

# Submission to Church of Ireland Select Committee on Human Sexuality

## 1. Understanding the question

It's a matter of human rights, isn't it? And it amounts to little more than allowing James and John to have the same rights and support from society and the Church that are afforded to Jeremy and Janet.

No it's not. The European Court of Human Rights has ruled that same-sex marriage is not a human right.<sup>1</sup> There is more to this than meets the eye.

This submission will argue that, far from being a simple 'James and John' issue, human sexuality is an immensely complex matter, and that both Church and society risk the unravelling of the web of the Judaeo-Christian traditions that, though often unrecognised and unappreciated, serves to hold society together in the western world.

Janna Darnelle gives a harrowing account of how her husband declared himself gay and abandoned his family:

Every time a new [U.S.] state redefines marriage, the news is full of happy stories of gay and lesbian couples and their new families. But behind those big smiles and sunny photographs are other, more painful stories. These are left to secret, dark places. They are suppressed, and those who would tell them are silenced in the name of "marriage equality."

But I refuse to be silent. I represent one of those real life stories that are kept in the shadows. I have personally felt the pain and devastation wrought by the propaganda that destroys natural families. In the fall of 2007, my husband of almost ten years told me that he was gay and that he wanted a divorce. In an instant, the world that I had known and loved—the life we had built together—was shattered.

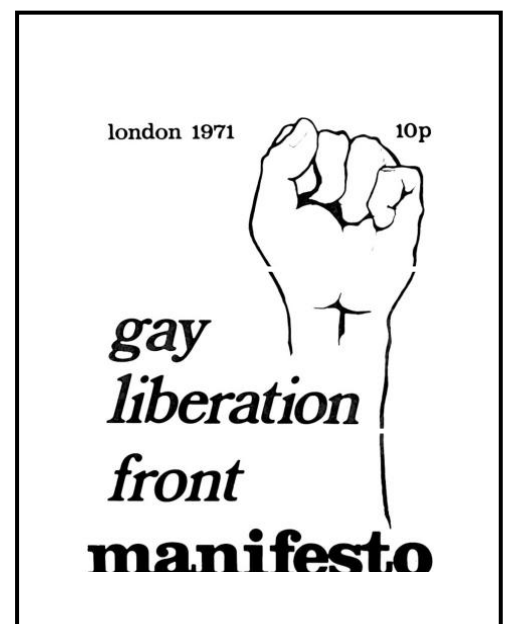
I tried to convince him to stay, to stick it out and fight to save our marriage. But my voice, my desires, my needs—and those of our two young children—no longer mattered to him. We had become disposable, because he had embraced one tiny word that had become his entire identity. Being gay trumped commitment, vows, responsibility, faith, fatherhood, marriage, friendships, and community. All of this was thrown away for the sake of his new identity.

Archbishop Justin Welby has rightly made the point that society has changed greatly in recent years, and that the Church needs to take account of this. The crucial question, however, is whether the changes in society's sexual mores have been mainly *towards* or *away from* Christian godliness. If the former, the Church must humbly follow and admit that sometimes it needs to learn from society. If, however, the shift has been largely away from Christian teaching, the Church must take a counter-cultural stand, as it has often had to do in the course of its history.

## 2. The Change in Western Society

In 1971 the Gay Liberation Front issued a Manifesto. Peter Tatchell, one of its leaders, describes it in these terms:

The GLF Manifesto articulates a radical agenda for a non-violent revolution in cultural values and social institutions. It critiques homophobia, sexism, marriage, the nuclear family, monogamy, the cults of youth and beauty, patriarchy and rigid male and female gender roles. As well as opposing the way things are, it outlines an alternative vision of how society and personal relationships could be, including



<sup>1</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/9157029/Gay-marriage-is-not-a-human-right-according-to-European-ruling.html>

living communally, gender subversive radical drag and non-possessive multipartner open relationships. Our message was “innovate, don’t assimilate.”

GLF’s idealistic vision involved creating a new sexual democracy, without homophobia, misogyny, racism and class privilege. Erotic shame and guilt would be banished. There would be sexual freedom and human rights for everyone – queer, bi and straight.

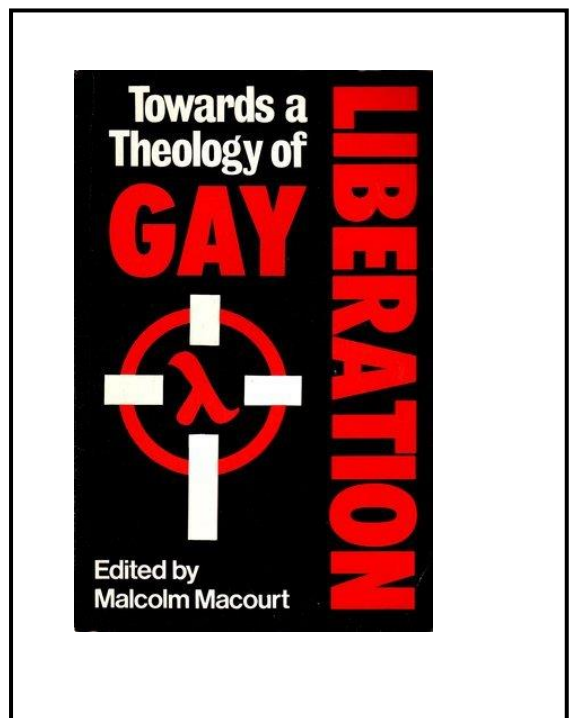
This vision is in clear opposition to the Judaeo-Christian tradition on which western society is based. Targets identified for ‘revolution’ include marriage and the traditional family (in which children are born and raised by their biological parents). ‘Sexual freedom for everyone’ is promoted as the utopian ideal; this contrasts sharply with the Church’s teaching of the virtue of self-control, with genital sexual activity constrained within opposite-sex marriage.

