

There is certainly a problem in our schools, but statutory sex education is not the solution

Family Education Trust director, Norman Wells, responds to calls to put sex and relationships education on the curriculum in all schools

Not so long ago, it was being claimed that statutory sex and relationships education (SRE) in schools holds the key to reducing teenage pregnancy rates and the incidence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among young people. But it is rare to hear that claim being advanced today. The argument that has come to the fore over recent months is that providing compulsory SRE in all schools from the age of four is the only sure way to keep children safe from sexual harassment and sexual violence.

According to the chief executive of Barnardo's, Javed Khan: 'Compulsory SRE lessons for all children must be introduced as soon as possible - it will help prevent children being groomed and sexually exploited.'¹

In its much-publicised report on sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools, the House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee asserted that: 'Good quality SRE is shown to have a positive impact in helping to reduce sexual harassment and sexual violence.'²

Columnist and human rights activist, Joan Smith, who co-chairs the Mayor of London's Violence Against Women and Girls Panel, suggests that the demand for a change in the law is well-nigh universal. She writes that Theresa May and her Cabinet:

have...been told by just about everyone that the best way to keep children safe is to insist that every school in the country teaches high-quality...SRE and the broader subject of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education – no ifs, no buts, and no exemptions for faith schools.³

Fever pitch

Over recent weeks calls for compulsory sex education in all schools have reached fever pitch. Barely a week goes by without campaigners identifying or creating an additional hook on which to hang yet another headline to put further pressure on the government. And in Parliament

itself, every effort is being made to keep the issue on the boil.

- On 10 January, Stella Creasy MP moved an amendment to the Children and Social Work Bill at committee stage;
- Ten days later Caroline Lucas MP spoke in support of her Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (Statutory Requirement) Bill;
- The following week saw Maria Miller MP, chair of the House of Commons Women & Equalities committee, initiate an adjournment debate on sex and relationship education; and
- Just over a week later, Diana Johnson MP secured a Westminster Hall debate on statutory sex and relationships education.

The sex education lobby anticipates that further opportunities to make the case for compulsory SRE in Parliament may be limited in the foreseeable future. As Stella Creasy has written, 'With the maelstrom of Brexit, it is difficult to see this being considered a priority for additional Parliamentary time. Thus legislative opportunities to actually make SRE happen are few and far between.'⁴



Norman Wells

Major problem

No one doubts that sexual harassment and violence is a major problem in many schools. And no one denies the challenges presented by the ready availability of online pornography and the relatively new phenomenon of 'sexting'. But is there any evidence that teaching SRE to every pupil in every school will put everything right?

The type of sex education favoured by advocates of making the subject a compulsory part of the curriculum in all schools (see box overleaf) is already being taught in many of our schools, but still the problem of sexual harassment persists. In fact, the evidence from recent serious case reviews suggests that the relativistic approach advocated by the leading campaigners for statutory sex education is not the solution, but is rather part of the problem.

With its emphasis on sexual pleasure divorced from the context of a lifelong loving union, the comprehensive sex education favoured by the Sex Education Forum and its associated groups creates

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Statutory sex education not the solution

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in young people the expectation that they will have a series of casual sexual relationships. As the social commentator, Cassandra Hough has remarked: 'It is no wonder that the hookup/friends-with-benefits/anything-goes sexual culture has become normalised among today's emerging adults.'⁵

Moral confusion

It is within that culture that child sexual exploitation has been allowed to go undetected, and vulnerable young people have found themselves without the protection they desperately need.

A serious case review published by the Bristol Safeguarding Children Board last year notes 'an underlying confusion for practitioners in distinguishing between underage but consensual sexual activity between peers and child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation'.⁶ But that confusion does not exist in a vacuum. It is rather 'rooted in the complex and contradictory cultural, legal and moral norms around sexuality, and in particular teenage sexual experimentation'.⁷ Put simply, a major part of the problem lies in the moral confusion that has resulted from an abandonment of moral absolutes.

The same theme features in the 2015 serious case review into child sexual exploitation in Oxfordshire. Having made the observation that there were times when 'confidentiality was put before

protection',⁸ the report suggests that for at least some professionals this related to 'a reluctance to take a moral stance on right and wrong, and seeing being non-judgmental as the overriding principle'. The Oxfordshire report further states that: '[T]here was...an acceptance of a degree of underage sexual activity that reflects a wider societal reluctance to consider something "wrong",' and argues that 'action to prevent harm' should always take precedence over 'action to be non-judgmental'.

Reluctance

In a most telling comment, the report notes that 'the reluctance in many places, both political and professional, to have any firm statements about something being "wrong"' is among the factors that create 'an environment where it is easier for vulnerable young people/children to be exploited. It also makes it harder for professionals to have the confidence and bravery to be more proactive on prevention and intervention.'⁹

In the light of these observations from the serious case reviews, we should be wary of any approach to sex and relationships education that is reluctant to declare anything 'wrong'. Children, young people and professionals alike all need a clear moral compass in order to safely negotiate the confused and confusing landscape that lies before them.

