

Why 'gay marriage' is not good for Australia

By Rod James

Why marriage is a government recognised and registered legal bond

The question needs to be asked today, 'Why do governments of nations involve themselves in legally registering one type of domestic relationship of their citizens. The answer is two-fold:

1. It is in the interests of children to do so.
2. What is in the interests of children is in the interests of the generational progression of the nation as a whole.

It would seem that for governments marriage is about family, and family is about the raising and the well-being of children. Dr David van Gend, general practitioner in Toowoomba and a spokesman for the Family Council of Queensland recently wrote to the Australian newspaper,

Redefining marriage to include gay and lesbian couples would eliminate entirely in law, and weaken still further in culture, the basic idea of a mother and a father for every child.

Marriage is a compound right under Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; it is not only the right to an exclusive relationship, but the right to form a family. Therefore gay marriage includes the right to form a family by artificial reproduction, but any child created within that marriage would have no possibility of being raised by both mother and father.

Yet legalising same-sex marriage will inflict that deprivation on a child. That is why it is wrong, and that is why all laws are wrong that permit single people or same-sex couples to obtain a child by IVF, surrogacy, or adoption.

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The matrix of the human person

George Orwell once remarked, "We have now sunk to a depth at which the restatement of the obvious is the first duty of intelligent men." To restate the obvious about human life and well-being we need to look at the matrix in which that life is created and exists. This word, 'matrix', is both helpful and important in understanding what is truly good for a human being. A couple of definitions:

matrix - From Latin, *mater*, meaning "breeding female". Matrix was originally used for the uterus or womb, then for a supporting or enclosing structure.

matrix - A situation or surrounding substance within which something else originates, develops, or is contained.

So the womb is the matrix of the unborn child. However the womb itself has a matrix—the pregnant woman has a necessary matrix which is the relationship with the father of the child and indeed the whole family of which that woman and her unborn child are part. People in non-western cultures understand this as fundamental and essential. It is only in the artificial individualism of western cultures that the broader matrix for the child can be thought of as non-essential

To alter the obvious matrix of human generation, for the sake of a very small minority is to tamper with the 'womb' of the nation—the life-long love-union of a man and a woman, united in domestic and familial vocation, this is the wonderful matrix from which a strong and happy nation is born.

All of this is obvious, but we have now sunk to a depth at which the restatement of the obvious is the duty of all intelligent and courageous people. So this address is really about 'Why heterosexual marriage and family is vital for Australia, and, indeed, every other nation'. I will, therefore, proceed by talking about family, and then return to the matter of legal marriage.

The importance of mothers

The significance of mothers in the lives of their children is widely recognised in sentimental expressions of Australian culture. It is still important, however, to plainly state just how important they actually are. Recently Bill Muehlenberg wrote a piece for Mother's Day in which he said,

It is a no-brainer to declare that mothers are important. But we live in a no-brainer age in which the very concept of motherhood is now under attack.

...Numerous international studies have shown that maternal deprivation at an early age can affect the mother-child bonding process, and can impair a child's emotional, social and psychological development.

...More recent research has found that maternal separation can profoundly affect the brain's biochemistry, with lifelong consequences for growth and mental ability.

...Indeed, as one expert put it, the attachment relationship that a young child forges with his mother "forms the foundation stone of personality." Regular and prolonged detachment from the mother can demonstrably impair a child's intellectual and emotional development, and affect a child throughout his or her life.

Studies in bonding and attachment theory have shown that a child's emotional and mental well-being are inexorably tied up with continuous, sustained, stable physical and emotional contact between mother and child.

...as family expert Steve Biddulph writes, "It now appears that mother-baby interaction, in the first year especially, is the very foundation of human emotions and intelligence. In the most essential terms, love grows the brain. The capacities for what make us most human – empathy, co-operation, intimacy, the fine timing and sensitivity that makes a human being charismatic, loving, and self-assured – are passed from mother to baby, especially if that mother is herself possessed of these qualities, and supported and cared for, so that she can bring herself to enjoy and focus on the task."

CultureWatch, Bill Muehlenberg's commentary on issues of the day, *The Importance of Mothers*

The importance of fathers

The significance of fathers in the lives of their children gets much less press, but again research is revealing the truth of the matter. Fathers and closeness tend not to go together in our Australian culture. Mum, yes she has always been associated with closeness; she is always there. But fathers were often distant—they were away working, out on the tractor, at the office, out in the shed, leaving early for work and arriving home late. So fatherhood and closeness have not figured.

The pain of a distant or absent father is movingly expressed in the following poem by Ken Canfield. Ken began his working life as a drug dealer, but progressed to the point of being a world authority on marriage and family. His poem gives us some insight as to how that was able to happen.