This GLF manifesto has been clearly and publicly articulated, and the Church must either affirm or reject it. There is no *via media* here and no room for ‘twin integrities’. We must be either cultural, taking our lead from secular society, or counter-cultural, opposing it.

The Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement has chosen the first of these options. In 1977 Malcolm Macourt, one of its leaders, set out his vision for ‘gay liberation’ in a book entitled *Towards a Theology of Gay Liberation*<sup>2</sup>:

“I suppose that the society to which they [lesbian and gay people] aspire is one in which young people, as they grow up, will become aware of a wide variety of life patterns: monogamy - multiple partnerships; partnerships for life – partnerships for a period of mutual growth; same-sex partners – opposite-sex partners – both ...”

The use of the phrase ‘gay liberation’ in the thinking of both the secular GLF and the Christian LGCM clearly indicates the key factor driving the gay movement both inside and outside the Church – sexual licence is the demand: “innovate, don’t assimilate.” It’s about freedom from the constraints of a world which is said to be ‘heterosexist’, and of a Church which is seen as the cause of this wicked heterosexist culture.



The consequences of this position are truly radical: if, for example, a bisexual man can have two partners of *different* sexes [as both GLF and LGCM propose], a heterosexual man must be allowed two partners of the *same* sex – we cannot permit sex discrimination. So we *must* allow everyone the right to bigamy, and all the other sexual choices mentioned above. And of course, men will take most advantage of such societal norms, and women and children will be the first to suffer.

In its deliberations on matters of sexuality, the Select Committee needs to decide whether the sexual revolution in western society – including its prospective continuing evolution – is a movement towards or away from God. The purpose of this paper is to provide information to assist in that judgement.

### 3. Framing the debate – the use of words

Activists have been astute in realising that a powerful way to influence the debate is to define new words and concepts in order to change public perceptions. Thus the discussion has moved from ‘sodomy’ (an act) through ‘homosexuality’ (a condition) to ‘being gay’ (a personal identity – ‘Good As You’). One can object to an act; one may empathise with a condition while disapproving with its outworking; but the concept of identity is used also in connection with race, and so can hardly be challenged without incurring the opprobrium of decent people.

Anyone who wishes to affirm the dignity of the person but the wrongness of the behaviour (if that is their view) thus has to tread very carefully. And the general public find it convenient to simply accept a person

<sup>2</sup> M Macourt, *Towards a Theology of Gay Liberation*, SCM Press (2007), p25

as 'gay' – assuming that this is simply a variant of human sexuality - an 'orientation' that cannot be changed (as indeed – without evidence – the mental health professional bodies have assured them it is.)

Anyone who disagrees with this view is termed 'homophobic' – another new term coined to stifle rational discussion and close down debate.

#### 4. Distorting the debate – Manipulating science

##### 4.1 Pilling Report questions evidence of the Royal College of Psychiatrists

A standard narrative has been used to support 'gay' advocacy, as follows:

- you're born gay
- you can't change
- if you try to change you'll harm yourself
- if you are depressed or suicidal the problem lies mainly with societal homophobia
- if you are unable to establish a long-term relationship with a same-sex partner, it's also largely society's fault.

This narrative has been submitted twice by the Royal College of Psychiatrists to the Church of England, first to the Church's 'Listening Process' in 2007 and again (in almost identical terms) to the Pilling Commission in 2012.

The College marshalled no fewer than 18 scientific papers to support its argument. Such an impressive body of evidence from such an august institution would seem to settle the issue. Who could possibly challenge it? But when I studied the arguments and read the supporting papers, I found that their case was deeply flawed – the science didn't support the College's claims. I wrote a booklet to this effect: *Beyond Critique: The Misuse of Science by UK Professional Mental Health Bodies*, published by Core Issues Trust.<sup>3</sup> A senior GP – a former member of the Church of England General Synod, Dr Peter May – found my arguments compelling and promptly wrote an additional paper (now included in the revised edition of the booklet) critiquing the College's submission to Government on the issue of same-sex marriage.

He and I wrote a letter to the President of the Royal College, Professor Sue Bailey, asking her to respond to our criticisms. She did not reply, though two months later we received a letter from the Registrar of the College, assuring us that they upheld the highest levels of science but failing to respond to the points we had made.

We are grateful that the Pilling Report itself upheld our arguments against the Royal College of Psychiatrists on two issues: the causes of depression and suicide, and the reasons underlying the short term character of most same-sex partnerships.

Pilling correctly states that homosexual people experience an "elevation of risk for anxiety, mood and substance-use disorders and for suicidal thoughts and plans ... [and, for men] high risk sexual activity" (para 205) and notes that the Royal College attributes this to "discrimination in society and possible rejection by friends, families and others" (para 206). The report comments:

On the other hand, the Core Issues Trust point out that the three scientific papers referred to by the Royal College of Psychiatrists at this point actually refuse to attribute the causation of mental health issues among gay and lesbian people to societal factors. For example, one paper cited states, 'It may be that prejudice in society against gay men and lesbians leads to greater psychological distress... conversely, gay men and lesbians may have lifestyles that make them vulnerable to psychological disorder.'

This judgement by Pilling was criticised in an article in the Church Times on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2014 by Chris Cook, Professor of Theology and Religion at Durham University. The following letter of mine was published in response on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2014. It is self-explanatory:

Sir, - The Revd Professor Chris Cook attributes elevated LGB mental ill-health to societal stigma, and criticises the Pilling working group for accepting Core Issues Trust's evidence over that of the

---

<sup>3</sup> O'Callaghan D, May P, *Beyond Critique: The Misuse of Science by UK Professional Mental Health Bodies*, Core Issues Trust, 2013

Royal College of Psychiatrists. He claims that Core's evidence was selected to support "a particular interpretation of scripture".

