

FAMILY RESEARCH COUNCIL

The Slippery Slope of Same-Sex Marriage



A Man and His Horse

In what some call a denial of a basic civil right, a Missouri man has been told he may not marry his long-term companion. Although his situation is unique, the logic of his argument is remarkably similar to that employed by advocates of homosexual marriage.



The man claims that the essential elements of marriage—love and commitment—are indeed present: “She’s gorgeous. She’s sweet. She’s loving. I’m very proud of her. ... Deep down, way down, I’d love to have children with her.”¹

Why is the state of Missouri, as well as the federal government, displaying such heartlessness in denying the holy bonds of wedlock to this man and his would-be “wife”?

It seems the state of Missouri is not prepared to indulge a man who waxes eloquent about his love for a 22-year-old mare named Pixel.

The Threat to Marriage

The Missouri man and homosexual “marriage” proponents categorically reject the definition of marriage as the union of a man and a woman. Instead, the sole criterion for marriage becomes the presence of “love” and “mutual commitment.” But once marriage is no longer confined to a man and a woman, it is impossible to exclude virtually any relationship between two or more partners of either sex—even non-human “partners.”

To those who object to comparing gay marriage to widely-rejected sexual preferences, it should be pointed out that until very recent times the very suggestion that two men or two women could “marry” was itself greeted with scorn.

Of course, media stories on same-sex marriage rarely address the fact that redefining marriage logically leads to the Missouri man and his mare. Instead, media reports typically focus instead on homosexual couples who resemble the stereotypical ideal of a married couple. Ignored in such reports is social science research indicating that such idealized “families” are utterly atypical among homosexuals.

In this pamphlet we will show the following:

- Gay marriage threatens the institutions of marriage and the family.
- Same-sex relationships are not the equivalent of traditional marriage
- Gay marriage is not a civil rights issue
- Americans overwhelmingly reject gay marriage
- Gay marriage is not a moral alternative to traditional marriage.
- Homosexuality is rightly viewed as unnatural.

The “Polyamory” Movement

“Sean has a wife. He also has a girlfriend. His girlfriend has another boyfriend. That boyfriend is dating Sean’s wife.”

DESCRIPTION OF “POLYAMORY” RELATIONSHIP²

The movement to redefine marriage has found full expression in what is variously called “polyfidelity” or “polyamory,” which seeks to replace traditional marriage with a bewildering array of sexual combinations between various groups of individuals.

“Polyamory” is derived from Greek and Latin roots, and is loosely translated “many loves.” Polyamorists reject the “myth” of monogamy and claim to practice “harmonious love and intimacy between

multiple poly partners.”³ Stanley Kurtz describes the “bewildering variety of sexual combinations. There are triads of one woman and two men; heterosexual group marriages; groups in which some or all members are bisexual; lesbian groups, and so forth.”⁴

The polyamory movement took its inspiration from Robert Heinlein’s 1961 sci-fi novel, *Stranger in a Strange Land*, in which sexual possessiveness (as in marital exclusivity) is portrayed as an evil leading to societal ills such as murder and war. The book helped spawn a number of ill-fated sexual communes, such as San Francisco’s Kerista community, in which members had sexual relations with each other according to a rotating schedule.

Anti-Marriage Activists

The Kerista commune collapsed in 1992, but the polyamory movement has taken hold in academia where, according to *First Things*, its proponents “are now so influential, if not dominant, in the academic field of marriage and family law.” Scholars enamored with polyamory argue in favor of “a social revolution that would replace traditional marriage and family law.”⁵

Kurtz concurs that the “gradual transition from gay marriage to state-sanctioned polyamory, and the eventual abolition of marriage itself, is now the most influential paradigm within academic family law.” One prominent advocate of polyamory, David Chambers, professor of law at the University of Michigan, argues: “By ceasing to conceive of marriage as a partnership composed of one person of each sex, the state may become more receptive to units of three or more.”⁶

The Frat House Concept of “Family”

This radical definition of marriage gives rise to bizarre conceptions of family that include virtually



any relationship or social group. In 1990, a San Francisco task force on family policy led by lesbian activist Roberta Achtenberg defined the family as a “unit of interdependent and interacting persons, related together over time by strong social and emotional bonds and/or by ties of marriage, birth, and adoption.”⁷

The “frat house with revolving bedroom doors” concept of marriage and the family poses dangers to children.

