

THE SECULAR STATE AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

The state and marriage

The state should ideally not recognise marriage at all. Marriage should just be a private arrangement and not a civil/public one. The state needs only make laws regarding the contract regarding property and other rights in relation to the married couple. There is no need for the state to go beyond that. Until people show sense in relation to marriage, we must put up with it or something akin to it.

The state could perhaps replace all marriages with civil partnerships.

States that only allow religious ministers to perform wedding ceremonies are discriminating against humanists and atheists and secularists who wish to perform non-religious marriage ceremonies.

Civil partnership involves having a ceremony. Alternatively, a couple who are together a set number of years 5 years in Ireland may be considered to be civil partners without the ceremony. Indeed a couple being together at least five years should be considered proof of commitment. Its a lot better than a ceremony. What can a ceremony prove?

Marriage is demeaning for it is not real unless the couple have sex at least once. This puts the emphasis on sex not on love or cementing the relationship. It discriminates against those who are unable to have sex. Marriage is not real until sex happens. It is mad to say that marriage vows are useless until sex happens. It denies that love unites. Sex would only be an expression of that love so it would be less important. Relationships make marriages not sex and certainly not a single sex act. The message is that a man owns his wife by having sex with her the once - this is not compatible with real love. It contradicts it. The concept of marriage is superstitious. Therefore it is religious. Marriage contradicts the separation that should exist between Church and state.

The state must not recognise religious wedding ceremonies. Marriage is a legal affair and the context of the ceremony and the ceremony must reflect that. Religious weddings do not have the same meaning as the state weddings. God religion sees marriage as mainly as couples coming together to be one for God. Civil weddings are not about God. If people want a Church wedding, they must have a legal ceremony first and then go on to Church.

If the Church wants the right to perform marriage with the authority invested by the state, then it functions as a state representative and not as a religion. Then it has no right to refuse to marry gay couples even if it disapproves of homosexuality. If you represent the state you have to sustain the values of the state.

Marriages which fail to recognise the union as being about property rights are invalid. It will take examination of the vows and the paperwork to determine this. There is no problem at all with the idea of temporary marriage or trial marriage.

People must have the right to choose whoever they wish as the celebrant of their marriage - even the local comedian. As long as the paperwork is correct it does not matter.

There are many successful relationships and families without any marriages. They do not need the support of the state except maybe financial support. It is clear that there is no need for state recognition of marriage. Tax benefits should be given to parents for their sake of their children. It is not right that two single people pay higher taxes than two married people. Marriage in itself is not a justification for that.

The Church performs marriage not only for God but for the state. The Church takes a state role when it takes on the legality of marriage. Therefore the Church is obligated to perform gay marriage as a representative of the state, if the state legalises and recognises gay marriage. The Church can retain the right to refuse to conduct gay marriages by ceasing to provide marriage in its legal and civil capacity. In many countries, the couple marry in a register office first to cover the legalities. Then they have a church wedding if they wish which gets no legal recognition.

The thought that gay people pay their money to the Church and therefore the Church should provide marriage for them is an interesting one. If you agree, then you might argue that it should be illegal for the Church to take money to serve the best interests of the people and to fail to do so.

It is interesting that the Catholic Church allows divorce as long as the husband and wife merely intend to dissolve the marriage in the eyes of the law and not God. So it has to consider then why it cannot perform gay marriage even though it does not really believe this is marriage?

Religion and its adoption agencies

The Church states that governments do not have the right to force Church adoption agencies to arrange adoptions with heterosexual couples who are not validly married in the eyes of the Church. Or with gay couples. Or a couple one of whom is a transsexual.

There is no room for debate. If a couple is suitable for raising a child it does not matter if the couple is unwed or gay. It is the principle that counts. Suppose religion is right to argue that, for example, no gay couple is suitable for parenthood. Each application still has to be considered on its own merits. Maybe no gay couple will get a child, but it is only fair to consider them.

Secularism requires that people who oppose homosexuality etc should not be allowed to become foster parents or to adopt children. Such people only accept the child conditionally. They have limits placed on what rights a gay child has. They may strongly hate or oppose the child if the child is gay.

Religion and same-sex civil partnerships

A few Christians say that society disagrees with them that homosexuality is wrong so they decide that they should let the state grant them civil partnerships. This is really saying that Christian disapproval of homosexuality is just an opinion. No true Christian can take that stance. If the Christian says that society disagrees with them that homosexuality is wrong so they decide that they must let the state grant them civil partnerships that means that the Christian is not in a mind of approval but resignation.