

CANADIAN FAMILY VIEWS

INSTITUTE OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY CANADA 

THE FAMILY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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INTRODUCTION



DURING THE COURSE OF THE PAPER, I WILL DESCRIBE THE FAMILY IN THE 21ST CENTURY. I will note various family forms and then speak about the outcomes for children from these.

I will suggest that the family, as it is traditionally understood, generally provides the best outcomes for children as they prepare for adult life; that substantive research indicates that children nurtured by a *two-biological-parent married couple* fare better across a wide range of outcomes than those from other family forms.

I will argue that if we accept that raising children is vital to the social good, then we should ask what environment provides the best preparation for life for our children.

My contention is that the two-biological-parent married couple is generally the best environment for preparing children for life.

This being the case, I will ask why the family—as it has been classically understood—has been injured, and what policies and initiatives might restore its dignity.

THE FAMILY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

So to begin—the family in the 21st century is, interestingly, as it has always been.

By this I mean that when we think of family, we picture it as a place of unique relationships focused around a marriage—a mum and a dad—and then siblings and grandparents, and often aunts, uncles and cousins, too.

The thing that springs to mind, initially, for the majority of people, is: mum, dad, marriage—and then, perhaps, the surrounding web of kinship. This is still the case despite widely reported social changes.

This classic family structure is not a figment of our imagination; it is the experience of the majority, and most likely, despite some serious threats that my colleagues will elaborate on during the day, it will continue to be so during the 21st century.

So, the experience of family structure in my own country, for example, consists, predominantly, of married couples.

According to the New Zealand national census (2001),¹ 83% of two parent families are married parent families.² And in spite of sensationalist reporting, this is happily so.

DEFINITION OF FAMILY

So *what is the family in the 21st century?* It is the union of a man and a woman in a committed monogamous relationship, that I will call marriage. And this is a natural and universal phenomenon.

Family is thus *the most basic social bond*—rooted in human biology and cultural convention.

Family is also *the most basic social unit* within society, and genuine communities flow from it—flow from the commitment of mothers and fathers to their children and grandchildren.

What does the family do? Family is the home to human relationships. It shapes human identity and character, and it places a pattern before us on how to relate to one another.

Family, in this context, is also, therefore, for bearing and raising children.

Our family is our first school, our first hospital—in fact, it is the first society we encounter.

Of huge importance, and mentioned only a moment ago, it also connects the generations and sustains social order.

ALTERNATIVE FAMILY FORMS

While the family in the 21st century is as it has always been, there are, however, a variety of other family forms.

Deleire and Kalil (2002) state that there are at least twelve family forms common today, especially given the prevalence of divorce and re-partnering.

These family forms include

- never married single mothers;
- never married single mothers in multi-generational (grandparent) households;
- single mothers with *cohabiting males*;
- divorced single mothers;
- divorced single mothers in multi-generational (grandparent) households;

and

- single father families (in the same variations as single mothers);

and

- grandparent households with no parent present;

and

- two cohabiting couples with *one non-biological* parent;
- two biological *cohabiting* parents;

- blended or step-families;
 - blended or step-family married couples;
- and finally, the form I will spend most of my time on this morning—
- the two-biological-parent married couple.

Some of these family forms are comparatively novel—an observation that I will elaborate on shortly. They are less to do with the realities of, for example, disease, warfare or the breakdown of marital relationships and divorce, and more to do with social construction. Same-sex cohabiting couples with only one biological parent, for instance, arguably, have very little historical and a limited biological basis to them. However, developments in human reproductive technologies, cloning and same-sex procreation, for example in the UK at the universities of Newcastle, Edinburgh and Sheffield, have the potential to change this.

Same-sex partnerships where there are two cohabiting partners with one non-biological parent, and civil unions or same-sex marriages have become in some nations socially acceptable, with legislation introduced in support of these relationships, for example, in New Zealand and Canada in 2004 and 2005 respectively.

WHY SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED FAMILY FORMS HAVE GAINED PLAUSIBILITY

Why have these family forms gained plausibility? This question is very difficult to answer because there are so many variables involved in the formulation of a response.

However, two individuals stand large in social analysts' thinking: the eighteenth century figures of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Immanuel Kant.

I want to speak very briefly about their work, because it might begin to explain why we are where we are today with regard to family forms. Further, some of the recommendations I will make at the close of this paper will deal directly to that influence.

ROUSSEAU'S INFLUENCE

Rousseau was an extraordinarily creative man who composed opera, wrote theology and education theory, and who worked in diplomatic circles. But perhaps more than anyone he destabilized the meaning of family.

