

Submission on Marriage

The arguments in favour of changing the understanding of marriage to include a sexual relationship between two persons of the same sex is like jumping through the Looking Glass with Alice and meeting up with Humpty Dumpty who said, "When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean."

Throughout human history, marriage has been understood to be a union between a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, with the intention of bringing children into the world through their sexual union. The family thus formed by this heterosexual, natural union, has underpinned all cultures and has been the basic building block of society. The responsibility of the State in securing its own interests, has been to protect and defend this natural institution of marriage and the family.

Since the conception of a child involves a mother and a father, unaided reason should dictate that the mother and the father should take responsibility for the care and upbringing of this child. The role of the State should be to recognise the benefits stable families provide and to enact and defend, laws and regulations which uphold the rights and duties of the parents.

Children obviously do best when they and their siblings are cared for by their own mothers and fathers, committed to each other and their children in a mutual loving environment, with the aid and support of the extended family group related by blood and marriage. Ample studies have demonstrated this. Children who, for one reason or another, cannot be cared for by their own parents and who are adopted, also do best within the stability of a family based on marriage between a man and a woman.

Children need both a mother and a father to properly care for them. Just as the female egg and the male sperm are required for conception of a child, so male and female parents are critical to the child's welfare. Neither a mother or father are dispensable.

Whatever a sexual relationship between two persons of the same sex may be called, it certainly must not be called 'marriage', or indeed be equated to marriage. Sexual intercourse between a man and a woman is ordered to the procreation of a third person, the child. While not every act of intercourse between a man and a woman results in the conception of a child, the sexual union of two men or two women is, by its very nature, sterile, and can never bring forth new life.

No one has the 'right' to a child. Children have inalienable rights and are not products to be bought, sold or owned. A child needs to be loved for its own sake. While it is a natural, and universal, desire for couples to have children, they certainly cannot claim any 'right' to do so. Children conceived by artificial means satisfy the emotional desires of adults. Even with the best of intentions by those adults to provide loving care for those children so conceived, the adults' emotional desires are what is ultimately being satisfied.

Even more tragic would be the artificial conception of a child for political mileage. That scenario brings up the spectre of Big Brother and Thought Police of totalitarian regimes. Once laws are introduced which alter our traditional understanding of marriage and children become merely merchandise, then freedoms must be restricted to prevent anyone from being foolhardy enough to oppose such laws. Marriage Celebrants, adoption agencies, landlords,

teachers etc., will be forced to recognise this new meaning of marriage and woe betide anyone who does not comply.

Discrimination is another word which has been re-interpreted by our modern day Humpty Dunptys. It is not always a bad thing, or an injustice, to discriminate. People can, indeed should, be very discriminatory when it comes to deciding who to allow into their homes, or which movies their children watch, or which schools their children attend, or which politicians they elect.

Unjust discrimination is another thing. It is unjust to discriminate against people because of the colour of their skin, or their religion, or their race. But a person can't claim unjust discrimination if he fails to be registered as a doctor if he has no medical qualifications. Merely wanting to be a doctor is not sufficient.

Our society, indeed all societies today, are built upon marriage and family, consisting of a man and a woman united together to the exclusion of all others, to provide the best environment for the begetting and raising of children. We change that at our peril.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this important consideration.

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