Notes

1. 'Children want safer lives', Barnardo's news release, 11 January 2017.
2. House of Commons Women & Equalities Committee, *Sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools*, HC91, 13 September 2016.
3. Joan Smith, 'By ignoring sex education, ministers are risking children's safety', *Guardian*, 27 January 2017.
4. Stella Creasy, 'The Government could be about to blow its last chance for years to sort out sex education in Britain', *Daily Telegraph*, 9 January 2017.
5. Cassandra Hough, 'Learning about Love: How Sex Ed Programs Undermine Happy Marriages', Witherspoon Institute, *Public Discourse*, 29 October 2014.
6. Jenny Myers and Edi Carmi, *The Brooke Serious Case Review into Child Sexual Exploitation: Identifying the strengths and gaps in the multi-agency responses to child sexual exploitation in order to learn and improve*, Final Report, Bristol Safeguarding Children Board, March 2016.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Alan Bedford, *Serious Case Review into Child Sexual Exploitation in Oxfordshire: from the experiences of Children A, B, C, D, E, and F*, approved by the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board, 26 February 2015.
9. *Ibid.*

What kind of sex and relationships education do the campaigners want all schools to teach?

All too often, when campaigners call for statutory sex and relationships education (SRE) in all schools, they fail to define what they mean. True, sometimes they use the adjectives 'high quality' or 'age-appropriate', but that doesn't get us very far, because such terms mean different things to different people. The same goes for the words 'comprehensive' and 'inclusive'. Exactly how 'comprehensive' and precisely how 'inclusive' do they want schools to be? Is nothing to be off-limits? Are no types of sexual conduct to be excluded? Assuming that there are to be at least some limits, where are the lines to be drawn?

One of the arguments advanced in support of making SRE a statutory curriculum subject in all schools is that it is the only way to ensure a consistent approach so that all children receive their 'entitlement'. But what kind of SRE would they like to see all schools required to deliver?

The Sex Education Forum describes itself as 'the national authority on sex and relationships education' and includes among its more prominent members the PSHE Association, Brook and the *fpa*. The Forum's toolkit, *Are you getting it right?* contains a series of activities designed to encourage pupils to share their views about what they want to learn in SRE, how they want to learn, and what support and advice they want and need. The activity on a 'moral and values framework' makes it clear that the purpose is 'not to agree the rights and wrongs' of various statements, 'but rather to discover the range of opinions on the subject'.¹

More recent guidance from the PSHE Association places a strong emphasis on 'non-judgmental classroom discussion', which is described as 'a key feature of high-quality PSHE education'.²

This same commitment to relativism is reflected in 'supplementary advice', produced in 2014 by the Sex Education Forum in association with the PSHE Association and Brook.³ The advice is devoid of references to morality, marriage or family life. While it talks about treating sex as 'a normal and pleasurable fact of life', apart from stressing the importance of consent, it has nothing to say about the moral context in which sex is to be enjoyed. There is not even a reference to the need for fidelity and exclusivity. It is as though such considerations are completely irrelevant to SRE.

This is the type of SRE that the leading campaigners would like to see consistently imposed on all schools, both primary and secondary.

Notes

1. Anna Martinez and Lesley de Meza, *Are you getting it right? A toolkit for consulting young people on sex and relationships education*, Sex Education Forum, 2008.
2. PSHE Association, *Teaching about consent in PSHE Education at key stages 3 and 4*, March 2015.
3. Brook, PSHE Association, Sex Education Forum, *Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) for the 21st Century*, 2014.

Welsh smacking ban would present a threat to children and families in Wales and beyond

The Welsh Government is planning to introduce legislation to remove the defence of reasonable chastisement. Although the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children, Carl Sargeant, has told the Welsh Assembly that 'this isn't about legislation to criminalise parents',¹ the removal of the legal defence would make it a criminal offence for a parent to administer even the mildest of smacks to a naughty child.

The law as it stands

Although the Welsh Assembly has previously signalled its support for legislation to remove the legal defence, there has been uncertainty as to whether such reform would lie within the Assembly's legal competence, since it would involve a change to the criminal law. However, at a late stage, ministers at Westminster quietly slipped an unannounced amendment into the Wales Bill, which explicitly gives the Welsh Assembly the power to legislate on 'parental discipline'. The Wales Act 2017 has now passed into law, having received Royal Assent on 31 January.