He did this through his ideas and writing. In *The Social Contract* (1762; 1994, 45) he advanced the line of thought, with revolutionary implications, that “man was born free, and everywhere he is in chains.”

In doing so, he encouraged the human tendency towards *autonomy and self-mastery*.

Emile, also written in 1762, is a novel that outlines a method for creating the model citizen. Susan Neiman, Director of the Einstein Forum, Potsdam, in her recent philosophical work *Evil in Modern Thought* (2004:41), believes that the section

in *Emile* known as the “Creed of the Savoyard Vicar” was “so new and so profound, that it changed society’s construction of the problem of evil.” In a nutshell, it proposed that human beings, as “noble savages” can deal with moral evil. In doing so, it limited evil to the natural world.

Why was this a crucial move philosophically? Because it began to close the door on metaphysics and as a consequence shifted the debate in epistemology, the question that addresses how we know things and upon what authority we draw our conclusions.

KANT'S INFLUENCE

Kant was gripped by Rousseau’s daring. It is well known that only two events ever interrupted his legendary routine: his reading of *Emile* and news of the French Revolution—arguably, a material consequence of the novel.

Kant cemented the moves that Rousseau began in his work. More importantly, he was rigorous—possibly more so than any other philosopher in the Western tradition. With his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781; 2004) Kant closed off the transcendent from philosophical enquiry. The phenomenological—the world and everything in it—became our playground. The result was an outpouring of human assertion and the rejection of authority models that claimed legitimacy through their links to the transcendent.

Kings, as anointed rulers, were overthrown in an age of upheaval.

The rational, autonomous, self-perfecting, self-asserting individual became the epitome of the Enlightenment and of high modernity. Prometheus was unbound.

THE RELEVANCE OF ROUSSEAU AND KANT TO OUR DISCUSSION

Rousseau and Kant are relevant to this discussion because they set the trends of 19TH and 20TH century thought that materialised in social action and attitudes.

So, Karl Marx’s dialectical materialism and Friedrich Nietzsche’s moral relativism and “will to power” find their expression in the tragically destructive ideologies and wars of late modernity.

And Michel Foucault, the most cited author in academia today, is a horse from the same stable: both he and Nietzsche, with their insistence that morals, histories and even families are socially constructed, labour in Kant’s shadow.

My point is that Rousseau and, especially, Kant have set the agenda in theoretical thought since the nineteenth century. After Kant, discourse on metaphysics and ontology—the nature of reality and of being—dwindled. This is why so much 20TH century philosophical enquiry concerned itself with language. Jacques Derrida recognised that short of an Incarnation there was nothing else to play with.

More tangibly, Kant’s legacy has been autonomy, self-potential and, arguably, an emphasis on personal fulfilment.

Whether this has emerged through the aforementioned Nietzsche's will to power (characterised, for example, by identity politics) or through John Dewey's Copernican revolution in education (1916), which, in the mould of Rousseau's *Emile* places the child at the centre of learning, thus displacing an external authority, the effect is the same. It is, for better or worse, self-centredness.

If more time were available we might consider how Kant's work also opened the way for the degree of epistemic scepticism that is prevalent today. Truth is held to be tenuous and claims of truth are associated, negatively, with claims to power.

✿ SUMMARY TO DATE

Why have we had this excursus? We are considering family forms, and I would like to suggest that some of the forms, which I described earlier, have become acceptable because of the impact, however indirectly, of Rousseau and particularly Kant's thought. In a nutshell, I am arguing that ideas have consequences. To the medieval and early modern mind a single parent by personal choice or a same-sex marriage would have been incomprehensible: it would have been implausible, even—an impossible contradiction. However, in the minds of many, even as I speak, it is ok.

And nor am I advocating a return to medieval times! My point is that Kant and Rousseau's ideas crystallized into the western pre-occupations with individualism and self-centredness.³ For the family, this means that partnering, child-bearing, and child-rearing are now meant to serve and fulfil individualistic desires, rather than serve as the foundation for kinship, posterity, and, ultimately, survival.

When we apply this to our own lives, we think of our needs and wants in priority to those of our children, our marriages and other relationships. Personal satisfaction becomes the guiding principle for life. Other people, prior obligations and the significance of family form do not feature in our calculations.