But Core's evidence was from the College's own cited sources: "the precise causal mechanism at this point remains unknown. Therefore, studies are needed that directly test mediational hypotheses to evaluate, for example, the relative salience of social stigmatisation and of psychosocial and lifestyle factors as potential contributors" (Gilman, 2001); "many people will conclude that widespread prejudice against homosexual people causes them to be unhappy or worse, mentally ill. Commitment to this position would be premature, however, and should be discouraged. In fact, a number of potential interpretations need to be considered" (Bailey, 1999); and "It may be that prejudice in society against gay men and lesbians leads to greater psychological distress. . . . Conversely, gay men and lesbians may have lifestyles that make them vulnerable to psychological disorder" (King, 2003).

Thus, the Pilling report rightly affirmed that "the three scientific papers referred to by the Royal College of Psychiatrists . . . actually refuse to attribute the causation of mental health issues among gay and lesbian people to societal factors."

Furthermore, the College has produced a new position statement (April 2014) that takes on board some of CORE's criticisms. In particular, it no longer follows a "biological" theory of causation, and it allows that sexual orientation may be "fluid", so that "born gay" can no longer be sustained (though it doesn't draw this logical conclusion).

*Dermot O'Callaghan*

So the papers cited by the Royal College are clear that science has not found that discrimination is the major cause of mental health issues, whereas the College gives the contrary impression.

Pilling delicately refrains, however, from noting the highly significant fact that both the Royal College's submission and the contrasting cited scientific paper mentioned above were written by the same person, Professor Michael King – the version submitted to the Church apparently being a purposeful distortion of the version published for the scientific community.

Pilling continues:

209. Is there an issue about the durability and stability of same sex relationships?

There seems to be general agreement that, while there are undoubtedly examples of long-term, stable and sexually faithful relationships, gay, lesbian and bisexual relationships have tended to be less long-lasting than heterosexual ones ... and more promiscuous ...

210. There is disagreement about the cause of these tendencies. As with the issue of health problems among gay and lesbian people, one explanation is the lack of social support until recently. Thus the submission from the Royal College of Psychiatrists suggests:

"A considerable amount of the instability in gay and lesbian partnerships arises from lack of support within society, the church or the family for such relationships".

211. However as the Core Issues submission points out, the very paper which the Royal College cites to support its position states:

"We do not know whether gay male, same sex relationships are less enduring because of something intrinsic to being male or a gay male, the gay male subculture that encourages multiple partners, or a failure of social recognition of their relationships. The 'social experiment' that civil unions provide will enable us to disentangle the health and social effects of this complex question".

But remarkably, as in the previous example, both the Royal College submission to Pilling and the paper it cites which gives a different account of the evidence, were written by the same person - Professor King. And once again, the Commission has refrained from pointing out the consequences resulting from

the gap between the Royal College's submission to the Church and the scientific evidence on which it is based.

At a minimum, it can be said that the Pilling Commission has recorded for history the fact that the Royal College of Psychiatrists has misled it, offering the Church 'gay science' rather than good science, and vindicating, at least in these two instances, the criticisms of the mental health professional bodies that are set out in the publication *Beyond Critique*. Pilling rightly comments that the evidence of science is "both complex and contested" [218], and that "neither the medical nor the social sciences have arrived at any firm consensus that would impact decisively on the moral arguments" [329]. These observations are true. But the fact that the Royal College of Psychiatrists has misled the Church as regards scientific evidence relating to homosexuality, betrays a bias in the professional mental health establishment which must be factored into our exploration of the question of human sexuality.

It is not enough to say, as the Pilling report in effect says, that since there are two opposing views in the scientific debate we cannot adjudicate between them. Where we find a misuse of science on one side of the argument, the Church has a duty to ask hard questions of those who are not being straightforward with the evidence.

### Recent research into suicide

While many assume that family or societal rejection is the leading cause of depression among LGBT individuals, a new study has found that in fact the problem appears to stem predominantly from the higher incidence of relationship problems among homosexuals.

Dr. Delaney Skerrett led a team of researchers from the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention (AISRAP) in studying suicides in Queensland.<sup>4</sup> He found that a leading cause of suicide among "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex" (LGBTI) people is *stress from their romantic partners*.

"We tend to assume that the psychological distress LGBTI people are often going through is due to family rejection. But it seems that's not so much the case. The conflict seems to be largely related to relationship problems, with partners," Dr. Skerrett said.

The study found that "LGBT individuals experienced relationship problems more often" than heterosexuals, "with relationship conflict also being more frequent than in non-LGBT cases."

This reinforces what Bell & Weinberg<sup>5</sup> found many years ago – that the major reason for suicide attempts was the breakup of relationships: "Suicidal ideation and suicide attempts are apt to occur at the time of the breakdown or 'dissolution' of a significant couple relationship." Since LGBT people tend to have more partners than heterosexuals, they also have more partnership breakups.

### 4.2 Royal College of Psychiatrists new Position Statement

The Royal College of Psychiatrists has responded to the criticisms of the Core Issues Trust by issuing a new Position Statement (April 2014).<sup>6</sup> Although the College now affirms – in a radical revision of its previous position – that a person's sexual orientation is shaped by 'postnatal' experiences and may change during life, it still opposes any therapeutic attempts to assist such change. This is a kind of God of the Gaps argument. The College used to say that change was impossible. Now it has been forced to say that change may be *possible*, but it will not allow it to be *permissible*. But this prohibition is not based on science, but on ideology. A consequence of this is that many people who would like to try to reduce or

---

4 Skerrett DM, Kölves K, De Leo D Suicides among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender populations in Australia: An analysis of the Queensland Suicide Register (2014)

5 Bell, A.P.; Weinberg, M.S. (1978): *Homosexualities. A Study Of Diversity Among Men And Women*. Simon and Schuster, New York p.216

6 [www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/PS02\\_2014.pdf](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/PS02_2014.pdf)

eliminate the unwanted same-sex attraction that they experience, will be prevented from doing so because any therapist assisting them would be struck off by their professional body.

