

Dear Sir or Madam,

I write as the National Director of the Assembly of Confessing Congregations within the Uniting Church in Australia. to register my strong support for maintaining the legal definition of marriage as between one man and one woman entered into voluntarily and for life.

The ACC represents 150 congregations and clusters throughout Australia. (I have attached the ACC's theological statement on marriage).

There are profound reasons for upholding this tradition.

The design of our bodies clearly demonstrates the complementary physiology of male and female and the importance of sexual intercourse between men and women in creating and nurturing children.

The importance of being raised in a loving family with a mother and a father cannot be underestimated. Divorce, death and single parenthood all create a deficit for children in this regard. When these unfortunate situations arise, families and welfare workers do everything in their power to provide role models to ameliorate the loss.

Therefore, it is incredible, and potentially very damaging to the wellbeing of children, that Federal Parliament is seriously considering to legislate a form of 'marriage' that, by definition, begins with what otherwise is regarded in our society as a profound social deficit.

The reason for such an irrational proposal is to be found in a shallow concept of human rights that has gained currency among us. Based almost entirely on consent between adults, it fails to recognise the right of children to have a father and a mother - as mandated by the United Nations.

Thus the post-modern infatuation with the rights of the individual has joined with the libertarian right to sexual expression to undermine marriage and threaten the well being of children.

It is most regrettable that public debate generally ignores the reasons for upholding marriage between man and woman and vilifies opponents of the present push to re-invent sexual and family relations as 'religious.' Religious people have strong reasons to reaffirm the unique splendour of marriage between a man and a woman and to oppose irrational attempts to redefine it in individualistic terms.

It would be a great pity if this rash social experiment were to be enacted in law before the personal, social, philosophical and theological issues have been thoroughly debated.

Yours sincerely,

Rev Dr Max Champion
National Director of the Assembly of Confessing Congregations within the Uniting Church in Australia.

In Conclusion

In all, the marriage of a man and a woman, together with the family it enables, is a holy expression of the image and glory of God. In the marriage of a man and a woman the Old Testament sees a reflection of the covenant relationship between God and his people, and the New Testament sees the splendour of the union of Christ and his Church.

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Assembly of Confessing Congregations

within the Uniting Church in Australia

Marriage



Marriage – An ACC Statement

Marriage is not an exclusively Christian concept. As a human experience between a man and a woman it is witnessed in all countries, and in all faiths. Nevertheless, there are many features that are common throughout time and culture. Here we speak of Christian marriage which is understood as “a gift of God and a means of grace. In the life-long union of marriage we can know the joy of God, in whose image we are made, male and female. ... Husband and wife, in giving themselves to each other in love, reflect the love of Christ for his Church.” ... (‘Declaration of Purpose’, *Marriage* Order of Service, The Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia, Sydney, 2005)

This Christian understanding of marriage has several features. These are:

1. Marriage is a central part of God’s wonderful creation

Jesus pointed to the foundation of marriage as being in God’s creation of humankind: male and female in his own image (Genesis 1:27, Matthew 19:3-5). As part of God’s creation, marriage was provided then and now for mutual comfort, love and support. It also provides the fundamental basis for society and good order.

2. Marriage is between a man and a woman

In the most basic sense of our being (ontology) a man and a woman provide the only complementary basis for a marriage. Simply put, a woman and a man are made to fit together, and by their union are bonded together and can receive the blessing of children born from their mutual sexual love.

3. Marriage is a public acknowledgement of the love and commitment of a woman and a man to each other

Marriage involves a public ceremony. The couple’s mutual decision to marry each other leads to the two being joined together with and before God and witnessed by family and friends. There is a public acknowledgement of the relationship.

4. Marriage is meant to be life-long

This life-long covenant is a gift from God, whose love is unending. God has eternally covenanted himself to the people called into a relationship with him, and married couples are called to model that love and life-giving forgiveness (Hosea, Ephesians 5).

5. Marriage is monogamous

Sexual love in marriage is a glorious and holy gift. It is not meant to be devalued by casualness before a marriage, or adultery after the bonds are created. Sexual love strengthens and unites the covenant union of the couple as they express the full complementarity of their man-woman relationship (Genesis 2:23-25, 1 Corinthians 7:3-5).

6. Marriage involves an openness to children

Children are a blessing from God, and families provide the basis of our society. As God provides for his children, parents provide for their children and should model the strength, love, generosity and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 7:9-12). Marriage enables children to live and grow up together with their mother and father in a secure covenant family.