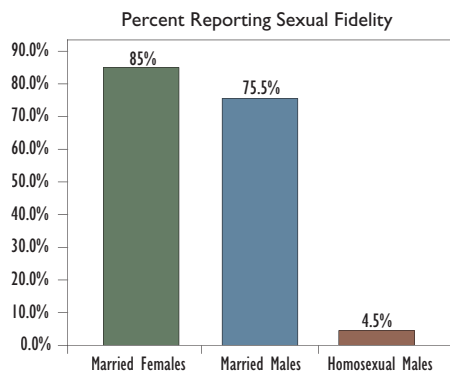
Polyamory advocates pay scant attention to the dangers posed to children being raised according to this “frat house with revolving bedroom doors” concept of marriage and the family. Yet, this nebulous, free-for-all model of the family looms ahead for our society unless a bulwark is created in the form of a constitutional amendment protecting marriage.

The slippery slope leading to the destruction of marriage as we know it draws ever closer with the decision of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court to compel the state legislature to grant homosexual sex partners the legal status of married people. This decision has emboldened public officials in various localities to grant marriage licenses to homosexual couples, igniting a national debate on the question: What is marriage—and where do we draw the limits on who can marry?

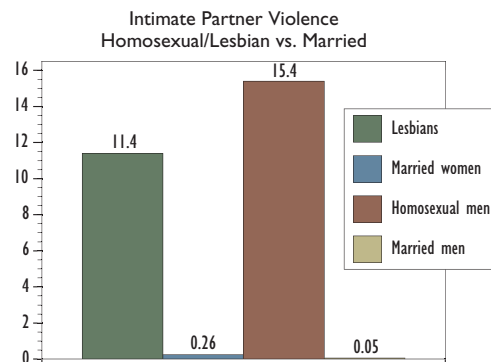
Same-Sex Relationships are not the Equivalent of Marriage

A growing body of research indicates that in key respects homosexual and lesbian relationships are radically different than married couples.

- **Relationship duration:** While a high percentage of married couples remain married for up to 20 years or longer, with many remaining wedded for life, the vast majority of homosexual relationships are short-lived and transitory. This has nothing to do with alleged “societal oppression.” A study in the Netherlands, a gay-tolerant nation that has legalized homosexual marriage, found the average duration of a homosexual relationship to be one and a half years.⁸
- **Monogamy versus promiscuity:** Studies indicate that while three-quarters or more of married couples remain faithful to each other, homosexual couples typically engage in a shocking degree of promiscuity. The same Dutch study found that “committed” homosexual couples have an average of eight sexual partners (outside of the relationship) per year.⁹



- **Intimate partner violence:** homosexual and lesbian couples experience by far the highest levels of intimate partner violence compared with married couples as well as cohabiting heterosexual couples.¹⁰ Lesbians, for example, suffer



a much higher level of violence than do married women.¹¹

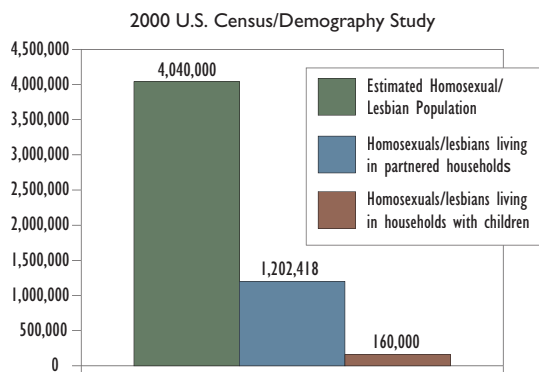
What about the Children?