The College alleges that therapy to reduce unwanted same-sex attraction can be 'deeply damaging'. But no study has proved such a link, and Dr Nicholas Cummings, the former president of the American Psychological Association, currently has an affidavit before a New Jersey court affirming that he has seen 'hundreds' of people change their orientation away from homosexuality.<sup>7</sup> And he is no right wing extremist: it was he who proposed the resolution that led to the APA removing homosexuality from its list of disorders,

#### 4.3 The UKCP's ban on therapy to try to reduce same-sex attraction

Already, in N Ireland, Dr Mike Davidson, has been struck off the register of the British Psychodrama Association (affiliated to the UK Council for Psychotherapy) and told that he may "re-apply to continue training should you consistently cease to promulgate your current opinions." In other words, his offence is not in what he has done (no client has made a complaint against him); rather, he has committed a *thought crime* – that he believes he may be able to help people reduce unwanted same-sex attractions.

The UKCP's *Ethical Principles and Codes of Professional Conduct* document<sup>8</sup> says that for a therapist to agree to a client's request for therapy for the reduction of same sex attraction "is not in the client's best interests." This is an extraordinary statement. How can such a universal response be given to all client requests, when the circumstances of the client are not known?

Clearly such a position can legitimately be taken only if it is clear that such therapy is harmful in itself. This is in fact what the UKCP claims:

There is overwhelming evidence that undergoing such therapy is at considerable emotional and psychological cost.<sup>8</sup>

It is of the greatest importance that such claimed evidence should be made publicly available, so I engaged in correspondence with senior personnel in the UKCP asking where the evidence might be found. I was given polite assurances but no evidence. I asked the UKCP's Chief Executive, Mr David Pink, the same question. Again, I received a polite reply, but no answer to my question. So the UKCP has declined to offer any evidence in support of its contention that therapy to reduce same-sex attractions is harmful in itself.

Dr Di Hodgson, Chair of the UKCP's Diversity, Equalities and Social Responsibility Committee has incautiously admitted: "I think there is very conflicting evidence ... So we have taken a view in a way which is regardless of the scientific findings. We still believe that it is unethical to seek to agree or to work towards changing someone's sexual orientation through psychotherapy."<sup>9</sup> So the UKCP says first that there is '*overwhelming evidence*'; then declines to specify *any evidence*; then says that there is '*conflicting evidence*'; and then that they have taken a position that doesn't require *any evidence*. This should concern every thinking person. I would urge the Church of Ireland Select Committee to press the UKCP hard on this point. Their position is anti-science.

Thus two crucial things are clear:

- no evidence has been offered by the professional mental health institutions to show that therapy to attempt to reduce same-sex attractions is harmful
- current proposals to ban such therapy are not based on scientific evidence.

---

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.advocate.com/politics/2013/07/31/former-therapist-claims-ex-gay-therapy-worked-hundreds>

<sup>8</sup> UKCP's Ethical Principles and Codes of Professional Conduct: Guidance on the Practice of *Psychological* Therapies that *Pathologise and/or* Seek to Eliminate or Reduce Same Sex Attraction

<sup>9</sup> BBC Radio 4, Sunday 3 Feb 2013

The best study we have<sup>10</sup> found that, “The attempt to change sexual orientation did not appear to be harmful on average for these participants. The only statistically significant trends that emerged for the GSI (global) and PSDI (distress intensity) variables indicated improving psychological symptoms Time1 to Time6... Our findings mitigate against any absolute claim that attempted change is likely to be harmful in and of itself. ... In conclusion, the findings of this study appear to contradict the commonly expressed view that sexual orientation is not changeable and that the attempt to change is highly likely to result in harm for those who make such an attempt.”

#### 4.4 Denial of the fundamental principle of freedom of client choice

I was recently a co-signatory to a letter to all the bishops of the Church of England and the Church of Ireland which posed the urgent pastoral question:

What may be said to a man married to a woman, who for whatever reason and degree of intensity, experiences same-sex attraction which he might indulge, but wants to preserve his marriage and family? Currently, the answer is nothing except to counsel him to discover his true self, divorce his wife and leave his children for a new relationship. This is because ideology currently prevents the licensing of therapists, who can help such people reduce their unwanted same-sex attraction, and is driving legislative proposals to ban them altogether, making such counselling a criminal offence.

This cannot be right. In addition, a recent ComRes poll<sup>11</sup> found that an overwhelming majority (over 5 to 1) of people in the UK believed that such a person should have this freedom of choice.

The logical and tragic corollary of this discussion is that families are likely to be broken up because of the mental health establishment’s refusal to permit a husband or wife to seek therapeutic help to try to reduce unwanted same-sex attraction.

#### 5. Destruction of the family as an institution

Marriage can be compared to a four-legged stool:

- between two people
- of opposite sex
- sexually exclusive
- lifetime commitment

It is not difficult to trace one of many ways in which the institution of marriage could be destroyed by same-sex marriage (which itself of course removes one of the four legs).

##### 5.1 Second leg: destruction of the ‘two persons’ character of marriage

Why should marriage be limited to two people? If a parent can love more than one child, why can an adult not love more than one marriage partner?

The obvious answer is that the ‘twoness’ of marriage is derived from the fact of the two sexes. Marriage involves the coming together of the two great halves of humanity – male and female – two by two by two. As Jesus said of the male/ female marriage bond, “They are no longer two but one.” But if the two sexes are not needed for marriage there is no reason why marriage should be limited to two people.