✿ SIGNPOSTING

So where am I going with this talk. I have argued that *de facto* the family is what it has always been; that is, that the family of the 21ST century is the union of a man and a woman in marriage, and that it is a natural and universal phenomenon. I have suggested that it is the most basic unit of society and it is the cradle of identity and education for children. I have also referred to other family forms. I have tried to explain why they might have become part of our social landscape.

I will now go on to argue that social science data indicates that generally children do better in terms of preparation for life when they are *raised in a two-biological-married parent home*—a traditional family unit—than in other family forms. And if this is the case, then with reference to the common good, we should look for ways to honour and vitalise this family form, while not neglecting to improve the outcomes

for children from other family forms. Our priorities, however, might wish to be directed to the family form that, all things being equal, pre-eminently prepares children for life: the two-biological-married parent family.

✿ A QUALIFICATION

Before I turn to the best data available on outcomes for children, I would like to draw attention again, momentarily, to family forms that are not social constructs designed for immediate personal gratification. These family forms are the *consequences of circumstances*. When a spouse dies a family still exists. Similarly, even amid separation or divorce a family is extant. These families are a fact of life. We will hope to assist them and work for better outcomes for their children, but they represent a very different policy and societal proposition to those family forms that have recently emerged, simply because they are personally desirable and socially permissible.

✿ A SECOND CAVEAT

A second, and very important, point to note is process. By this I mean how functional a family is. This is a question of relationships.

The research I am about to cite clearly articulates that while children from a two-biological-married parent family do better than children who are raised in other family forms, they only do so in *low-conflict* situations (Amato 2001). In other words, children don't necessarily do well in high-conflict traditional families where, for example, violent physical and verbal fights are common between parents. They might do better in other family forms. Common sense alone would suggest this.

✿ A THIRD CAVEAT

I do need, also, to state that the majority of the studies mentioned (with the exception of McLanahan and Sandefur (1994) and Deliere and Kalil (2002)) whilst highly regarded among social scientists in academia, fail to include controls for *selection effects* and did not use *longitudinal data sets*.

This means that it is difficult to know whether the *selection process* in marriage between a husband and wife *anticipates better outcomes* for children because of the man and woman involved, or whether the *institution of marriage* provides something for children in its own right.

✿ SUMMARY OF CAVEATS

These caveats on family functionality and marriage partner selection noted, I would now like to return to the proposition that children from a two-biological-married parent family have better life outcomes in certain known domains than those from other family forms.

If we accept that success in these domains is critical for the common good, then it is reasonable to ask how we can

foster such success and what undermines it. Here we think of our children and society's future.

Findings on outcomes for children in relation to family form

Now to the evidence, and can I emphasise that the primary conclusion to be drawn from these studies is that children living with two-biological-married parents fare better across a wide range of outcomes than those from other family forms.

So children living with two-biological-married parents, or in what I will term the family of the 21st century, do better in *educational attainment and school engagement* (Hao and Xie 2002; Deleire and Kalil 2002; Lamb and Manning 2003; Brown 2004). And this has wide implications for employment, the generation of wealth, future family wellbeing and costs for society.

Further, children living with two-biological-married parents are less likely to be engaged in *early sexual activity* and fall to *teenage pregnancy* (McLanahan and Sandefur 1994; Woodward, Fergusson and Horwood 2001; Deleire and Kalil 2002; Hao and Xie 2001).

And, I think we all understand something of the health issues and the surrounding difficulties and costs to families and wider society that are involved here, not to mention the challenges that arise for a single mother hoping to enter into a new and substantive relationship.

And then there are the well-documented *behavioural problems* of children from family forms other than the two-biologically-married parent couple (Lamb and Manning 2003; Acs and Nelson 2002; Hao and Xie 2001), with children more likely behaving anti-socially, withdrawing from society or being insecure, and angry and inconsistent in relationships. Again this has repercussions for them as they seek employment and enter into their own marital relations. It can be difficult for them to escape negative elements of their past.

Perhaps the most grievous findings in the research speak to *poverty/food insecurity levels* (McLanahan and Sandefur 1994; Acs and Nelson 2002), with children from one in five cohabiting families falling into the "poor" category, and two in five children from cohabiting families experiencing food insecurity. I should mention that Acs and Nelson used data from the National Survey of American Families with a sample size of 44,000 households. Interestingly, and as an aside, other studies have confirmed that men's incomes increase after marriage and that marital status increases cohabiting couples incomes (Waite and Lillard, 1995).

