

## BOOK REVIEW

## The Great Adventure!

# Defending Marriage

## Twelve Arguments for Sanity

by Anthony Esolen

**D**EFENDING MARRIAGE — *Twelve Arguments for Sanity* is a survival manual from the attacks on it by same-sex unions, divorce and avoiding children.

The first eleven chapters diagnose the evil effects (if not the aims?) of the 1960s Sexual Revolution, to suppress marriage, family, purity and modesty. These words will have no meaning, their ideas unthinkable.

Moreover, every State intervention on marriage, from registry office marriage, to divorce and no-fault divorce, has made things worse. The fornicators now see no point in getting married or in having children, while same-sex unions demand both.

### THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION

- The Sex Revolution claims any sex act whatever is OK and male & female are **interchangeable unisex**.
- Same-sex unions are the present stage of a Gadarene slide, soon to justify polygamy, incest and bestiality.
- School sex-ed programs despise the **latency period** and scorn traditional marriage and family.
- Planned Parenthood? or Planned Predators!

### TRUTH, BEAUTY, GOODNESS of marriage

The book's last chapter has a parable of two countries — the beautiful Land of Marriage and the horrid Land of *Divisia* and its negativity.

Till now, civilized societies have **always** been made and sustained by marriages. A man and woman promise publicly to "give their lives to give life".

*Divisia* is divisive. Society is reduced to isolated individuals in a fur-lined mouse trap dictated to by an oligarchy self-conscious of its superiority. Self-interest is all that remains. The culture of marriage and family that made civilization has been *terminated*.

### MAJOR THEMES in *Defending Marriage*

- The sexes are complementary, not interchangeable; marriage and family hold a society together.
- Marriage is not just a private contract between individuals but the bonding of two families.
- Marriage/family link past, present, future generations so the extended family thrives on its nuclear families.
- Marriage and family pre-exist the State; indeed, the State developed from families and marriages.
- The State exists to defend and promote marriage and family, and depends on them for its own survival.
- The State cannot redefine marriage and family, nor is it the source of their authority and existence.
- A dictatorial bureaucratic State insists on worship by its members in an idolatrous attempt to usurp God.
- The best preparation for marriage is growing up in a family practising the virtues of giving and forgiving. Real sex-education is boys learning to be men and girls women from parental example and instruction.

### THE AUTHOR'S ATTITUDES

- Sympathy for, not condemnation of homosexuals; and praise for *Courage* group's positive reform program.
- He distinguishes love for sinners from hatred of sin, and refuses to equate a person with his conduct.
- Boys want to become men, but same-sex talk gets them uneasy at growing up in their **God-given sex**.
- Boys need boys to become boys, to become men; girls need girls to become girls, to become women.
- The vital influence of **fathers**, plus traditional **self-segregation** of boys & girls, makes same-sex taboo.
- The author offers convincing rebuttals to proponents of contraception, divorce and same-sex unions.
- His clear thinking flows from his Catholicism. Herein he deals only with **natural marriage**, not sacramental.

### EDITORIAL COMMENT

**A**NTHONY ESOLEN defends marriage by patient argument enriched with quotes from pagan classics, and Christian literature, poetry and drama.

He often quotes Tolkien and Lewis. I think he would approve of further quotes from them:-

In *Tree and Leaf*, J.R.R. Tolkien says fantasy/fairy stories help us to live better lives in the real world. They teach "the necessity of keeping promises (even with intolerable consequences) that, together with observing prohibitions, runs through all Fairyland" — a reminder of marriage vows and no adultery. He also says, "... to have the heart of a little child [meaning humility and innocence] is necessary for all high adventure," and for entry "into kingdoms both less and far greater than Faërie..."

In *The Screwtape Letters*, C.S. Lewis says that Christ "...wants to bring the man to a state of mind in which he could design the best cathedral in the world, and know it to be the best, and rejoice in the fact, without being any more (or less) or otherwise glad at having done it than he would be if it had been done by another."

Thus humility is self-forgetfulness, a combination of honesty, generosity and being ready to laugh at oneself. His *Four Loves* treats affection, friendship, eros and charity.

