautioned:

> *"It may be that prejudice in society against gay men and lesbians leads to greater psychological distress… Conversely, gay men and lesbians may have lifestyles that make them vulnerable to psychological disorder. Such lifestyles may include increased use of drugs and alcohol."*[19]

It trivialises a homosexual person's suffering to blame it primarily on the external environment. The associated claim that we must legalise same-sex "marriage" or be culpable for gay suicide is blackmail. One does not overturn the foundational institution of society as an act of psychological therapy for some depressed citizens.

3. Justice for people who are 'born that way'

The final argument for affirming homosexuality is a claim of justice: that gay people are simply born that way, so natural justice demands they should have equal marriage rights.

This moral argument has great influence on public thinking, but it is false and needs to be refuted.

No science supports the "born that way" theory. The American Psychiatric Association says: "There are no replicated scientific studies supporting any specific biological etiology for homosexuality".[20]

Even the avowedly pro-gay American Psychological Association states: "No findings have emerged that permit scientists to conclude that sexual orientation is determined by any particular factor or factors."[21]

The director of the Human Genome Project, Francis Collins, notes that "sexual orientation is genetically influenced but not hardwired by DNA, and whatever genes are involved represent predispositions, not predeterminations."[22]

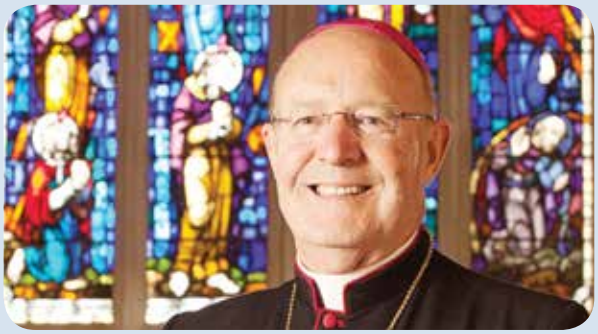
There is no justification, then, for claiming gay people are born that way; there is no simplistic gay gene or gay brain.

> **'There is no justification for claiming gay people are born that way.'**

In the same way, psychological mechanisms are not sufficient to explain all cases. One can only conclude that the phenomenon is multi-factorial in origin, with predisposing and precipitating factors – an ingrained but potentially modifiable psychological condition, not an innate identity.

Consider the clinical findings of spontaneous change in sexual orientation. A large study by Savin-Williams found that three-quarters of adolescents who had some initial homosexual attraction changed to experience heterosexual attraction only.[23] Another large study of some 14,000 young people by Ott found that two-thirds of those who thought they might be homosexual eventually became exclusively heterosexual.[24]

These studies show that most sexual confusion in adolescence clears away if left to itself. A policy to "celebrate gay identity" among confused adolescents would encourage some young men to "come out" prematurely at school. If left alone, most would get over their confusion and avoid the harms of a homosexual lifestyle.



Tasmania's Catholic Archbishop Julian Porteous faces legal action over a booklet defending man-woman marriage.

The third harm: suppressing conscientious & religious freedom

In a 2011 Campion College graduation address, former PM John Howard said:

> *"Changing the definition of marriage, which has lasted for time immemorial, is not an exercise in human rights and equality; it is an exercise in de-authorising the Judaeo-Christian influence in our society, and any who pretend otherwise are deluding themselves."*[25]

In 2015, Australia's Catholic Bishops published a pastoral letter entitled *Don't Mess with Marriage*. Rodney Croome of AME took offence at the booklet which simply conveyed traditional Catholic teaching on marriage to families of Catholic school students. Croome urged same-sex "marriage" supporters to complain to the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner."[26] In response, Tasmanian Greens candidate Martine Delaney did just that.

Significantly, the Bishops' pastoral letter included this passage: "People who adhere to the perennial and natural definition of marriage will be characterised as old-fashioned, even bigots, who must answer to the law."