With regard to children living outside two-parent-married families, the disadvantages they experience seem to be mediated through, at the very least, some of the following dynamics: *income disadvantage* (McLanahan and Sandefur, 1994; Acs and Nelson, 2002); *increased chances of parental depression/distress* (Brown, 2003; 2004; Dunn, 2002); *lower levels of social capital* (McLanahan and Sandefur, 1994); *lower levels of parental commitment towards non-biological children outside of marriage* (Lamb and Manning, 2003; Thomson, Hanson and McLanahan, 1994); and *an apparent relationship between family*

change and increased levels of teenage sexual activity (Woodward, Fergusson and Horwood, 2001; Cherlin et al 1995). Please note, that certain disadvantages that I have described appear to be closely related to specific family forms.

Now I would like to move on to specific family forms.

SINGLE PARENT FAMILIES

Whether we like it or not, research indicates that children living in single parent families are more likely to engage in *early sexual activity and become teenage parents than children from married parent families* (Thomson, Hanson and McLanahan 1994; Woodward, Fergusson and Horwood, 2001; Deleire and Kalil 2002; Hao and Xie 2001). With pre-teenage and teenage girls this behaviour appears to relate to the absence of a father. So Ellis notes "father absence was an overriding risk factor for early sexual activity" (Ellis et al. 2003, 818).

Furthermore, as mentioned a moment ago, there appears to be a substantial difference in income levels between married parent families and single parent families.

This financial difference, combined with lower levels of parent-child quality contact time and lower levels of general commitment, support and social capital, means that *children from single parent homes are at greater risk of lower educational achievement, early sexual activity, early family formation and late labour force participation* (McLanahan and Sandefur, 1994; Thomson Hanson and McLanahan 1994).

Income and relationship investment disadvantages are apparently the primary contributing factors towards disadvantage in this family type (Thomson Hanson and McLanahan, 1994, 239).

COHABITATION

Children living in cohabiting parent families are at greater risk of being poor or being 'food insecure', than those from intact married parent households (Acs and Nelson, 2002).

While researchers acknowledge that marriage does not necessarily have an immediate positive effect on couples' financial situations, they hold that marriage does lead to less poverty: when couples marry, they do better financially (Korenman and Neumark 1991; Ozawa and Lee 2006; Sawhill and Thomas 2005). There is also evidence that suggests marriage is related to better family oriented priorities and family investment (Bumpass and Sweet 1989; McLanahan and Sandefur 1994).

Children from cohabiting families also seem to exhibit the highest levels of misbehaviour, when compared to children from other family types (Hao and Xie, 2001; Brown 2004).

One particularly interesting finding is that while stable family conditions appear to ameliorate certain negative outcomes for children in every other family form, *a stable family environment does not seem to reduce children's misbehaviour in cohabiting unions* (Hao and Xie, 2001).⁴

Furthermore, cohabitation does not appear to have a similar effect to marriage with regard to the presence of a male father figure, the presence of a non-biological partner in a household has been found to have no observable benefit for children, when compared to children living with single parents (Lamb and Manning, 2003). Much more seriously, some researchers suggest that the most dangerous place for a child to be, in terms of family forms, is with a non-biologically related male.

So, for instance, Margolin (1992) found that 84 percent of child abuse occurred within single-parent homes and 64 percent of this abuse was committed by mothers' boyfriends who carried out only 1.75 percent of the child care. Homicide risks have also been found to be 60 times higher from male step-parent care givers, as opposed to natural fathers (Daly and Wilson, 1994).

Relationship instability and/or lower levels of parental investment appear to be the strongest contributing factors towards lower quality outcomes for children in the cohabiting family type. This is because higher incomes do not seem to significantly impact outcomes for children within cohabiting families (Brown 2004). It should be mentioned that this was one of the strongest findings in the research I am citing, indicating that family structure effect was strongest for adolescents, even after controls were added to differentiate the effects of income and parental resources.

STEP-FAMILIES

Moving on to step-families: *biological father absence seems to place teenage girls at greater risk of early sexual activity and pregnancy* (Pong and Dronkers et al 2003) *and adversely affect school achievement* (Maley, 2001; Carlson, 2006).

Furthermore, family change in general seems to be associated with early sexual activity and youth offending (Fergusson, 1999).

Moreover, children from cohabiting step-parent families have lower school achievement than those from married parent families (Brown, 2004).

Overall, it appears that the main disadvantage within step-parent families stems from lower than average levels of emotional well-being for children, most likely linked to lower levels of parental support and encouragement, as opposed to income disadvantage (Thomson Hanson and McLanahan, 1994). Again, a critical issue here, as it is with other family forms, is the relational investment that a biological parent makes in their child. Step-families, by their very nature, will find this more difficult than two-biological-parent married couples.