The logic will be strongest for allowing three people to marry. A recent Radio 4 programme<sup>12</sup> on same-sex parenting inadvertently indicated one way in which this is likely to happen. Charlie Condue, the actor who

---

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.exgaystudy.org/>

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.comres.co.uk/polls/Core\\_Issues\\_Trust\\_Therapy\\_Poll\\_April\\_2014.pdf](http://www.comres.co.uk/polls/Core_Issues_Trust_Therapy_Poll_April_2014.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> *Same-Sex Parents*, BBC Radio4, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2014

plays the midwife Marcus Dent in Coronation Street, is a gay man who “co-parents two children with his partner and a friend, Catherine.”

Such arrangements are likely to become common among same-sex parents. The problem is that in England now it is permissible for Charlie and his male partner to marry each other, but not for them to marry the female co-parent. It cannot be long before this is challenged in the courts. Why should Charlie's children not be allowed to have a mother who is fully integrated into the family as a wife to the two men (with hospital visitation, adoption and inheritance rights etc)? Why should the children's birth certificates not show the name of Parent C as well as Parents A and B?

## 5.2 Third leg: destruction of the requirement of monogamy

A well-known book is entitled, “Heather's Got Two Mommies.” Who would be so harsh as to deny Heather the right to a Daddy too – like most of her friends? As anticipated in the foregoing discussion, the law will surely change to allow this. But Heather's prospective daddy may point out that her mommies are lesbians and he will not have a sexual relationship with them – he must look outside the marriage for any sexual companionship. Thus his admission to the triple marriage will require abrogation of the prohibition on extra-marital sex. All his sexual relationships will be extra-marital.

And if Heather's daddy is allowed to have extramarital sex, this rule must extend to all married men (and women).

## 5.3 Fourth leg: destruction of the requirement of lifetime commitment

The multiple marriage partner arrangements will inevitably lead to more marriage breakdown, divorce etc. Having set aside the traditional requirements of the commitment of two opposite-sex spouses to lifetime fidelity, it will become impossible (and futile) to take a stand on defending the lifelong character that characterises traditional marriage. Marriage as we have known it will effectively have been destroyed.

Who would bother to oppose the now-fulfilled vision of the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement cited above?:

monogamy - multiple partnerships; partnerships for life – partnerships for a period of mutual growth; same-sex partners – opposite-sex partners – both ...”

But sadly, this adult paradise of value-free sex will create untold misery for children. Some children will, indeed, be raised by good same-sex parents with no significant ill effects, but it is necessary to dig deeper to assess the likely experiences of children overall.

## 6. The kids are not alright

A study by McLanahan and Sandefur<sup>13</sup> concludes: “Children who grow up in a household with only one biological parent are worse off, on average, than children who grow up in a household with both of their biological parents...regardless of whether the resident parent remarries.” This enables us to say that single parent families must be deemed to be Plan B (not withstanding that many of these lone parents may make heroic sacrifices for their children). This conclusion is hardly surprising – two parents are better than one. The question then arises: Where do same-sex parented families fit on this spectrum?

### American Psychological Association Claim

In 2005, the American Psychological Association (APA) issued an official brief on lesbian and gay parenting which examined 59 published studies and said, “Not a single study has found children of lesbian or gay parents to be disadvantaged in any significant respect relative to children of heterosexual parents”(p. 15). Not surprisingly, this claim has been very influential in the field of social science.

---

<sup>13</sup> Growing up with a single parent: What helps, what hurts, McLanahan S and Sandefur G, Harvard Univ Press 1997



## The Marks Literature Review

This claim was investigated and challenged, however, by Loren Marks who found that

- 26 of 59 APA studies on same-sex parenting had no heterosexual comparison groups.
- In comparison studies, single mothers were often used as the heterosexual comparison group.
- No comparison study had the statistical power required to detect a small effect size.

Many studies measured things which were of minor importance (division of labour in the home, etc) and involved children who had not even reached the turbulent years of adolescence.

The review concluded that the APA's strong assertions were not empirically warranted. It was not the case that science had found no significant difference in child outcomes regardless of family structure.

## The Allen Study (2013)

A major study in Canada, based on a 20% sample of the Canadian census, found that children of same-sex parents fare worse than those of single-parent families as regards graduation from high school. The children of gay and lesbian couples are only about 65 percent as likely to have graduated from high school as the children of married, opposite-sex couples. And girls are even less successful than boys, with daughters of gay parents displaying dramatically low graduation rates.

In Canada same-sex couples have had access to all taxation and government benefits since 1997 and to marriage since 2005.

The study is able to compare—side by side—the young-adult children of same-sex couples and opposite-sex couples, as well as children growing up in single-parent homes and other types of households. Three key findings stand out:

- children of married opposite-sex families [Plan A] have a high graduation rate compared to the others;
- children of lesbian families [Plan C] have a very low graduation rate compared to the others;
- and the other four types - common law, gay, single mother, single father - [Plan B].are similar to each other and lie in between the married heterosexual/lesbian extremes

Thus the intact, married mother-and-father household remains the gold standard for children's progress through school. What is surprising in the Canadian data is the revelation that lesbian couples' children fared worse, on average, than even those of single parents.

## The Regnerus Study (2012)

A landmark study by Mark Regnerus of the University of Texas surveyed almost 3,000 adult children (aged 18 – 39) from different family structures. It found that children of homosexual parents:

- Are *much* more likely to have received welfare growing up
- Have lower educational attainment
- Report less safety and security in their family of origin
- Are more likely to suffer from depression
- Have been arrested more often
- If they are female, have had more sexual partners-both male and female

Children of lesbian mothers are three times as likely to be unemployed as those raised by married opposite-sex parents.