The Welsh Government is expected to hold a public consultation during the summer, before proceeding with legislation in the autumn. Darren Millar, a Conservative member of the Welsh Assembly, asked Mr Sargeant whether he accepted that many parents who love their children use reasonable chastisement sparingly as a method of discipline, and that the excessive use of other forms of discipline can be equally abusive when not used correctly. The Cabinet Secretary failed to respond to the question, but stressed that the legislation would be accompanied by 'a package of tools' to encourage parents to use 'positive parenting' approaches that do not include smacking.²

The wider impact

If the Welsh Government were to legislate against smacking, it would not only affect families in Wales, but also visitors to the country from other parts of the UK and further afield. In a submission to legislators, senior lawyer Emyr Lewis highlighted the implications for holidaymakers:

[I]f...the Assembly legislated to ban the smacking of children..., a parent being tried in Nottingham on a charge of assaulting his or her child while on holiday in Aberystwyth would not be able to raise the defence of reasonable chastisement, even though he could do so if the incident had occurred in Nottingham. It is of course unlikely that Nottingham magistrates would end up hearing the case described above. Most likely it would be heard in Aberystwyth.³

Family Education Trust director, Norman Wells, told the *Daily Mail*:

It is parents, and not national governments, who bear the responsibility for caring for their children, nurturing them, and correcting them where necessary. Generations of parents have proved the benefit of the occasional moderate smack to correct their children's behaviour, and research continues to show its positive effects when used in the context of a loving home where children are respected and cherished.⁴

Notes

1. The National Assembly of Wales, Record of proceedings, 22 June 2016.

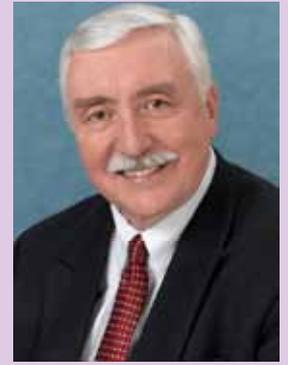
2. *Ibid.*

3. Emyr Lewis, 'Observations submitted to the Joint Meeting of the Constitutional and Legal Affairs Committee of the National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Affairs Committee of the House of Commons' as part of its inquiry into the draft Wales Bill.

4. Steve Doughty, 'Parents to be hit by smacking ban', *Daily Mail*, 5 January 2017.

The Three Love Diet

Dr Patrick Fagan



There is a very simple fact that social scientists have neglected to make clear to the country. Only a fraction of our children are fully nurtured, relationally, because of the breakdown in family structure over the last fifty years. Children in single parent homes get a one-love diet while children in always-intact married families get a three-love diet.

Only one adult love is present in the single parent family while three adult loves are present in the always-intact married family (the love of mother, the love of father and the love between mother and father). The love between mother and father is especially powerful. It makes a big difference in their lives and to the social infra-structure of the country. One set of adults can bear a lot more weight and traffic than the other. For instance: just one of the many critical tasks is the modeling of living in a world of male and female where both cooperate on serious and significant tasks. The child raised in the single parent family has less chance of learning that. These are uncomfortable facts, but facts nonetheless. And they have huge consequences.

Some will object, with good reasons, that the single parent family can produce strong adults--and many do. But, on average, the children of single parent families do not become as strong as adults as do the children of married parents (even as single parents often give heroically of all the love they have). This is tough for many to take and in academia many still deny it. It is a sad and strange phenomenon but *many social science professors* are quite anti-scientific; they deny or avoid the disquieting data as a form of short-sighted 'kindness'.

Moving from a single love diet to a three-love diet

On average the single-love diet cannot deliver what the three-love diet does. How do we as a society move from the single love diet to the three love diet for all children? The answer: restoration of a culture based on -- bear with me -- chastity. Without a culture of chastity society does not get a culture of strong marriages. Folk may laugh but there is no alternative and savvy parents, *single or married*, work hard to transmit this to their children for everybody's sake—for the young folk's own future, the future of the grandchildren, and for a more peaceful old age future for the grandparents.

What makes it possible for an adolescent to come up with such a resolve? How do we grow such young people? Parents cultivate it be they married or single by telling the truth about the relationship between chastity and life-long love between a man and a woman. And the data show that teenagers (deep down) welcome their parents when they raise these issues.

Single parents have a tougher task here, and it is therefore one of the most critical projects for our society. There is a need for a movement among single parents, a movement to raise chaste children, chaste teenagers, so that they will have the happiness of being at the wedding of their children, and their grandchildren. Such a movement needs alongside it a solidarity movement of everyone else to cheer them on and help them. This is the infra-structure work we need most if we are to have future citizens who can take over running a country.

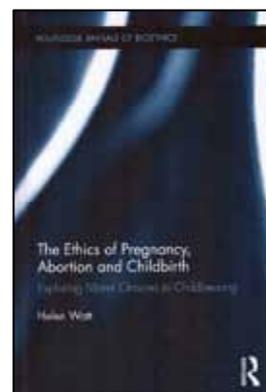
It is amazing how sex, children, marriage, chastity and the future are all intertwined. It is time for all families to link together to pull this off for the next generation. Everything else in society is connected to this. Everything.

• Patrick Fagan is founder and director of the Marriage and Religion Research Institute (MARRI). This article was first published by MARRI on 1 December 2016 and is reproduced here by kind permission.