MARRIED PARENT FAMILIES

Children from married parent families are more likely to graduate from high school and attain the highest levels of educational achievement. They are also less likely to engage in early sexual activity, or fall into alcohol and drug abuse. They are less likely, too,

to exhibit behavioural problems (Hao and Xie, 2001; Thomson Hanson and McLanahan, 1994; Lamb and Manning, 2003).

Interestingly, marital status does appear to have a direct effect on child outcomes. So, for example, children living with step-parents who subsequently married showed marked improvements across a range of outcomes, including educational attainment and lowered levels of behavioural problems (Lamb and Manning, 2003).

Additionally, marriage appears to have a general protective effect on children, against a range of negative outcomes. Lamb and Manning's (2003) findings are particularly important insofar as they measure the relationship between marital status and the presence of biological parents, showing a clear benefit for married parent families over and above cohabiting parent families.

SUMMARY

The findings I have briefly outlined show that children from married parent biological families fare better across every measured outcome.

The benefits derived from an intact married family seem primarily to be related to higher levels of income and greater degrees of parental investment, support and social capital (Thomson Hanson and McLanahan, 1994).

These benefits speak of higher educational achievement, relating to personal confidence in a child and social capital at home; fewer behavioural problems and better social integration in relation to the workforce and future family relationships; less likelihood of early sexual relationships, teenage pregnancies and the difficulties these pose health-wise and socially; and better physical and mental health, that in turn will lead to better participation in society and greater benefits to the common good.

While some of these advantages can often be found in two-parent families, the research indicates that *the most uniform advantage is directly linked to children living with married parents.*

IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

If we accept the evidence of social science with respect to the effect a two-biological-married couple has on life outcomes for children, then we will consider ways to strengthen the success of the two-biological-married couple in their marriage and in their raising of children. We might also ask how we can improve the life outcomes for children in other family forms. One simple action that society can take is to urge couples to consider marriage seriously, knowing that its benefits are tangible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I will now make five suggestions with regard to legislation, policy and society that might help promote a marriage culture and a subsequent investment in our children both for their

wellbeing and for our benefit.

1. Firstly, there is a need for marriage to be seen as a viable option, to be cool, to be satisfying and to be enriching. This means reaching into contemporary culture and transforming it. It means relating stories that speak to the possibilities available for strong relationships, effective career pathways and for a good standard of living that, more often than not, result for children in the two-biological-married family form. It means critiquing a self-centred lifestyle that is more interested in short-term satisfaction and self-gratification than long-term stability, depth of relationship and prosperity.

Arguably, the most powerful influences in contemporary culture are music and film; to this end, composers, script-writers and directors should be asked to help rather than hinder the image-making process that surrounds family forms. Various think tanks and a number of philanthropists are working with creative writers, musicians and directors for positive change in this area. In my opinion, this is not something that any government can or should attempt to steer.

By way of explanation, I have started with recommendations in the area of culture, because I do not think that legal and policy solutions are sufficient when it comes to asking people to make an investment in marriage. The whys of such an investment are better told in narrative forms that present life stories and events, than through acts passed by houses of representatives. Empirical data, research and law will not reach the hearts of a postmodern generation the way that a good story will.

2. If we can effect change through policy and law in the field of family, then we might begin with something similar to the Australian Marriage Amendment Act that was prompted by legislation on same-sex marriage, here, in Canada. The Australians incorporated the common law definition of marriage into the nation's *Marriage Act* and the *Family Law Act*, specifying that: "Marriage means the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life. Certain unions are not marriages. A union solemnized in a foreign country between: A. a man and another man; or B. a woman and another woman; must not be recognized as a marriage in Australia".⁵ The Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA)⁶ in the USA has also sought to differentiate marriage as between a man and a woman from any other family form.

The aim of this type of legislation with regard to marriage would be to preserve and magnify the family in the understanding that the two-biological-parent-married couple is vital to societal health. And possibly, the most important aspect of such legislation is its symbolic nature: it speaks to coming generations about the place and value of marriage.

This is less a rebuttal of other family forms and more of a statement on the unique contribution that marriage—as it has been understood through common law—makes to society, beginning with children. I realise that such an act of parliament is a much more difficult proposition for Canada, given

your constitutional arrangements and recent legislative history. However, I believe, it is in your best interests, to consider very seriously such an option.