It is important to note that this study comprises adults in the range 18 – 39 years, who have been raised in the respective family types. This contrasts sharply with so much research which is based on young children and involves questions asked of the parents. In the latter case, most parents are likely to say that their children are doing very well. By contrast, the outcome measures in this study represent very serious

and objective issues (eg have they ever been arrested?). There are some forty measures in all, and the results are overwhelmingly in favour of the intact biological family.

There was intense reaction from gay activists when this study was published, but it was fully investigated by the University of Texas and found to be rigorously and properly conducted. The Church has an urgent obligation to follow up the above evidence and challenge the distorted view of the Establishment.

### The Establishment in denial

Despite all this recent evidence, in the House of Lords debate on same-sex marriage Lord Winston said, “there is no evidence at all that children are worse off as a result of having parents who are in a gay partnership.” This is quite untrue. Yet when Lord Phillips of Sudbury asked for leave to reply to Lord Winston, there was a chorus of ‘No’ and he was not allowed to speak.

Baroness Stowell, summing up for the government, actually said, “the research shows that [children of same-sex couples] do better than children of opposite-sex couples.” The untruthfulness of this statement will become increasingly and painfully clear in the coming years as more and more children become casualties of dysfunctional families.

#### 7. Sexual liberation for children

But the activists have a solution to the plight of children in their brave new world: let them have sexual rights and freedoms too. Peter Tatchell has written:

“(I)n the realm of sexual ages of consent, we need to ask whether the law has any legitimate role to play in criminalising consenting, victimless sexual activity.”<sup>14</sup>

He campaigns for an age of consent of 14<sup>15</sup> (though he would like it lower).

In America, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network [GLSEN] has pioneered the teaching of sexual matters in schools.

GLSEN’s founder, Kevin Jennings, was appointed so-called Safe Schools Czar by President Obama. How did he become so successful? “We borrowed the opponent’s calling card,” he is reported to have said. By claiming that schools were unsafe places for lesbian/ gay pupils, he was able to get inside schools and help shape the curriculum. The key words he used were ‘safety’ and ‘bullying’.

But GLSEN teaches more than a parent might feel was necessary for an understanding of same-sex issues.

At conferences supported by GLSEN<sup>16</sup>, children have been taught

- how to insert their fist into another person’s rectum,
- how to make a dental dam from a latex glove
- the ethics of whether it is rude to spit out a boy’s semen from your mouth, or whether you should swallow it.

We in Ireland are going down the same road pioneered by GLSEN and if we are not vigilant, in thirty years’ time we shall have a tragedy on our hands.

The safety ‘Calling Card’ presents itself in many ways:

- the claimed need for ‘Safe Schools’
- expressed concern about ‘homophobia’ and bullying of gay pupils at school (and of course I strongly oppose all forms of bullying)

---

<sup>14</sup> [The Betrayal of Youth, p 118](#)

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.petertatchell.net/sex\\_education/schoolsex.htm](http://www.petertatchell.net/sex_education/schoolsex.htm)

<sup>16</sup> [michellemalkin.com/2009/12/04/explosive-the-not-safe-for-school...](http://michellemalkin.com/2009/12/04/explosive-the-not-safe-for-school...)

- the need to address the high suicide rate among gay young people, allegedly because of homophobia
- the so-called 'gay history month'
- the annual 'Day of Silence'
- the so-called IDAHO (International Day Against Homophobia)

Already in Ireland (north and south) academic researchers are following the GLSEN script and are writing reports on the dangers that school holds for LGBT students, not realising what the consequences of these reports will be. Millions of euro/ pounds are being poured into this research. I have seen some of these reports. They are based on bad science, but they are influencing people in high places.

And I don't want to see children, though protected from adult predators by Safeguarding Trust, yet being instructed in the pleasures of multiple different sexual practices and orientations, so that they can have sexual relationships with their friends in any way they want.

### What to teach four-year-olds?

There is a push to sexualise children at an ever-younger age.

Preschool children should be taught about gay relationships to combat future homophobia in society, the new chief executive of Stonewall has told The Independent.<sup>17</sup>

In an exclusive interview, Ruth Hunt said that she wants the gay rights charity to commission books "celebrating difference in all its forms for under-fives".

The initiative is part of the organisation's commitment to tackling homophobia in schools, which has the backing of the new Education Secretary. "Nicky Morgan wrote to me this week saying she was very keen to tackle homophobic bullying in schools, and there's a very real commitment to shifting attitudes in schools," said Ms Hunt.

This is a replica of the GLSEN 'calling card' strategy, now being used in the UK (and Ireland) by gay activists.

### Valuing all God's children

The Church of England Archbishops' Council Education Division has also bought into this line of thinking, having endorsed a document entitled Valuing All God's Children (VAGC). This takes the GLSEN mantra on board and states its intention to ensure that all schools are 'safe' places for children. The irony is that a survey in the 2012 OFSTED report *No Place for Bullying* found only three primary and five secondary pupils who were apparently bullied over sexuality issues. It speculated, without evidence, that other bullying issues "may mask issues around perceived or actual sexuality."

The Longitudinal Study of Young People in England traced more than 8,000 pupils from age 13 onwards over seven years. "For the year 9 age group, when bullying is at its worst, around 94% was purportedly of heterosexual young people and 6% was directed at LGBs," it said.<sup>18</sup>

Alarm bells should ring when we read the Archbishop saying, "Less than a year ago I set out my concerns about the terrible impact of homophobic bullying on the lives of young people and I made a public commitment to support our schools in eradicating homophobic stereotyping and bullying." The subtitle of the report is: Guidance for Church of England Schools on Challenging Homophobic Bullying. But *why focus on 6% of bullying?* What about the other 94%? The vast majority of bullying is to do with appearance – too fat, too thin, too small, wearing glasses, having red hair etc. Do we value only 6% of God's children? Why is the Church being urged so uncritically to accept the Jennings calling card?