The Ethics of Pregnancy, Abortion and Childbirth: Exploring Moral Choices in Childbearing

Helen Watt, Routledge, 2016, 157pp, £85.00 (hb)
ISBN 978-1138188082

Helen Watt is a former director and now Senior Research Fellow at the Anscombe Bioethics Centre in Oxford and offers a here a challenging and seemingly expensive read. However, both her economy of writing and the extensive use of endnotes enable her to encompass more ideas and topics than many books twice the size. It is a comprehensive, fascinating and worthwhile treatment of the subject.



In her introduction, Dr Watt states her aim is to primarily explore pregnancy in all its moral aspects. However, since such debate most frequently centres on the status of the unborn child, abortion is inevitably discussed at some length. The first chapter *The Uni-Personal Pregnancy* focuses on the fetus and explores various theories of personhood. Dr Watt concludes that pregnancy involves the linking of two human subjects and argues that there are many thorny issues for those who reject equal status but consider the fetus at least as a significant other. She writes: 'Birth is a change of location, not a change of identity.'

Positive duty

The next chapter, *The Neighbourly Pregnancy*, shifts the focus to the pregnant woman and the question of what she might reasonably be said to owe the 'other' she supports. While it may take a 'splendid Samaritan' to give aid to a stranger, Dr Watt argues that we have a *positive duty* to refuse to perform a violent and invasive act that will harm, or even kill, another.

"Birth is a change of location, not a change of identity."

The third chapter, *The Maternal Pregnancy*, is by far the longest and focuses on the pregnant woman herself by asking whether becoming pregnant in itself makes one a mother rather than a helpful assisting Good Samaritan. Dr Watt considers the rights conferred upon a woman by virtue of her becoming pregnant through an exploration of the case of pregnancy in women rendered unconscious by trauma and the case of women who are raped. Though such examples are generally raised as those where abortion may be most justifiable, Dr Watt contends that, in both circumstances, an abortion would be 'a new invasive act, fully avoidable, which would make the

woman's own invaded body the unwitting site of a violent invasion of her child's'. She further argues powerfully that the maternal role cannot *simply* be chosen by those who want to parent a particular child. There are several moving personal accounts from women who have become pregnant through the violation of rape that illustrate this. Dr Watt writes: 'I believe that to encourage a woman to have an abortion is to add more violence to her life. The fact that she is still alive should give her an added reason to cherish the innocent life growing inside her. Two wrongs will never make a right.'

The chapter goes on to consider a seemingly exhaustive array of related topics – pregnancy, control and feeling of control, pregnancy and guardianship, prenatal testing, maternal and materno-fetal treatments in pregnancy and the conflicts that can arise from them, life-threatening pregnancies, ectopic pregnancy and premature delivery.

The section on ectopic pregnancy made me uneasy as a former clinician, as Dr Watt does seem to have considerable unease ethically about 'intentional removal of the embryo (with a relatively undamaged tube)' rather than expectant management or removal when the tube is damaged. However she recognises the tenuousness of her own ethical position here in immediately acknowledging that surgical removal at an early stage seems 'clearly justifiable' and 'arguments against it seem well-nigh incomprehensible, in view of the risks this could avoid'.

'Consumerish' attitudes

The Spousal Pregnancy, the fourth and final chapter, looks at the way in which pregnancy affects parenting and society as a whole and considers whether there are morally speaking 'better and worse ways to begin a pregnancy...and if so what these ways might be'. In making fetal reduction in multiple pregnancies from IVF her first topic here, Dr Watt makes a convincing case that 'the 'consumerish' attitudes of ART [assisted reproductive technology] doctors and

patients to unborn ART offspring' stem from the 'consumerish' structures of ARTs themselves. Not all parents requesting IVF however would contemplate the creation of untransferred embryos, let alone accept fetal reduction and may rightly resist (and feel diminished by) the implication that users of ARTs are merely 'commissioners of the child-product assembled...[taking] owner type attitudes towards it'. Furthermore parents who conceive naturally are certainly not immune from those attitudes either!

This final chapter also explores donor pregnancies, 'embryo adoption', pregnancy intimacy and sexuality, and male support of pregnancy. Dr Watt concludes by claiming that pregnancy tests our commitment to both human equality and to the bodily nature of human moral subjects. Pregnancy, though it may be burdensome, is not an illness. Pregnancy is maternal, involving two subjects whose relationship is familial. It is to be celebrated and it should be supported even for those for whom it is not a cause for celebration:

We should not lose sight of the joy of having children – children seen as a gift, not a product – as we support each other through the obstacles that may cloud or obviate that joy.

Though I suspect few will agree with Dr Watt on every point, she makes her arguments clearly and carefully and within this relatively short volume she explores a wide range of issues some of which I have never seen discussed anywhere else. Most readers will find something to challenge existing views and to stimulate fresh thought about the ethics of pregnancy.