3. A third recommendation that I would like to put forward is that policy-makers revisit welfare. It might be possible to see welfare delivery through a more intensely relational framework; where assistance, for example, for a single mother is worked through family relations and extended kinship models. This would place family forms back into a relational context and possibly provide better outcomes for children—at the moment, and by way of contrast, in New Zealand, state provision for single mothers almost insulates them from their wider families and encourages them to live without consideration for their children's need of a father. Its principles are based on Kantian individualism rather than the relationships that enable us to approach life holistically.

4. In the light of the previous recommendation, it might also be worth re-examining the provisions made for charitable giving in Canada. In New Zealand, we marvel, positively, at aspects of the American tax model; it seems to endorse and simultaneously promote a culture of giving. Through charitable donations, such a mechanism would allow the various institutions of civil society to flourish, and this in turn might result in more precise welfare delivery, pinpointing need through local insight and relationships rather than through an impersonal and removed, albeit positively intentioned, public service.

5. Finally, the compulsory schooling sector can have an enormous influence on our attitudes towards family forms.

So, for example, New Zealand has recently reconsidered its national curriculum and published a draft curriculum for discussion. In a very positive fashion, it continues the trend in the education sector that encourages local initiative. In the section entitled "Planning with a Focus on Outcomes" it states that: "Principals and teachers can articulate what it is that they want their students to achieve and how their curriculum is designed to achieve this. Schools can explain their curriculum priorities."⁷ This is a powerful opportunity for principals, consultants, senior staff and charities to work together to produce education material, for instance, in "health and physical education" and "social studies" that sensitively supports the two-biological-parent married family form. And surely any attempt to revivify and uphold this family form must take into account the effect schooling has on a generation's attitudes.⁸

CLOSING SUMMARY

In closing, I will summarize my argument in this paper.

I have argued that if we accept that the raising of children is pivotal for the common good, then it is reasonable to want to locate the optimal environment for such a responsibility, and then seek to preserve and to strengthen it.

My contention is that the optimal environment for raising children is the traditional, or classic family form, as it is described in common law—that is the two-biological-parent married couple.

This contention is supported by a substantial and growing body of evidence among social scientists that indicates that children from such a family—the family of the 21ST century—fare better across a wide range of outcomes than those from other family forms.

Additionally, I have asked that honest efforts in culture be made that show marriage for what it really is. And further, that policy-makers and legislators consider a “Marriage Act”, revisit welfare and tax arrangements, and encourage educators to work with the various institutions of civil society, to strengthen marriage in schooling and in our communities.



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ENDNOTES



- 1 These statistics are taken from the 2001 census. Data from more recent surveys is not yet available in this and other domains. Statistics New Zealand does note however, that "the proportion of adults in partnerships other than legal marriage increased from 9.6 percent in 1996 to 11.3% in 2001. This increase occurred across all age groups, with 25 to 29 years being the most common age for people being in other relationships." <http://xtabs.stats.govt.nz/eng/TableFinder/index.aspx><http://xtabs.stats.govt.nz/eng/TableFinder/index.aspx> <1 September 2006>.
 - 2 This figure includes all marriages, not just first time marriages.
 - 3 It goes without saying that the impact of Kant and Rousseau was also for good. Their work brought freedom—intellectually and creatively, and inspired mankind to think for itself in new and positive ways. However, I think it is reasonable to suggest, in accordance with the law of unintended consequences, that their work opened up avenues of thought and action that have had a negative impact on society, especially in terms of community, family and education.
 - 4 Hao and Xie (2001) speculate that this could be connected to the fact that a cohabiting union is, by its very nature, already relatively unstable. A proposition supported by Susan Brown (2003; 2004).
 - 5 <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/bd/2004-05/05bd005.htm> <1 September 2006>.
 - 6 Officially known as: PUB. L. NO. 104-199, 110 STAT. 2419 (Sept. 21, 1996).
 - 7 <http://www.tki.org.nz/r/nzcurriculum/pdfs/curriculum-framework-draft.pdf#search=%22curriculum%20framework%20draft%20tki%22> <1 September 2006>. 28.
 - 8 I say "sensitively", because we face the reality of a diversity of family forms that are usually characterized by commitment and love. This does not, however, free us from the conclusions, implications and hence obligations that social-science research has rendered during the last 30 years on family forms. Our thoughts and efforts should be towards our children and their best interests.
- A second consideration is on tolerance. Tolerance, properly conceived, is a positive value, and a schooling that taught intolerance on family forms would be unwise and damaging.