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### FURTHER READING

- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*; marriage nn. 1534,1601<sup>ff</sup>; children & parents, nn. 2197<sup>ff</sup>; 6th Commandment, nn. 2331 ff; 9<sup>th</sup> Commandment, nn. 2514 ff.
- *Nineteen Eighty Four*, George Orwell on the police State.
- *Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley on the sex State.
- *Mothering Matters*, Dr Peter Cook on damage by "child-care".
- *False Promises*, Lucy Sullivan, social statistics 1960s-1990s.
- *Unprotected*, Miriam Grossman M.D. politically correct sex.

Father James Tierney

# The single most humanising institution in history

Lord Jonathan Sacks

**A**MONG many speeches yesterday [21-11-2014] following Pope Francis's address to the *Humanum colloquium* on complementarity, that of Lord Jonathan Sacks, the former Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom, was the standout, bringing the audience of 300 in the synod hall to their feet. Using dazzling oratory, he offered a magisterial account of the development of marriage from the very start 'a sexual act between fish in Scotland' right up to the present day, told by means of seven stories, and ending with a spectacular exegesis of the Genesis account. It is a story with a tragic end: the dismantling of what he calls "the single most humanising institution in history" resulting in a whole new era of poverty and social division. Yet the recovery of that institution offers hope. **What follows is an excerpt from the full speech:**

**M**ARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY are where faith finds its home and where the Divine Presence lives in the love between husband and wife, parent and child. What then has changed? Here's one way of putting it. I wrote a book a few years ago about religion and science and I summarised the difference between them in two sentences. "Science takes things apart to see how they work. Religion puts things together to see what they mean." And that's a way of thinking about culture also. Does it put things together or does it take things apart?

What made the traditional family remarkable, a work of high religious art, is what it brought together: sexual drive, physical desire, friendship, companionship, emotional kinship and love, the begetting of children and their protection and care, their early education and induction into an identity and a history. Seldom has any institution woven together so many different drives and desires, roles and responsibilities. It made sense of the world and gave it a human face, the face of love.

For a whole variety of reasons, some to do with medical developments like birth control, in vitro fertilisation and other genetic interventions, some to do with moral change like the idea that we are free to do whatever we like so long as it does not harm others, some to do with a transfer of responsibilities from the individual to the state, and other and more profound changes in the culture of the West, almost everything that marriage once brought together has now been split apart. Sex has been divorced from love, love from commitment, marriage from having children, and having children from responsibility for their care.

The result is that in Britain in 2012, 47.5 per cent of children were born outside marriage, expected to become a majority in 2016. Fewer people are marrying, those who are, are marrying later, and 42 per cent of marriages end in divorce. Nor is

cohabitation a substitute for marriage. The average length of cohabitation in Britain and the United States is less than two years. The result is a sharp increase among young people of eating disorders, drug and alcohol abuse, stress related syndromes, depression and actual and attempted suicides. The collapse of marriage has created a new form of poverty concentrated among single parent families, and of these, the main burden is born by women, who in 2011 headed 92 per cent of single parent households. In Britain today more than a million children will grow up with no contact whatsoever with their fathers.

This is creating a divide within societies the like of which has not been seen since Disraeli spoke of "two nations" a century and a half ago. Those who are privileged to grow up in stable loving association with the two people who brought them into being will, on average, be healthier physically and emotionally. They will do better at school and at work. They will have more successful relationships, be happier and live longer.

And yes, there are many exceptions. But the injustice of it all cries out to heaven. It will go down in history as one of the tragic instances of what Friedrich Hayek called "the fatal conceit" that somehow we know better than the wisdom of the ages, and can defy the lessons of biology and history. No one surely wants to go back to the narrow prejudices of the past.

This week, in Britain, a new film opens, telling the story of one of the great minds of the twentieth century, Alan Turing, the Cambridge mathematician who laid the philosophical foundations of computing and artificial intelligence, and helped win the war by breaking the German naval code Enigma. After the war, Turing was arrested and tried for homosexual behaviour, underwent chemically induced castration, and died at the age of 41 by cyanide poisoning, thought by many to have committed suicide. That is a world to which we should never return.

But our compassion for those who choose to live differently should not inhibit us from being advocates for the single most humanising institution in history. The family, man, woman, and child, is not one lifestyle choice among many. It is the best means we have yet discovered for nurturing future generations and enabling children to grow in a matrix of stability and love. It is where we learn the delicate choreography of relationship and how to handle the inevitable conflicts within any human group. It is where we first take the risk of giving and receiving love. It is where one generation passes on its values to the next, ensuring the continuity of a civilization. For any society, the family is the crucible of its future, and for the sake of our children's future, we must be its defenders.

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