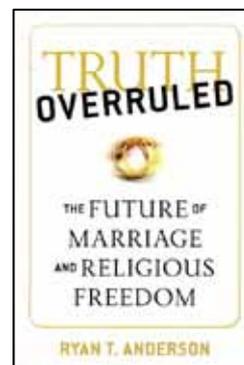
Dr Trevor Stammers

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Truth Overruled: The Future of Marriage and Religious Freedom

Ryan T Anderson, Regnery Publishing, 2015, 259pp, US\$16.99 ISBN 978-1621574514



In this frank and sober consideration of the longer-term consequences of redefining marriage, Ryan Anderson argues that ‘we are sleepwalking into an unprecedented cultural and social revolution’. He warns: ‘If the law teaches a falsehood about marriage, it will make it harder for people to live out the truth about marriage.’

The author is a Senior Research Fellow at the Heritage Foundation and the founder of *Public Discourse*, the online Journal of the Witherspoon Institute. As the co-author with Professor Robert George and Sherif Girgis of *What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense*, Dr Anderson has established a reputation for clear and incisive thinking and in that regard the present volume does not disappoint.

Dr Anderson reasons that if intense, emotional feeling is sufficient to constitute a marriage, then there is no reason why marriage has to be permanent, limited to two people, or sexually exclusive. As people internalise this new vision of marriage, the institution will become less of a stabilising force. Further, if opposition to same-sex marriage is equated with irrational bigotry, we can expect to face a serious threat to freedom of conscience and religious liberty.

In seeking to rebuild a marriage culture, Dr Anderson writes, our first step will be to protect our freedom to live in accordance with the truth about marriage as the lifelong union of one man and one woman. His purpose in writing this book is to equip everyone to defend their families, schools, businesses and churches with reasoned arguments drawn from philosophy, jurisprudence, political science and social science.

Harmful consequences

After an opening chapter in which he sets out the truth about marriage, Dr Anderson identifies four harmful consequences that flow from its redefinition: (i) the needs of children will be subordinated to the desires of adults; (ii) the marital norms of monogamy, exclusivity and permanence will be weakened; (iii) in a weakened marriage culture, more unborn children will be at risk; and (iv) law and culture will seek to eradicate traditional views through economic, social and legal pressure.

Dr Anderson writes: ‘Pretending as a matter of law that men and women are interchangeable, that “monogamish” relationships work just as well as monogamous relationships, that “throuples” are the same as couples, and that “wedlease” is preferable to wedlock will only lead to

more broken homes, more broken hearts, and more intrusive government.’

In his analysis of the landmark 2015 US Supreme Court ruling by a 5-4 decision that ‘same-sex couples may exercise the fundamental right to marry in all States’, Dr Anderson notes that the majority verdict assumes that marriage is an essentially genderless institution. In a chapter entitled, ‘Bake me a cake, bigot!’, he proceeds to give examples of people whose livelihoods and reputations have come under attack because of the conscientious stand they have taken for the truth about marriage. The cases cited are American, but similar cases are occurring on this side of the Atlantic as well.

The observation is made that ‘religious liberty claims in connection with same-sex marriage have never been about turning away certain *persons* or *groups*, but about not endorsing certain *actions* or *ceremonies*’.

‘Not like race’

The chapter heading, ‘Anti-discrimination law: Why sexual orientation is not like race’ speaks for itself. Dr Anderson points out that laws based on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) are not based on objective traits, but on subjective and unverifiable identities. ‘Race has nothing to do with marriage, but marriage has everything to do with uniting the two halves of humanity – men and women – as husbands and wives and as mothers and fathers committed to any children they bring into the world. So while marriage must be color-blind, it cannot be blind to sex.’

In a chapter simply entitled ‘Victims’, Dr Anderson considers the effects of re-

defining marriage on children raised by same-sex couples. He critiques the alleged ‘scientific consensus’ about there being no difference between same-sex parenting and being raised by a married mother and father and considers the evidence that same-sex marriage contributes to a decline in marriage rates and fertility rates.

Children raised by same-sex couples are invariably deemed homophobic if they express dissatisfaction about their upbringing, but some courageous adults are now beginning to speak out. Heather Barwick, for example, writes:

It’s only with some time and distance from my childhood that I’m able to reflect on my experience and recognise the long-term consequences that same-sex parenting had on me. And it’s only now, as I watch my children loving and being loved by their father each day, that I can see the beauty and wisdom in traditional marriage and parenting.

Although a true understanding of marriage and the family is currently out of favour among our political, business, academic and cultural elites, Dr Anderson concludes on a positive note by outlining a strategic approach to rebuilding a marriage culture. He recognises that this will take time, but argues that the truth can prevail before long and be tolerated even sooner. He concludes: ‘In this struggle to preserve marriage...we need to take a long view, not counting the immediate wins or losses, but rebuilding, over decades perhaps, the intellectual and moral infrastructure of a society that can once again appreciate the truth about marriage.’