Circles of pain

*One morning I stood at the window,
made cold from the outside rain,
and rubbed a circle on the steamy glass,
exposing beneath, the pane.*

*Through my circle, I saw my father
climb routinely into the car.
His job would keep him distant,
his work would take him far.*

*"Of course your father loves you.
Can't you see how he provides?
Just accept," my mother told me,
"that he keeps his love inside."*

*So I, too, learned the business
and made love a transactional art.
I sold my grades to buy his time.
I played sports to buy his heart.*

*Yet, I imagine that once my father
made his own circles on the pane.
I know his dad had left him.
He had not heard from him again.*

*And I imagine that, in his young heart,
he had made a solemn vow:
He would love his sons and give them time;
he would break the cycle now.*

*Yet despite his noble ambition,
my dad, too, soon became
another father, the circle unbroken,
the patterns still the same.*

*So as time passed by and our numbers grew,
I left home in my own car.
I never returned to mend the fences.
I never returned to star.*

*I never returned to share the pain I felt inside
and the grief I had learned to stuff.*

*No, it was more than I could handle,
but less than I could bluff.*

*Still, something inside me beckoned,
for I, too, had come of age.
I now had children of my own
that I had begun to encage.*

*No longer a boy, still I desired
a father's voice accepting of me.
Too often I wanted to scream and shout.
Too often I wanted to flee.*

*It was time to go, and wisely so,
to find that for which I yearned.
I couldn't make sense amidst the pretence
until I finally learned*

*That once, two thousand years ago,
the sky burst forth in rain.
It was a Son who had gone to work,
and a Father who felt the pain.*

*It was His whisper that drew me close,
a voice that caused no shame.
I found the Father of my great search,
and Abba is His name.*

Sadly, modern Western culture can reduce fathers to little more than sperm donors, but recent research is showing the enormous significance of fathers in the maturation and wellbeing of both girls and boys. Ken Canfield tells the story of a group of fathers and daughters that he took on a camp. On one day they all climbed to the top of a high hill, for something special that he had asked the fathers to prepare for. The weather was unpleasant and the climb hard. Ken tells what happened:

But when we finally reached the top, something extraordinary occurred. The blustery wind suddenly died down, the clouds parted, and rays of sunshine burst through, almost like a spotlight. It was as if we were on holy ground. For the next hour, the air stayed calm and warm.

Then one by one each father introduced his daughter, shared something special about her, and pronounced a blessing on her in front of the rest of us. As each father shared—talking about his pride in his daughter, her unique gifts, and his love for her—he broke down and wept at some point, no exceptions. Next, all the fathers gathered around the dad and daughter and prayed that God would bring the blessing to pass. The daughters, who had been weary and grumbling, all became attentive and bright-eyed. After hearing her father speak blessings to her, each one was relaxed, talking, and laughing. I still hear from dads and daughters who talk about that day and the difference it made. (from Ken Canfield, *They Call Me Dad: The Practical Art of Effective Fathering*)

Emphasizing fathers and fathering almost seems politically incorrect in our Western culture. But lurking in most of this culture's men and women is an unresolved father-relationship which continues to have a significant effect on the well-being and behaviour of the person.

Our mothers can say a "Yes" to our young lives that is warm and nurturing and wonderful, but it is our fathers who can say a "Yes" to us that is strong, authoritative and securing. Our earthly fathers may not have been able to speak that "Yes" to us, perhaps because their fathers did not speak it to them. Thankfully our Heavenly Father speaks His 'Yes' to us so fully in His Son, Jesus Christ, that we can be made totally secure in who we are as His children.

Messing with the matrix

In the artificial environment of western culture, aided as it is by medical technology, there is a relentless desire to mess with the matrix of human life. The illogicality of this is noted by Jim Wallace when he says: 'the Greens are swamping us with legislation to ensure the natural environment for every tree in Australia; they won't do the same for children'.

The following example illustrates the effects of the current inclination:

Lesbian couple want to help boy to become girl

A LESBIAN couple in California who say their 11-year-old son Tommy wants to be a girl named Tammy are giving their child hormone blockers that delay the onset of puberty, so that he can have more time to decide if he wants to change his gender.

The couple's supporters say the Hormone Blocking Therapy has only minor side effects and is appropriate for a child who is unsure of his gender.

Tommy's parents, Pauline Moreno and Debra Lobel, told CNN they support their child and feel this is the best way for him to find an answer to a question he has been asking all his life.

They say Tommy - whom they now call Tammy -- began taking GnRH inhibitors over the summer to give him more time to explore the female gender identity with which he associates.

