

Public Questions

Sex and gender

There has recently been an ideologically motivated push from some quarters to deny the intrinsic natural distinction between male and female as expressed by our Lord in Mark 10: 6-8 and to regard gender as fluid. This attempt at social engineering has been evident in the misleadingly titled Safe Schools program, in a recent proposal from Tasmania's Anti Discrimination Commission to change the requirements for formally registering a person's sex and in the same-sex marriage campaign. It has included attempts to sexualise ever younger children, notably via the equally misleadingly titled Respectful Relationships program for Victorian schools. My December article addressed same-sex marriage and this one will expand on it to give some background on the related issues.

Same sex marriage

With a federal election now expected on 2nd July, and the Coalition having promised a plebiscite on this question, while Labor is committed to introducing same sex marriage legislation and binding their parliamentarians to support it should they be elected, this has now become an election issue.

Registration of sex

The recent proposals from our Anti-Discrimination Commission to change the requirements for registration of a person's sex verged on farcical. They would deny the essentially binary biological nature of sex and create all manner of social problems just to accommodate those very rare individuals whose sex is ambiguous (intersex) or who experience gender dysphoria (i.e. their psychological perceptions of their own gender are in conflict with their biological sex).

Their proposed solution made no distinction between intersex people, those with gender dysphoria and anyone who merely fancies being of the opposite sex. It would have made the registration of a change of sex at will as easy as a change of name, even though no actual change had occurred, the only restriction being that this could only happen once per year (e.g. without any justification, someone could decide to be male in odd numbered years and female in even ones).

It is mind boggling to think of the real world consequences of one's sex being disconnected from biological reality to become just a matter of personal preference (imagine the medical and sporting implications for a start). And it is profoundly disturbing that a responsible government body could even consider such a radical proposal. Furthermore, this could thwart any rejection of same sex marriage in the plebiscite by allowing one of a same sex couple to register as a different sex then change back after the marriage. I have lodged a submission on behalf of Tasmanian Baptists opposing this measure and suggesting some alternative approaches for intersex or gender dysphoric people.

Safe Schools

It took some time for the true radical agenda of those behind the federally funded Safe Schools program and the actual nature of the program to become widely known. It also presents gender as a personal choice disconnected from biological sex and promotes the indoctrination of young children with these ideas, providing links to some websites promoting highly questionable and even dangerous activity. Although it is (mis)represented as an anti-bullying program, it hardly mentions the various other grounds on which most bullying is based, but focuses almost exclusively on sexuality.

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Thankfully, the federal government has not committed to renew its funding once it expires next year and has required it to be put under closer government control, with objectionable links removed from its website. The Tasmanian government has said it will develop its own anti-bullying program, but what form that will take has yet to be seen.

What can we do?

The things we value can all too easily be lost if we just remain silent.

Parents who are concerned about the way that marriage, sex and sexuality are represented to their children should keep a close eye on what is being taught in their schools.

As my experience tells me that the current definition of marriage will have near universal support in our churches, but unfortunately I will be out of the country for most of June and July, I would urge all those who care about marriage to get behind the Australian Christian Lobby's campaign to support candidates willing to defend the current definition of marriage. Those willing to assist in letterboxing or by promoting the cause within their own church may contact the ACL's Mark Brown at mark.brown@acl.org.au, who can put you in touch with the local campaign coordinator for your electorate.

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