---

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/new-stonewall-chief-ruth-hunt-teach-preschool-children-to-celebrate-being-gay-9643872.html>

<sup>18</sup> Patricia Morgan, Unpublished research 2014)

A further cause for concern is VAGC's several references to 'sexual identity'. This innocuous-sounding term is used to allow a person to declare themselves to be whatever sex (or 'gender') they wish. For example, in Massachusetts all state schools are required to accept a boy's chosen sexual identity as a girl (no surgery needed) and to allow him to play on girls' sports teams and change in the girls' locker rooms.<sup>19</sup> This is bound to lead to chaos and great distress for many children.

### "You can't make a child gay"

It is often said that since people are born gay, they can't become gay through life experiences. That claim is impossible to maintain in the light of the highly renowned work of Laumann<sup>20</sup>, who found that both men and women who had been 'sexually touched' in childhood were almost four times as likely as others to identify as gay/ lesbian.

Furthermore, the Regnerus study above found that children of homosexual fathers are nearly 3 times as likely, and children of lesbian mothers nearly 4 times as likely, to identify as something other than entirely heterosexual. This is not due to any genetic inheritance, but rather to environmental factors in childhood.<sup>21</sup> Moreover:

- the daughters of lesbians have 4 times as many same-sex sexual partners as the daughters of married biological parents
- the daughters of homosexual fathers have 6 times as many
- the sons of both lesbian mothers and homosexual fathers have 7 times as many same-sex sexual partners as sons of married biological parents.

This is entirely consistent with the widely-accepted scientific finding that childhood environmental experiences are an important factor in shaping sexuality<sup>21</sup>.

In New Zealand a study<sup>22</sup> has found that homosexual or bisexual individuals are more likely to have undergone a variety of traumas in childhood, including sexual assault, rape, violence, and witnessing violence in the home. "People who either identify themselves as homosexual or bisexual, or have had a same-sex encounter or relationship, tend to come from more disturbed backgrounds," said Research Associate Professor Elisabeth Wells.

Of people who reported certain traumatic childhood events, 15% were not heterosexual; of those without such experiences, only 5% were not heterosexual, suggesting that such experiences tripled the chance of later professing homosexual or bisexual inclinations.

So the evidence appears strong that identification as 'gay' is closely related to adverse life experiences in childhood. People, particularly children, can be 'made gay' (but see below).

### "Children can't change from being gay"

It is wrong to think of children being 'gay' as though that were an immutable characteristic. Ritch Savin-Williams, a leading expert on gay teenagers, says:

In the data set of the longitudinal Add Health study, of the Wave I boys who indicated that they had exclusive same-sex romantic attraction, only 11% reported exclusive same-sex attraction 1 year later; 48% reported only opposite-sex attraction, 35% reported no attraction to either sex, and 6% reported attraction to both sexes (Udry & Chantala, 2005).<sup>23</sup>

The most striking facts here are that only 11% of those boys who thought they were exclusively attracted to boys, still felt that way one year later, and *almost half of them now said that they were exclusively attracted to girls.*

---

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2013/03/9244/>

<sup>20</sup> *The Social Organization of Sexuality*, E O Laumann et al, University of Chicago Press 1994

<sup>21</sup> Frisch M et al. *Childhood Family Correlates of Heterosexual and Homosexual Marriages*, Archives of Sexual Behaviour 2006. 35, 533-47

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.odt.co.nz/campus/university-otago/117336/sexual-orientation-link-past-study>

<sup>23</sup> Ritch C. Savin-Williams, "Who's Gay? Does It Matter?" Current Directions in Psychological Science 15 (2006): 42

It would be cruel to encourage a child to self-identify as gay – a decision that could take him or her along a road that may lead to harm.

We in the Church of Ireland should strongly resist the temptation to go the way of the Church of England in its invitation to Stonewall to come into schools offering to provide ‘safe spaces’ for children who are being bullied. We should watch out for such terms as ‘bullying’ and ‘safety’ – they are Trojan horses.

## 8 Pandora’s Box

Despite its many flaws, the Church has accumulated a vast amount of wisdom which is embedded, often invisibly, in its laws and traditions. Sex is not new – it has been around for a long time and the Church has long understood our human frailties and temptations. When we lose our grip on the Church’s traditional teaching, we open at our peril a Pandora’s box.

### Royal College of Psychiatrists tells C of E what sexual behaviour permissible for its leaders

The Royal College of Psychiatrists Position Statement (April 2014) says,

The College holds the view that lesbian, gay and bisexual people ... have exactly similar rights and responsibilities as all other citizens. This includes ... freedom to practise a religion as a lay person or religious leader ...

This assertion does not mean merely that certain *people* have the right to become religious leaders – which of course they do – but also that religious leaders who identify as ‘gay’ have a right to engage in their chosen *sexual practices*, which may well be in conflict with the teaching of their religion. This is another Trojan horse: the Royal College has no business telling the religions of the world what sexual practices their leaders should be allowed to engage in. If the Church fails to challenge such an abuse of authority by a professional body, it will cease to have any relevance in society.

### HIV Costs – human and financial

Thankfully there have been considerable advances in the treatment of HIV in recent years. But a consequence of this is that is that people who previously would have died may now live for decades on an expensive drug regime.

In a Dublin taxi recently I heard a segment of a radio programme in which a gay man was rejoicing in the advances made in the treatment of HIV. When he was first diagnosed, he had to take several different medications at different times of the day, and his life revolved around trying to remember what came next. Now, he only had to take one pill a day, and his life expectancy was close to the average for society as a whole. It was great being gay and HIV+. What never occurred to him, nor to his interviewer, was to mention the financial cost.