Tommy began saying he was a girl when he was three years old, his parents said. He was learning sign language due to a speech impediment, and one of the first things he told his mothers was, "I am a girl." The child's parents also said Tommy threatened to mutilate his genitals when he was seven, and psychiatrists diagnosed a gender identity disorder. One year later, he began transitioning to Tammy.

After much deliberation with family and therapists, the child began taking hormone blockers a few months ago. The medication, which must be changed once a year, was implanted in the boy's upper left arm. Tommy will continue the treatment until he turns 14 or 15, at which point he will be taken off the blockers and pursue the gender he feels is the right one. (Adelaide Now 18-10-11)

Raised from the time of his conception in a female dominated environment it is unsurprising that Tommy would prefer to be a girl, and he has the kind of close family support to encourage him go in that direction.

Australia's social engineering experiments with parenting

Over the last 60-70 years there have been a number of social engineering experiments in Australia in which well-intentioned but badly informed adults have sought to engineer the lives of children by taking them out of their natural birth matrix in order to improve their life situations.

1. **The 'stolen generation'**. Part Aboriginal children (known as 'half-caste') were forcibly taken from their parents and relocated into institutions or given to white foster parents.
2. **The forced migration of children.** The recent film 'Sunshine and Oranges' tells the story of 130,000 children who were taken following the Second World War from their homes in Britain and sent to Australia for a new life of opportunity.
3. **The forced adoption of the babies of single mothers.** In many Australian settings in the 1950s and 60s the babies of single mothers were forcibly taken at birth and adopted out.

In each of these instances those children have grown up to protest as adults what was done to them as children, saying in effect, 'We acknowledge that you were well meaning in your objective of seeking a better life for us. However you have no idea what you did to us when you messed with our matrix by wrenching us out of our own families and forcibly engineering a substitute matrix'.

Will the next 'stolen generation' be children who are being engineered into homosexual families? In this case the engineering is not initiated to meet supposed needs of the child, but to fulfil the desire of adults to have children. Imagine how a boy might question the love of his lesbian mother:

"Mum, you say that, in your love for me, you took me away from my father and put me in the arms of another woman whom you called my second mother. You prevented my father from being recognised on my birth certificate and replaced him with a woman to whom I am not related. You have told me that I do not have a father, that I do not need a father, and that all necessary parenting of me can be supplied by two women. Mum, some kids do not have a father because of unpreventable circumstances, but I do not have a father because you did not want me to have one. Is this what you call your love for me, your son?"

This could also be the questioning by a girl of her 'gay' father, and given the high value put on mothering, it would sound even more distressing.

The marriage matrix matters

All of the above sets the scene for us to discern the nature and importance of marriage and family to our nation. The ontology of human life hinges upon a mother and a father bringing their unique inheritance to the life of their sons and daughters. (The word 'ontology' is based on the Latin word *ontos*, meaning 'being', so 'ontology' means 'things as they really are'.) Any alteration to the ontology of human development detracts measurably from the well-being of the offspring. Bill Muehlenberg again:

...A parent's absence or inaccessibility, either physical or emotional, can have a profound effect on a child's emotional health. Harvard psychiatrist Armand Nicholi has observed that individuals who suffer from severe nonorganic emotional illness have one thing in common: they all have experienced the "absence of a parent through death, divorce, a time demanding job or other reasons".

The selfish inclination is for a mother or father to love their children apart from or even over against the children's other parent. This can easily become a competition for the affection and loyalty of what become "*my children*". However, credible research has established that the best way for a father to love his children is to love their mother, and the best way for a mother to love her children is to love their father. What is happening in the family is reactive to what is happening in the marriage relationship.

Research among children has shown that the most widespread fear among children today is that their parents will split up. Pat Fagan, a well-known marriage and family researcher and counsellor in the USA, says that, when dealing with problem children, in 95% of cases he did not need to work directly with the children, but just with Mum and Dad. He says, "When Mum and Dad love each other the kids are OK. They thrive on the love that Mum and Dad have for each other."

Some say 'surely a loving gay family is better than a dysfunctional heterosexual family.' However, traditional families that are dysfunctional are not an argument for altering our nation's recognition of the natural matrix. Rather, they are an argument for recognising, upholding and resourcing it.

'Gay marriage'—the bridge to 'gay parenting' and 'gay families'

A significant number of homosexual couples do not have a strong aspiration to be included in marriage as it is traditionally understood, i.e. as life-long and sexually faithful. For some there is an agenda is to change marriage by lowering its high ideals.

It seems that the main reason for campaigning so strongly is that legal marriage brings with it a number of recognitions, one of which is the legitimacy of 'gay parenting' and 'gay families'. Access by homosexual couples to IVF and the opportunity to adopt or foster children are a matter of regulation. They could be changed if found unhelpful to children. But if 'gay marriage' becomes law these things will be the lawful right of those who are recognised by the state as married.