There should be no pretence that churches can be guaranteed lasting exemption under same-sex "marriage" law. Equally, the individual will be given no exemption from holding government-mandated opinions on homosexual marriage and parenting. David Blankenhorn observed:

> *"Once this proposed reform became law, even to say the words out loud in public – 'Every child needs a father and a mother' – would probably be viewed as explicitly divisive and discriminatory, possibly even as hate speech."*[27]

Consider the hounding and sacking of the head of Internet company Mozilla, Brendan Eich, just for donating to a political campaign defending natural marriage.[28]

Aaron Klein, a father of five from Oregon, was fined $135,000 and lost his livelihood as a baker, just because a lesbian couple demanded he bake them a wedding cake and he, in good conscience, declined.[29]

In her recent Press Club debate, Senator Penny Wong said lesbian couples would simply avoid bakers who did not want to bake them a cake. But of course the opposite is true – the whole objective is to

identify those who do not comply with the gay agenda and force them to do so.

Any law normalising homosexual "marriage" would be a truncheon in the fist of the thought police, enforce approval of homosexuality via "human rights" commissions, and be a major step in "de-authorising the Judaeo-Christian influence in our society". Any who pretend otherwise are deluding themselves.

The fourth harm: the deconstruction of marriage & kinship

Chief Justice John Roberts, of the US Supreme Court, said in his dissenting ruling on same-sex "marriage": "It is striking how much of the majority's reasoning would apply with equal force to the claim of a fundamental right to plural marriage."

Last year, the *New York Post* featured three women in wedding dresses under the heading, "Married lesbian throuple expecting first child"[30], while in February this year the same paper introduced us to "the world's first gay married trio" in Thailand.[31]

Australian polyamorist Rachelle White told *Radio 6PR*, "I do think we need to address same-sex 'marriage' before we do move forward and look at polyamorous marriage."[32]

For if marriage is only about love and commitment, on what logical grounds can we deny "marriage equality" to three or four loving and committed adults? "Love is love is love … and love knows no boundaries..."

However, the destructiveness of this revolution goes well beyond marriage itself to the broader bonds of blood and belonging.

It is not just that the words "husband" and "wife" will be deleted from legislation; the words "mother" and "father" will also have to go from various documents such as passports or birth certificates. And as in Canada, the legal term "natural parent" would be replaced by the soulless term "legal parent".

"Those who say 'They're only words, who cares?' clearly don't know their Orwell," says Brendan O'Neill, the self-described "godless Brit".[33]

US-based lesbian activist Masha Gessen told the Sydney Writer's Festival in 2012:

> *"Fighting for gay marriage generally involves lying about what we are going to do with marriage when we get there. Because we lie that the institution of marriage is not going to change… It's a no-brainer that we should have the right to marriage but equally I think that it is a no brainer that the institute of marriage should not exist."*[34]

Culture warriors like Gessen want to remake marriage in their own sexually radical image. Monogamy is an essential "repressive" element that "has to go". At that same writer's festival, Australian gay activist Dennis Altman said:

> *"One of the things about gay male culture is that it is not a monogamous culture… There are many longstanding gay relationships. There are virtually no longstanding monogamous gay relationships. I happen to think that this is a good thing."*[35]

And we are being told that nothing will change with a redefinition of marriage!

Conclusion: politics and just discrimination

How, then, can we live respectfully with our homosexual friends, relatives and neighbours while still protecting the truth about marriage, and protecting the triangle of truisms, mother-father-child?

The number of same-sex couples in Australia is very small – only 1% of all couples according to the ABS *Australian Social Trends 2013*. And only one in a thousand children are raised in same-sex households.[36]

Given these tiny numbers, and given that same-sex couples already enjoy the same benefits as any other couple, just what is the terrible injustice that requires marriage and parenting to be redefined for the 99%?

There is none. There is only a terrible psychological push from 1% of society to affirm the unequivocal normality of homosexual behaviour: in our institutions, in our laws, our schools, even – in due course – our churches. That is the root cause of this campaign for same-sex "marriage".

We must not acquiesce, because granting the right for homosexuals to marry would mean losing:

- the right of future children to have both a mother and a father;
- the right of parents to guide the moral education of their children;
- the right of conscientious objectors to live in accordance with their beliefs.

Marriage is given by nature, strengthened by culture, and uniquely empowered to nurture new life. It can only be, and must remain, a man-woman thing.

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