The great majority of people who become HIV+ in the western world are gay men.<sup>24</sup> The number of people living with HIV is increasing in the UK and Ireland. A major study<sup>25</sup> estimated that the average annual treatment costs for HIV patients range from approximately £20,000 to £35,000. This could mean up to £1million over a lifetime for just one person.

The number of people using NHS HIV services in the UK was 52,000 in 2006 and was projected to increase to 78,000 by 2013. Annual population cost was £483 million in 2006, with a projected annual cost of about £750 million by 2013. When community care was included, costs increased from £683 million in 2006 to over £1,000 million in 2013.

---

<sup>24</sup> Guardian Comment: The inequality we aren’t so keen to talk about, 1 Dec 2011

<sup>25</sup> S Mandalia, R Mandalia, Rising Population Cost for Treating People Living with HIV in the UK, 1997-2013

How many people will society allow to benefit from this generosity of the State at the expense of people who are dying from breast or prostate cancer?

## BDSM<sup>26</sup>

The *Guidelines and Literature Review for Psychologists Working Therapeutically with Sexual and Gender Minority Clients*, published by the Professional Practice Board of the British Psychological Society, cheerfully describes the practices of BDSM (Bondage & Discipline, Dominance & Submission, and Sadomasochism).

They say,

the vast majority of people who engage in these practices do so for the pleasure it affords and do not suffer any harm as a consequence (Moser & Levitt, 1995). There are, however, particular issues which may arise because this practice has been both criminalised and pathologised. For example, clients may present with concerns and confusion over their sexual behaviour primarily due to stigma and stereotyping which exists around this issue. It is also worth noting that for others there may be no problem whatsoever and it may simply be part of the broad sexual repertoire that they engage in. It is important not to ascribe meaning beyond that provided by people with oppressed and stigmatised identities and practices such as these” (Barker, Iantaffi & Gupta, 2008).

It is not difficult to see the great gulf that lies between this talk (in the literature of a professional mental health body) of dominance/ submission for ‘pleasure’ and the Church’s traditional teaching that we should “be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Eph 5:21). The dangers that surround us if we move away from traditional Church teaching are staring us in the face, yet we tend to close our eyes to them. The Church needs to make a clear statement which differentiates us from the values and practices of the world.

## 9 Lessons from History and a prediction for the future

It may be argued that there is no reason to expect society to experience any harmful outcomes from the changes in cultural views being urged upon the Church at this time. But from history we can see how such things as redefining the family can have radically damaging effects on society.

Two hundred years ago the French Revolution liberalised cohabitation and divorce. What was seen as a welcome extension of liberty actually resulted in significant numbers of women and children being abandoned. The number of children born out of wedlock soared. So serious was the ensuing crisis that in 1816 the legal changes that had been made were reversed completely. Divorce was actually outlawed – 24 years after divorce by mutual consent had been introduced.

Then one hundred years ago the Bolshevik revolution promoted the idea that cohabitation was as good as marriage. Divorce could be obtained in just three days. The feminist historian Wendy Goldman describes the thinking of the revolutionaries:

marriage would become superfluous. Men and women would come together and separate as they wished ... Free union would gradually replace marriage as the state ceased to interfere in the union between the sexes. Parents, regardless of their marital status, would care for their children with the help of the state; the very concept of illegitimacy would become obsolete. The family, stripped of its previous social functions, would gradually wither away, leaving in its place fully autonomous, equal individuals free to choose their partners on the basis of love and mutual respect.<sup>27</sup>

It was said that sex should be as freely available as a glass of water. But [Goldman continues]

the Bolshevik dream became a nightmare. Family breakdown, divorce and alimony became contentious issues and homeless children roamed the streets. In 1936 the deputy Chairman of the Supreme Court said, ‘It is necessary to put an end to the anarchist view of marriage and childbirth as an exclusively private affair’”.

In Goldman’s words,

---

<sup>26</sup> [http://www.bps.org.uk/sites/default/files/images/rep\\_92.pdf](http://www.bps.org.uk/sites/default/files/images/rep_92.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> Goldman WZ, *Women, the State and Revolution, Soviet Family Policy and Social Life*, Cambridge Univ Press, 1993 p51

jurists repudiated many of their earlier ideas and, in a clear ideological shift, demanded the strengthening and stabilization of the family.

The freedoms demanded by the revolutionaries in both France and Russia are expressed in terms that are startlingly similar to those sought by GLF and LGCM.

<b>Bolshevik idealism [Goldman]</b>	<b>LGCM idealism [Macourt]</b>
marriage would become superfluous. Men and women would come together and separate as they wished ... Free union would gradually replace marriage as the state ceased to interfere in the union between the sexes. Parents, regardless of their marital status, would care for their children with the help of the state; the very concept of illegitimacy would become obsolete. The family, stripped of its previous social functions, would gradually wither away, leaving in its place fully autonomous, equal individuals free to choose their partners on the basis of love and mutual respect.	I suppose that the society to which they [lesbian and gay people] aspire is one in which young people, as they grow up, will become aware of a wide variety of life patterns: monogamy - multiple partnerships; partnerships for life – partnerships for a period of mutual growth; same-sex partners – opposite-sex partners – both ...

## 10 Conclusion

This issue is not a matter of securing human rights for James and John. If history is a guide, the outcomes of following the stated gay agenda are likely to be very painful. Each generation can see the blind spots of its predecessors, and it marvels that they could have been so unwise. It is perhaps not coincidental that in both France and Russia the reversal of the radically liberalising laws took place about 25 years (or one generation) later.

Future historians will wonder how in just a few years we could have thrown away our Judaeo-Christian heritage, and the next generation will have no option but to reverse the legislative changes that we have so unwisely made.

But this reversal will only take place following great distress amongst women and children in particular.

I beg the Church of Ireland not to go there.

Dermot O'Callaghan  
October 2014