

TWO CONTRASTING AND IRRECONCILABLE VIEWS OF HUMANITY

Part A.

In recent days the Uniting Church in Australia has voted to allow same gender marriages to be conducted in its churches and by its ministers. Reflecting on this decision Rev. Dr Andrew Dutney has said,

...without disputing the biblical and theological validity of the traditional understanding of marriage – in fact the resolution reaffirms the Church’s policy statement originally adopted in 1997 – the Assembly has approved an additional statement on marriage for the Uniting Church, also biblically and theologically valid.

...Two doctrines of Christian marriage? Two expressions of that in “the rites of the Uniting Church in Australia”? How does that work?

Well, that’s the kind of thing that the Uniting Church was always supposed to be able to manage: unity in diversity... Holding together two doctrines and practices of marriage within the one diverse Church is the kind of thing that the UCA was built for.

Dr Dutney equates this ‘diversity’ of theology and biblical interpretation with the kinds of differences that existed between the prior denominations coming into union. But is that true? In section B of this paper I have laid out two views of humanity, one taken from the Scriptures and the other from the humanist philosophy overtaking Australian society. It attempts to show that the Assembly is, in fact, departing from the biblical view of humanity and embracing more and more of the secular humanist view. But these two views are not ‘two integrities’ that can be happily held as an expression of ‘unity in diversity’. They are, in fact, contrasting and irreconcilable doctrines of humanity which lead to vastly different outcomes

Turn now to Part B over the page, and then return to Part C below for some observations.

Part C. Observations:

1. These two views of humanity are contrasting and irreconcilable. Ultimately, in the life of the individual person, in the life of a Christian congregation, and in the ordering of the state, one or other of these views will prevail and the other will be rejected and excluded.
2. ‘Same-sex’ marriage is not an end-point decision, but rather a step along the way to completely reimagining humanity. There is more to come.
3. The kingdom of God is child-centred, and adults are accountable to our heavenly Father should we cause one of His little ones to stumble. In a humanist society the rights and needs of children are always subsumed under the ‘rights’ and wishes of adults.
4. In the cases of abortion, ‘same-sex’ marriage, sperm donation and surrogacy, it is adults who make these innovations to fulfil their wishes, and it is the children who pay for them. E.g. around 25% of all babies conceived in Australia are killed in the womb.
5. Wherever the authority of God is denied, the authority of the state assumes divine proportions leading to a totalitarian society. E.g. when the sharing of personal convictions makes other people feel ‘unsafe’, those convictions will be silenced by human authorities.
6. Nations are built upon the children they raise up. A godly nation which raises children who are physically, mentally, spiritually and relationally healthy will be strong, and will fend off the attempts of other nations to overthrow it. A nation which mars the development of its children with inadequate child/parent bonding, family breakdown, gender uncertainty, a narcissistic outlook, and an individualistic lifestyle, will raise up children who are unmotivated, rebellious, selfish, and untrained. Such a nation will eventually be overthrown by other nations keen to exploit its wealth and take its land.

Two contrasting and irreconcilable views of Humanity

The Biblical view	The Humanist view
Human beings are created by God, male and female. Gender is part of the <i>imago dei</i> (image of God) and is a given for each person.	A human being is what each person says they are. Gender is fluid and gender identity is self-defined.
Humanity is binary (male-female), and that is why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two become one flesh.	Humanity is individualistic, and the individual can have whatever associations or relationships they may choose.
Sexual intercourse with another person is reserved for married couples as the expression of their union as husband and wife.	Sexual intercourse with other people is at the discretion of the individual as an expression of their feelings at the time.
Marriage between a man and a woman is ordained by God. Those whom God has joined together let not man separate.	Marriage is a human and societal construct which has taken many forms in different times and cultures.
The glory of the man-woman union in marriage is revealed in, and is a reflection of, the marriage of the Lamb, Jesus Christ, and his bride, the church. As such it reflects God's relational nature, and His familial purpose to bring many sons and daughters to share in His eternal glory.	The good in marriage is simply that it expresses the desire of two people who love each other to be committed to each other for as long as they choose to be.
The life of the child in the womb is that of a sacred human person, created in the image of God. Even in the womb that child is seen and known by God.	Prior to birth, the foetus is simply developing tissue in the woman's womb, and she has the right to allow it to continue developing, or to remove that tissue if she wishes.
Every child has a biological mother and a father with whom they are deeply connected. Though not always possible, God's good plan is that each child might grow up living with their mother and father who make their children secure in the life-long covenant love of their marriage union.	The essential need of children is to be brought up by parenting adults who love them. Who the child lives with is the responsibility of the state which also has the power to determine parentage.
This family of father, mother and children reflects the nature and image of God. The purpose of God is that those created in His image might become part of the eternal family of God.	Family is simply a household of human beings who choose to identify as a family. This arrangement may take many forms.
It is the divine right and responsibility of parents to raise their children in good conscience and in the best interests of the children. In this they reflect the parental love of God our heavenly Father.	The right and responsibility for the upbringing of children rests with the state, which has power not only to determine who the child lives with, but also what they are taught about the nature of their humanity.
The authority to define humanity, gender, marriage and family rests with it's author and creator, God, and is revealed to us in His word.	The authority to define humanity, gender, marriage and family rests with human individuals and the state.
The love of God is revealed in the goodness of His creation and His laws which govern it. It is also revealed in His abundant grace in Jesus Christ who, in his life, death and resurrection, reconciles to God those who have fallen short of the glory of God.	Good is determined by 'what is right for you'. Failure and any resulting guilt are only in relation to humanly devised boundaries. The best way to reduce feelings of guilt is to declare all opinions to be equal, and to ensure a 'safe place'.