

# CIRCLING AROUND THE MARRIAGE SQUARE

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By Dr. Andrew Corbett, July 30<sup>th</sup> July 2009

Arguing against same-gender couple “marriage” feels like arguing against square-circles. Yet this is what we are being asked to do. This can be done in three ways. Firstly, we can reiterate why marriage is between a man and a woman. This is like being asked to defend the roundness of circles. Secondly, we can argue from nature that marriage is *naturally* between a man and a woman. This is like arguing that round things are circular. Thirdly, we can argue that two people of the same gender cannot ever be considered “married”. This is like arguing that even though a square claims to be a circle its claims are hampered because it has four sides.

## CIRCLES ARE ROUND

The purpose of marriage has always been to unite a man and a woman (to the exclusion of all others) so that they can have and raise children in the most natural and secure way. Thus marriage has occurred since the beginning of time and in every culture. The welfare of children has to be one of the highest values for a society. Raising children in a safe, secure, nurturing, and wholesome way is the best way to ensure that these children grow into upstanding, community-minded, contributing members of society.

Therefore, marriage between a man and a woman is biologically necessary to produce children. It is also biologically necessary for the raising of children. In my book, *What Is A Family?* I give the research to support this premise that children are best raised by their own biological mum and dad. The next best is where they are raised by a mum and a dad.

Biology does matter when it comes to marriage. Therefore, it is not *bigotry* to restrict marriage to a man and woman – it’s biology!

## DISCRIMINATION?

To claim that to deny two people of the same gender to marry is “discrimination” is the same as saying that it’s discrimination to deny that a square is a circle! Marriage laws apply equally to all people and without unfair discrimination. The Marriage Act provides the basis for any eligible person to marry. It does not discriminate against homosexuals from marrying (as long as they marry an eligible person of the opposite gender, which applies without discrimination to people of any gender).

“*But it’s unfair that heterosexuals can marry each other but homosexuals cannot*”, is the counter appeal. We have already established why marriage is necessarily biologically between a man and a woman. It is a *privilege* for a man and woman to marry and have children and to have society honour them. I deliberately say that it is a “privilege” for a man and a woman to marry to highlight one of the glaring problems with this kind of counter appeal. This emotional counter appeal assumes that marriage is a “right” – it fails to appreciate that marriage is a privilege. No one can legitimately demand a privilege.

Just as circles are round, marriage is between a man and a woman.

## ROUND THINGS ARE CIRCULAR

Not only are circles round, but round things tend to be rather circular. When we say that the marriage of a man and a woman is the basis for a family we are stating that it takes the union of a man and woman to have children. This is no mere partnership. Marriage is not just the validation of a “partnership”. It is the validation of a husband and a wife who can ordinarily be or become a father and a mother.

This is not to say that those of us who state that circles are round and round things are rather circular, that we hate squares. We are not denying that these people are generally within their rights to carry out their sexual proclivities. But they cannot do so and demand that we call what obviously has four sides “a circle”. Their sexual expression is largely a private matter. But marriage is a public matter. It is the recognition of a society. It bestows honour in a public way. And perhaps this is what is really at stake: *those who have four sides and demand to be called “circles” don’t really care about “circles”, but they really care about respectability and society’s acceptance.*

This, they claim, is needed in all the ways circles enjoy- estate laws, superannuation entitlements, hospital access, and guardianship of children. But most of these things are *now* available without the need to have their “square” relationships called “circles”.

## CIRCLES DO NOT HAVE FOUR SIDES

Just as the word to describe a round outline is “a circle”, the word to describe the publicly acknowledged covenant between a man and a woman who probably intend to have or raise children is called “a marriage”. Society values such covenants. Healthy marriages have many

benefits for a couple and society as a whole. Professor Linda Waite of Chicago University has found that a healthy marriage benefits a couple emotionally, psychologically, and economically. Other studies have found that on average, married people live a few years longer than unmarried people and many years longer than divorced people. Children raised by parents in a healthy marriage tend to do better academically, socially, and psychologically, according to research conducted by Assoc. Prof. George Sarantakos.

Men and women are different. These differences are not just the obvious superficial physical differences but they extend to the unique mix of chemicals secreted into the male and female brains and glands that causes men and woman to think, feel and act differently. While gender differences have led to unhealthy tensions between men and women, deep misunderstandings and even tragically to violence, marriage provides a harmony between the genders. When a man and woman marry they literally complement each other.

Not only does the term “marriage” mean the covenant union of a man and woman for the purpose of having or raising children (this is even possible for elderly people), but the covenantal union of a man and a woman to have or raise children is called: “marriage”. This is like saying circles are round and round outlines are circles. Therefore, a partnership between two people of the same gender is not a “marriage”. This is like saying that a square has four equal sides and that an equally four-sided shape is a square, therefore, an equally four-sided shape is not a circle.

In Australia, UK and the USA, several jurisdictions have moved to “equalise” squares and circles by legislating for a register of “Significant Relationships” whereby participants can enjoy equal property rights, inheritance benefits, superannuation (401K) entitlements, and hospital access. These are of course a part of the benefits of marriage, which any registered couple can also enjoy. But these are not the things that constitute a society paying its respects to such relationships with the term: “marriage”. And this seems to be the real sticking point: *respect*. The term “marriage” is a sublimely wonderful word that commands respect. To be “married” is respectable. To live together sexually without *marriage* is to *live in sin*. You still hear people joking about *living in sin*. But it’s no joke. The guilt and shame felt by some who live in such sin is not eased by medication, therapy, support-groups, self-help books, or even a government-issued certificate with the word “marriage” on it.

But the ache for respect and respectability by those who refuse to live by the Maker’s Instruction Handbook and go on deeper into sexual and moral sin can only be remedied spiritually. In fact, we all need remedying. It’s not that the heterosexual sinner has an advantage. All forms of sexual sin, including even “lust” according to Jesus (“*But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*” - Matthew. 5:28; “*For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person.*” – Matthew 15:19-20) will defile a person from entering Heaven!!! It seems that Jesus was infinitely intolerant when it came to those who practised sexual sin. According to the Apostle Paul though, this same Jesus is infinitely merciful when it comes to forgiving, spiritually cleansing, and setting people free from their untamed desires.

*And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were*

*justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

First Corinthians 6:11

I don't think this is really an issue about *marriage*. It's part of an infinitely frustrating strategy to shake off a sense of squareness and become a circle all the while clinging to a shape that it is comprised of four equal sides. Jeremiah the prophet asked, *Can a leopard change its spots or an Ethiopian change his skin colour?* It was most definitely not a question of being resigned to only ever being who you are. The context of Jeremiah's question still rings true today: *No matter what your past behaviour or desires, and despite your best but failed efforts to change yourself and your desires, only God can bring about the necessary change where it counts – your heart.*

*And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh,*

Ezekiel. 11:19

A sin-injured heart is a sin-stained heart. This inevitably leads to what Joe Dallas calls, "*desires in conflict*". Only God has the remedy to this. And again the ministry of Christ through the apostle Paul reveals the good news that everyone needs to hear about this wonderfully amazing heart transformation-

*¶ Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

1Corinthians 6:9-11

We all need a healed heart through the infinite mercy of a sin-hating God more than we need a certificate with the words: *marriage*, written on it. If you know that your heart is sin-stained and that you need a healed-heart, you are just one heartfelt prayer away from it.

When we recognise this we might see that the solution isn't really in trying to call four-sided shapes "circles" or claiming that the references to round outlines can only be considered "circles" is nothing more than "discrimination". Marriage is between a man and a woman in the same way that a circle is round and does not have four equal sides.

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