Recordings from the 2016 conference now online

Video recordings of addresses from last year’s Family Education Trust conference are now available for free download on YouTube:

- **James Bartholomew** – The state, the media, academia and feminism vs the family
- **Dr Calum Mackellar** – The ethics of artificial gametes

Recordings of papers given at previous conferences are also available for free download. These include Professor Kathryn Ecclestone on therapeutic education, Professor John Haldane on the philosophical foundations of the family, Professor Glynn Harrison on self-esteem ideology, and Professor Mark Pike on C S Lewis and character education.

- **These are all available at:** <https://www.youtube.com/user/familyeducationtrust>

State vs Family: The Tyranny of the ‘Emerging Orthodoxy’

In a recent article published in the online journal, *Public Discourse*, the UK human rights barrister, Paul Diamond (pictured) noted that, while in the past, state agencies only intervened in family life when it was in the ‘best interests of the child’, their powers are now being exercised to advance an ideological agenda.

The article highlights three recent UK cases which demonstrate that ‘the new ideology of sex, gender, and family has some powerful allies, including government agencies that have the statutory powers to expand and enforce this secular worldview.

- The first case concerns a mother who believes her child to be transgender.
- The second concerns a refusal by parents to acquiesce in their daughter’s desire to change her sex.
- And the third concerns the refusal of a public authority even to consider a married couple for adoption because of the couple’s belief that all children should have both a mother and a father.

Having analysed each case in turn, Mr Diamond makes the following comments:

Legally, the term ‘harm’ has traditionally focused on neglect or ill treatment of a child... The state is now redefining ‘harm’ to include a whole array of new sexual and lifestyle rights. This expanding definition is eroding the boundary between family and state, and it enables state intervention in family life in all kinds of circumstances. In other words, it represents a significant intrusion into the sacred field of family and private life. The proponents of the new orthodoxy have a distinct conception of morality. One of its most distinct features is that public authorities expect all private citi-



zens to conform their lives to the moral framework accepted and promulgated by the state.

This fundamentally illiberal concept is backed by the statutory authorities and increasingly dictates how people can run their businesses, express their convictions at work, and raise their children. Nowhere is the clash more apparent than in the field of sexual ethics and religious conviction. Expanding the definition of harm to include dissent from progressive orthodoxy on sexuality has given the state licence to interfere in family life and to punish those who do not adhere to the new ideology.

State powers are based on and traditionally limited to being used in the ‘best interests of the child’, but... these powers are [now being] exercised in the best interests of new ideological norms. Parents who do not facilitate the wishes of a young child to be treated as a member of the opposite sex may well be subject to state intervention on grounds that they are ‘harming’ their child. While many of the issues relating to transgenderism are likely to be similar to issues of sexual orientation, transgenderism takes the conflict a stage further...

The truth is that all parents lead, guide, and persuade their children as they fulfill one of the primary callings of parenthood: that is, to impart a moral code to their children. But the new illiberal government orthodoxy, and the zeal of those who promote it, has caused our statutory authorities to become dysfunctional. Publicly funded agencies often appear to have no regard for true liberalism or the rights of an individual. Rather they have become proselytizing agents that seek to advance their own fixed agenda. The only feasible way forward is to strengthen parental rights. The alternative is not utopia, but a kind, dogmatic, and infantile chaos.

• Paul Diamond, ‘State vs. Family: The Tyranny of the “Emerging Orthodoxy”’, *Public Discourse*, 9 December 2016.

The real agenda of the transgender movement

Most people assume that the objective of the transgender movement is simply to protect from discrimination the tiny minority of people who identify as something other than their birth sex. However, it is much more far-reaching than that.

As the social commentator Stella Morabito has observed:

Transgenderism is an ideology that is based on the presumption that all human beings have something called a ‘gender identity that may or may not match the sex they were assigned at birth’... It basically aims to legally erase male and female sex distinctions...

The implications are vast — for our language, for our relationships, for preserving a free society. There can be no question that all of the gender identity anti-discrimination laws amount to little more than censorship laws, intended to modify everybody’s behavior and everybody’s language on pain of punishment.

So, in short, the transgender movement is operating as a vehicle for conformity of thought. And in the end, that means it is a vehicle for dismantling freedom — in the name of freedom — and for building the power of the state. In the end, it puts laws into place that abolish the right to free expression and suppress independent thought. The power of the state enters that vacuum, as it always does under such circumstances.