If marriage has to do with children, we are being worked on as a nation to bring us to the fantastical position of believing that it does not matter if the matrix of human life is the union of a man and a woman, or a man and a man, or a woman and a woman. For Australia to affirm these innovations it is necessary for our nation to erode the rights of children and to assert that children not only do not need, but are not entitled to the benefits of having a mother and a father.

Going down the slant road

When you are driving your car and you turn off the main road and go down a slant road, as long as you continue to drive along that road you must cross any bridges that you come to if you wish to continue. The alternatives are to pull over and remain stationary, or to turn around and get back on the main road.

The Uniting Church had turned down the slant road of affirming the validity of homosexual lifestyle and relationships. The first bridge we came to was the acceptance of practising homosexual people in leadership and ministry. We crossed this bridge in 2003 by passing Resolution 84 which gave congregations and presbyteries permission to have practising homosexual people in leadership and ministry if they wished to.

The next main bridge on this road is the first of two bridges that are quite close together. They are 'sacred union ceremonies' to celebrate same gender relationships, and 'gay marriage'. These bridges are close together because Uniting Network has indicated that they see the SUC as just a stepping stone to 'gay marriage'. At the moment the Uniting Church has pulled over and parked rather than continue on and cross these bridges. But the time is coming soon when we will have to choose one of the other two options—either cross these bridges or turn around and get back on the main road

When travelling a slant road the tendency is to think that crossing the next bridge will resolve controversy and bring peace. However each bridge crossed leads to another bridge, because on a slant road the number of bridges is literally unending.

Further down the slant road are bridges such as gay parenting, polygamy, group marriage, child marriage, incestuous marriage, open marriage, the removal of gender distinction and the right of the individual to choose their preferred gender. Supporters of each of these innovations are waiting down the road, ready to urge us to cross their bridge.

In any organisation whose life is governed by regulation, when the slant road becomes the main road then other roads are decreed off-limits for officers, employees and leaders within that organisation. That means that leaders and ministers who do not wish to cross the bridges that the Church is crossing will be marginalised and eventually excluded.

Australia on the slant road

All that we have seen above concerning this alternative road applies not only to the Uniting Church as an organisation, but also to Australia as a nation:

- As Australia goes down the slant road of affirming homosexuality it will come to all the bridges on that road.
- There will be campaigners at every bridge, insisting that the next bridge be crossed.
- Australia will either have to cross those bridges, dig in its heels part way along the journey, or turn around and get off that road.
- As the slant road becomes the main road in Australia all those who are not able, in good conscience, to cross the bridges that our nation has crossed will be censured and excluded from positions that act on behalf of the government (e.g. public servants, members of parliament, etc.) and professions that deal with the Australian public (e.g. teachers, doctors, social workers, etc.).

Christian churches—vocal and silent

Recently the Christian churches of Australia responded to the current push for ‘gay marriage’ by issuing a joint statement on marriage. It is a worthy document, and represents an excellent example of how the Christian churches can serve their nation with a collective voice. It was signed by 50 prominent leaders from most Christian Churches. Although the statement was a good expression of the Uniting Church’s stated view of marriage, the only signatory to the document from the UC was Dr Max Champion, National Chair of the ACC. The UC has a hair trigger on making public statements and issuing strong advice to governments about social issues, even when the Church has no stated policy on that topic. By contrast, even though the Church has a clearly stated theology of marriage, our leaders have so far refused to say anything publicly in the current debate about marriage in Australia.

The prohibited debate

When you are debating a topic and you know that your argument is weak, it may seem necessary to proceed, not by contending for your side of the debate, but by attempting to throw the opposition off their game. This is done on the sports field when a team ‘roughs up’ the opposition hoping that will distract them from playing the ball. Such a strategy is in fact a back-handed compliment—an indirect acknowledgement that one’s opposition feels the superior weight of your cause.

In the debate over ‘gay marriage’ the response towards anyone who advocates the heterosexual nature of marriage is definitely of the back-hander type. Indeed, it is more like a swipe with a four by two piece of hardwood! Without any attempt to engage opponents of ‘gay marriage’ in issue-based debate, they have been vehemently attacked and mockingly dismissed as ‘homophobic’, ‘hateful’, ‘narrow’, ‘bigoted’, ‘fundamentalist’, etc. This is, indeed, a back-handed compliment, albeit with the proverbial four by two.

The advocates of ‘gay marriage’ know that their case is an exercise in special pleading which flies in the face of the ontological matrix of human life. They therefore seek to avoid the obvious by launching a concerted personal attack on their opponents. Only courageous people who are willing to risk getting mud on their reputation will dare to oppose them. At such a time it becomes necessary to restate the obvious.