

### **367 A field of wheat and tares**

Recent research from Marriage Foundation shows that rates of divorce in the first 15 years of marriage are falling across Europe, with Britain leading the way with the biggest fall in divorce rates over the last 25 years.

Reacting to this positive news, the founder of Marriage Foundation has said that - “marriages are being undertaken nowadays with a degree of serious commitment not seen for decades. By comparison with their parents, couples are marrying later, more thoughtfully and thus more enduringly ... (there is a) constant stream of data showing the qualitative advantages to married relationships. Now the challenge is to persuade those who do not marry that their informal cohabiting relationships are inherently far less stable or beneficial, which is not at all good for them and disastrous for their children” - (and, we might add, for the rest of society too).

We thank the Lord that these somewhat surprising pro-marriage findings indicate a definite step in the right direction, serving as a welcome “slap in the face” for trendy politicians who continue to weaken marriage in whatever ways they think will be popular. For instance in Britain since 2005 we have had the introduction of “civil partnerships” for homosexual couples, “same-sex marriage”, “no-fault divorce”, and most recently “civil partnerships” for heterosexual couples.

This string of legislation hardly strengthens the institution of true, God-ordained, Bible-revealed marriage that has been the bedrock of human society since Adam and Eve. Perhaps these encouraging divorce-rate figures from across Europe indicate that such marriages are not so bad after all when compared with the various alternatives on offer.

But meanwhile numerous liberal juggernauts grind steadily on, focussing, as shown by the various legislative examples mentioned above, especially on issues of sexuality and gender, and especially nowadays on the young.

“The transgender movement has become Orwellian” proclaims a recent headline, referring to a new “police force” now to be found in our schools, namely “the pronoun police”. If a boy pupil announces he is now to be treated as a girl, or a girl pupil announces she is now to be treated as a boy, then so be it – teachers and fellow pupils are to oblige or will “face the music”. This nonsense is but one example of the strong

influence of the homosexual / transgender lobby in shaping the “relationships curriculum” in our primary and secondary state schools.

A further example of this baleful influence is found in the United States. In a recent interview the President of the Parents Television Council (PTC) stated that in recent years there has been a dramatic and dangerous change of approach among film producers - “Instead of children just being collateral damage in the way of whatever explicit content they want to deliver to adults, Hollywood now seems to be directly marketing some of the most explicit stuff to children ... It has never been more difficult as a parent to monitor your children’s media consumption than right now, today”. A newly-released Disney cartoon called “The Owl House”, which “teaches kids how to be witches - using a demon to do so” is a timely example.

So there is no surprise that we are facing “a field of wheat and tares” concerning issues of sexuality and gender (Matthew 13.24-30, 36-43), that old mix in “the field of the world” of the Lord’s work and the devil’s work, of good and bad, of right and wrong, but with the tares clearly growing with extra vigour these days.

By way of response we stick close to the Lord and His Word, as in - “Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us” (from II Timothy 1.13-14, KJV). That “good thing” is simply the Gospel of grace and truth leading to salvation by faith in Christ alone (eg., Romans 10.9-13), which brings so many further blessings in its wake.

We keep our eyes and ears alert, and our voices active when necessary, for within the current chaos are many confused, hurting people in desperate need of spiritual truth and pastoral support. In our speech - “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4.29-30).

As with Elijah from last week, we continue to “look toward the sea” for the Lord’s intervention (I Kings 18.43). We pray “without ceasing” (I Thessalonians 5.17), and apply Jesus’ precious words spoken to those at Thyatira, and to us, “But that which ye have [already], hold fast till I come” (Revelation 2.18, 25).

What comfort we find in such words. Praise God, in Christ alone, and in no other, all shall be well.

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