Morabito, who holds a Masters degree in Russian and Soviet History and writes widely in social and political periodicals and journals, identifies four features of the transgender movement that demonstrate its role as a vehicle for increasing the power of the state:

- 1. Transgenderism is such an extreme form of individualism that accommodating it in law will only create a vacuum for state power. By its very nature it demands that an individual’s inner sense of reality trump any commonly held understanding of reality. This makes it unsustainable. Its extreme individualism demands the breakdown of society’s mediating institutions — such as family, faith, and private associations — that serve as buffer zones that protect the individual from state meddling.*
- 2. Transgenderism sows chaos into the language, requiring us all — universally and without exception — to accept a seismic change in the definition of what it means to be human, and what relationships mean, particularly family relationships. Freedom of speech and association are casualties.*
- 3. It requires a very aggressive programme of censorship in order to sustain itself and prop up its illusions over any commonly understood reality.*
- 4. It depends on a very aggressive campaign of agitation and propaganda to condition people to get with the programme.*

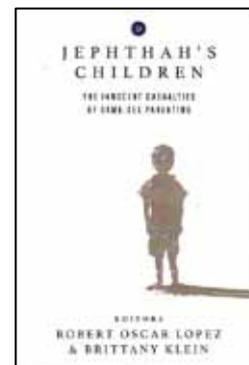
It thereby sows the conditions for totalitarianism. We have no choice but to speak out in the face of its censorship.

• Stella Morabito, ‘The Transgender Movement is a Vehicle for Censorship and State Power’, 28 February 2016 <http://stellamorabito.net/>

Jephthah's Children: The innocent casualties of same-sex parenting

Edited by Robert Oscar Lopez and Brittany Klein

Wilberforce Publications, 2016, 246pp, £9.99, ISBN 978-0957572592



'This book is an uncensored chronicle of everything that has gone wrong because of the movement to normalise same-sex parenting.' So Robert Lopez commences his Preface to a volume that tells the stories of people with firsthand experience of being raised by same-sex parent figures. Both of the editors were themselves brought up by lesbians and they write to help the general reader to understand why something which is viewed as beneficial by so many has been harmful to so many more.

There are some pithy quotes. For example: 'A society that compels people to think things that aren't true, say things they do not believe, and live in fear of retaliation, is one that will lose whatever war it thinks it is waging.' And: 'Parent-hood was designed to entail grown-ups sacrificing their own ambitions and desires for the sake of children. *Not the other way around.*'

Over many years, Robert Lopez has worked with adults who were raised by same-sex couples. Here they have the opportunity to tell their stories. He notes:

Generally they are respectful and grateful to the adults who raised them, but they are also keenly aware of the extent to which such adults may have used, abused and manipulated them for their own selfish purposes. They can love and feel fondness for a guardian and still know the person was self-absorbed and callous to their personal hurt. And many of them are mad about what happened.

Child protection

Lopez writes out of a burning passion for the protection of children:

Lesbian mums have done something cruel by forcing kids to grow up with a gaping void that their peers never feel. There are children whose fathers die, of course, but most often these children have a tombstone to visit and their widowed mothers will sit them down and tell them sentimental tales about what their father was like. That's not like having a lesbian mum who can't bear the thought of your dad, the reflection of you as a male, sharing your home and actually being part of your life.

I used to be timid about criticising lesbian mums, but not anymore. People have been too reserved about telling them to their faces that their families are abusive and their decision to deprive children of fathers a gross crime... Every child has a father. The lesbian couple raising a child has simply decided to steal the child from his father and to steal the father from his child. That's wrong.

Sexual confusion

Dawn Stefanowicz relates how around 30 per cent of children raised by same-sex couples subsequently identify as homo-

sexual or bisexual, and almost all children raised in such homes experience some degree of sexuality confusion. She writes of the challenges that she has had to overcome and is conscious that she will never be entirely free from the negative consequences of not growing up with a married mother and father.

Jephthah's Children includes brief accounts of the stories of dozens of people raised by same-sex couples, together with reflections by other writers, addressing assisted reproductive technology and surrogacy among other issues. With over half the volume authored by

Robert Lopez, the book has something of an uneven feel.

It is nonetheless of immense value for giving a voice to people who, hitherto, have had to suffer in silence. The short chapter by Stella Morabito is particularly insightful. She argues that:

Social acceptance of genderless marriage is guiding society towards a major shift in power from individuals to the state... Since same-sex couplings depend on third parties for reproduction, they invite government regulation on a massive scale, not just for same-sex couples, but eventually, in the name of 'equality', for all families.

Same-sex parenting: Innocent casualties speak

Jeremy Deck: 'Homosexuals are often able to surround themselves with like-minded individuals in the thriving gay culture. Spouses, parents or siblings of homosexuals do not usually immerse themselves in a homosexual environment once their loved ones "come out". Children, however, are in a sense forced to live a lifestyle they have not chosen.'

Meg: 'We have to recognise that all children of same-sex parents are being raised in brokenness. Something precious and irreplaceable has been taken from us. Two loving mums or two dads can never replace the lost parent. In my case... I was raised by same-sex parents because I was separated from my other biological parent and then told that "all that matters is love" and "love makes a family". Love matters, but accepting and promoting same-sex parenting promotes the destruction of families, not the building of families.'

Anonymous girl: 'Someone has to say it cos I don't hear it, but gay parents are selfish in a way. They don't think what it's going to be like for me to live in their world. .. Am I the only one who feels this way? Am I a bad daughter because I wish I had a Dad? Is there anyone else who has two Mums or two Dads who wonders what it would be like if they were born into a normal family? Is there anyone else who wants to be able to use the word normal without getting a lecture on what is normal????'

