

Imposing homosexual adoption on Northern Ireland

The Government has announced plans to legalise the joint adoption of children by homosexual couples and cohabiting heterosexual couples.¹ At present, only married couples can jointly adopt. The final decision will be made following a public consultation during August 2006.

Using children as trophies

- These proposals will place the most vulnerable children in society with adults who are living in a gravely immoral relationship. The Government is seeking to use children in care as political pawns to promote homosexual rights.
- The plans are an attack on the views of the vast majority of people in Northern Ireland. Some 61% of men in the Province believe that homosexual practice is always or almost always wrong.²
- Homosexual adoption deliberately and permanently denies a child either a mother or father. If two men adopt a child, the child has no mother figure. If two women adopt a child, the child has no father.
- It is claimed homosexual couples can already adopt via the single person route – where one person adopts as a ‘single person’ and the other is given legal responsibilities for the child.
 - ▶ There have been reports of a handful of such cases in England, but the major studies report virtually no such adoptions at all.³
 - ▶ The Bill will radically change the law on *joint* adoption. Only a married man and woman can adopt *jointly* at present – because vulnerable children need a father and a mother.
- Even researchers sympathetic to gay rights have found that children brought up by homosexuals are more likely to suffer from gender confusion⁴ and to become homosexuals themselves.⁵

Political correctness

- The plans are about transporting to Northern Ireland the political correctness which is rampant elsewhere. It is the same politically correct agenda which has put off so many suitable married couples in the rest of Britain from adopting children.
- The Prime Minister’s review for England and Wales found that up to 90% of those who enquire about adoption are put off or rejected.⁶ Married couples have been rejected because they are too fat or too rich, have too many books or go to church.⁷ Political correctness is not the solution; it’s the problem.

Homosexual adoption is not a human right

- In 2002 the European Court of Human Rights ruled that there is no right for homosexuals to adopt.⁸
- Some argue that allowing homosexual couples to jointly adopt will 'widen the pool of potential adopters'. But according to the census there are only 288 same-sex couple households in the whole of Northern Ireland.⁹ By 31 March 2006 only 43 civil partnerships had been registered in Northern Ireland.¹⁰
- With around 329,000 married couples in the Province, the pool of potential adopters is already wide enough.¹¹ Too few children are being adopted from care at present, but much more could be done to change social work practice and encourage adoption in the social services, as the Government has acknowledged in its consultation paper.¹²

Adoption by heterosexual cohabiters

- Children need a father and mother as committed to each other as they are to them. Only married couples have made a public and legal commitment to each other for life. If a cohabiting heterosexual couple want to adopt, they can simply get married.
- Cohabiting couples are six and a half times more likely to split up within five years of the birth of a child than a married couple.¹³
- Children brought up by married couples are statistically far more likely to have better health, do better at school, have fewer behavioural problems and are less likely to commit a criminal offence.¹⁴

¹ *Adopting the Future: A Consultation Document*, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, June 2006, page 12

² *Northern Ireland Life & Times Survey*, 2004, see http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2004/Religious_Observance/SEXHOMO.html as at 11 July 2006

³ Ivaldi, G, *Surveying Adoption: A Comprehensive Analysis of Local Authority Adoptions 1998-1999 – England*, British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering, 2000, page 88, and page 89 citing Owen, M, *Novices, Old Hands and Professionals: A Study of Single Parent Adoptions*, British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering, 1999; Lowe N, Murch M, Borkowski M et al, *Supporting Adoption: Reframing the Approach*, British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering, 1999, pages 67 and 347

⁴ Hoefler, B, 'Children's Acquisition of Sex-Role Behavior', *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 51, 1981, pages 536-543; and Hoefler, B, 'Lesbian and Heterosexual Single Mothers' Influence of Their Children's Acquisition of Sex-Role Traits and Behavior', Dissertation, University of California (Ann Arbor: UMI), 1979, cited in Belcastro, P A et al, 'A Review of Data Based Studies Addressing the Affects of Homosexual Parenting on Children's Sexual and Social Functioning', *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, 20(1/2), 1993, pages 111-112

⁵ Golombok, S and Tasker, F, 'Do Parents Influence the Sexual Orientation of their Children? Findings from a Longitudinal Study of Lesbian Families', *Developmental Psychology*, 32(1), 1996, page 9; Stacey, J and Biblarz, T J, '(How) Does the Sexual Orientation of Parents Matter?', *American Sociological Review*, 66, 2001, page 163

⁶ *Adoption, Prime Minister's Review – Issued for Consultation*, A Performance and Innovation Unit Report, Cabinet Office, July 2000, pages 35-36

⁷ See for example, *The Daily Express*, 5 October 2004; *Evening Mail*, 31 October 2002; *The Evening Standard*, 17 May 2002; *The Sunday Times*, 11 July 1993

⁸ *Frette v France* [2002] The European Court of Human Rights, case 36515/97

⁹ *Census 2001*, Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency, Table UV93

¹⁰ *The Registrar General's Quarterly Report: January to March 2005*, Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency, 337, June 2006, Table 2

¹¹ *Census 2001*, Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency, Table T50

¹² *Adopting the Future: A Consultation Document*, *Op cit*, page 6

¹³ Kiernan, K, 'Childbearing Outside Marriage in Western Europe', *Population Trends*, 98, Winter 1999, Office for National Statistics, Table 11, page 19

¹⁴ See for example, Halsey, A H, in Dennis, N and Erdos, G, *Families Without Fatherhood*, IEA, 1993, page xii