Anonymous: 'I am still drawn to older men, fatherly types. Still searching for the Daddy I will never know. You cannot just donate your sperm and walk away because there is so much more to you than a biological contribution. When you walked away, you denied me the chance of ever knowing you and loving you, and you denied yourself the chance to know and love your child. If you donated sperm about 18-20 years ago to two gay women, I could be your daughter.'

Mitzy Lancaster: 'I am not writing this as some kind of revenge against my mother. Nor am I writing this to shame her. I have a good relationship with my mother and I love her very much. I am writing this because of the growing glamorisation of homosexuality.'

Anonymous: 'My son is a maturing teen, and he is very into girls. But how will he learn how to deal with that interest when he is surrounded by men who seek sexual gratification from other men? How will he learn to treat girls with care and respect when his father has rejected them and devalues them? How will he embrace his developing masculinity without seeing his father live out authentic manhood by treating his wife and family with love, honouring his marriage vows even when it's hard?'

• Extracts taken from *Jephthah's Children*.

The Casey Review and the threat to fundamental freedoms

Dame Louise Casey has called on the government to require all holders of public office to swear an oath to British values. The obligation would apply to civil servants, school governors and local councillors, among others.

The recommendation was made in a 199-page report, published in December 2016, at the end of a review into integration and opportunity in isolated and deprived communities, originally commissioned by the then Prime Minister, David Cameron, and his Home Secretary, Theresa May. The report calls on the government to:

Increase standards of leadership and integrity in public office, by: Ensuring that British values such as respect for the rule of law, equality and tolerance are enshrined in the principles of public life and developing a new oath for holders of public office.

It is clear from the report that such an oath would involve a commitment to feminism and the LGBT agenda. Dame Louise is aware of the fact that this would present problems for the followers of some religious faiths among others, but she appears to have no qualms about imposing a 21st century secular world-view on people of all faiths and none.

The report refers to some people for whom religion is very important in their daily lives, ‘who are keen to take religion backwards and away from 21st century British values and laws on issues such as gender equality and sexual orientation’.

When she gave evidence before the Communities and Local Government Committee in January, Dame Louise expanded on her understanding of equality:

[I]t is not okay for Catholic schools to be homophobic and anti-gay marriage... —it is not how we bring children up in this country. It is often veiled as religious conservatism, and I have a problem with the expression “religious conservatism”, because often it can be anti-equalities.¹

Home education

The Casey Review also demonstrates an unwarranted negative and suspicious attitude towards home educating families. One of the main recommendations states that:

It is extremely concerning that children can be excluded from mainstream education without sufficient checks on their wellbeing

and integration. The Government should step up the safeguarding arrangements for children who are removed from mainstream education, and in particular those who do not commence mainstream schooling at all. All children outside mainstream education should be required to register with local authorities and local authorities’ duties to know where children are being educated should be increased. It should also consider the standards against which home education is judged to be clear that divisive practices are not acceptable in any setting. (emphasis in original)

Dame Louise is clearly motivated by a concern to ensure that home educating parents are promoting her understanding of ‘British values’ no less than holders of public office. She writes:

Even independent schools, which do not

have to follow the national curriculum and have a lot of autonomy on what and how they teach, are required to teach fundamental British values on the principle that all children should be equipped to participate fully in British life. It seems wrong, therefore, that this should not also be the case for home-educated children.

In her appearance before the Communities and Local Government Committee Louise Casey stated:

I would like to see what more can be done to make sure that we are on this home schooling thing more significantly, because it is growing. If home schooling were diminishing, it would not be such an issue, would it? That is the way of public policy: where our numbers or issues are getting larger, we need to pay more attention to them and have more of a look at them; if the numbers were getting smaller and diminishing, we would worry less.²

The government is currently studying the report and plans to publish a full response in the spring, though the Communities Secretary Sajid Javid has already registered his support for a British values oath.

Notes

1. House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee, Oral evidence: Integration Review, HC 881, 9 January 2017.
2. *Ibid.*

• **Dame Louise Casey, *The Casey Review: review into opportunity and integration*, Department for Communities and Local Government, December 2016.**

Saturday 24 June 2017 - Save the date!

The 2017 Annual General Meeting and conference of the Family Education Trust will take place at the Royal Air Force Club, 128 Piccadilly, London W1 on Saturday 24 June.

The speakers are due to be **Professor Julian Rivers**, Professor of Jurisprudence at the University of Bristol Law School, and **Dr Peter Saunders**, chief executive of the Christian Medical Fellowship.

Professor Rivers will be addressing the question, ‘Does English law need “marriage”?’ while Dr Saunders will speak on the subject of ‘The Transgender Agenda – critiquing its origins, ideology, message and goals’.

• **Further details will accompany the next issue of the bulletin. Please note the date in your diary now and plan to join us if you are able.**

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