In his exhaustive examination of human history, Giovanni Battista Vico (1668–1744), Professor of Rhetoric at the University of Naples, concluded that marriage between a man and a woman is an essential characteristic of civilization, and as such is the “seedbed” of society. Vico warned that chaos would ensue in the absence of strong social norms encouraging marital faithfulness and the loving care of children born to the union.



Since reproduction requires a male and a female, society will always depend upon heterosexual marriage to provide the “seedbed” of future generations. The evidence indicates that homosexual or lesbian households are not a suitable environment for children.

Data from the 2000 U.S. Census and other sources indicates that only a small percentage of homosexual households choose to raise children.¹² One reason for this is that the raising of children is inimical to the typical homosexual lifestyle, which as we have seen typically involves a revolving bedroom door. With the added problem of high rates of intimate partner violence, such households constitute a dangerous and unstable environment for children.



Homosexuals and lesbians are unsuitable role models for children because of their lifestyle. Dr. Brad Hayton observes that homosexual households “model a poor view of marriage to children. They are taught by example and belief that marital relationships are transitory and mostly sexual in nature. ... And they are taught that monogamy in a marriage is not the norm [and] should be discouraged if one wants a good ‘marital’ relationship.”¹³

The Phony Comparison with Race

Many black Americans are understandably offended when gay activists, who have never been relegated

to the back of a bus, equate their agenda with racial discrimination. In a statement supporting traditional marriage, several black pastors wrote: “We find the gay community’s attempt to tie their pursuit of special rights based on their behavior to the civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s abhorrent.”¹⁴

A majority of Black Americans reject the facile comparison of sexual behavior with an immutable characteristic such as race, and disagree with the oft-heard contention by gay activists that homosexuals are “born that way.” A Pew Research poll found that by an overwhelming 61 to 26 percent margin, Black Protestants believe sexual orientation can be changed.¹⁵ The same poll reported that Black Americans oppose homosexual marriage by a 60 to 28 percent margin.¹⁶

Gay Marriage is not a Civil Rights Issue

Defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman would not deny homosexuals the basic civil rights accorded other citizens. Nowhere in the Bill of Rights or in any legislation proceeding from it are homosexuals excluded from the rights enjoyed by all citizens—including the right to marry.

However, no citizen has the unrestricted right to marry whoever they want. A parent cannot marry



their child (even if he or she is of age), two or more spouses, or the husband or wife of another person. Such restrictions are based upon the accumulated wisdom not only of Western civilization but also of societies and cultures around the world for millennia.

Neither can gay activists appeal to a “natural rights” argument: i.e., no reasonable person would deny homosexuals and lesbians their self-evident right to marry. Harry Jaffa cogently replies that such arguments actually argue *against* homosexual marriage: “Nature and reason tell us that a Negro is a human being, and is not to be treated like a horse or an ox or a dog, just as they tell us that a Jew is a human being, and is not to be treated as a plague-bearing bacillus. But with the very same voice, nature and reason tell us that a man is not a woman, and that sexual friendship is properly between members of opposite-sexes, not the same sex.”¹⁷

Upholding Traditional Marriage is not “Discrimination”

Discrimination occurs when someone is unjustly denied some benefit or opportunity. But it must first be demonstrated that such persons deserve to be treated equally. For example, FAA and airline regulations rightly discriminate regarding who is allowed into the cockpit of an airline. Those who are not trained pilots have no rightful claim to “discrimination” because they are not allowed to fly an airplane.

On the other hand, discrimination would occur if properly credentialed pilots are refused hiring simply because of the color of their skin. In this case such individuals have been denied employment simply because of their race.

The issue of alleged discrimination was addressed by the Minnesota Supreme Court in *Baker v. Nelson*, when it rejected the argument that denying a same-sex couple the right to marry was the equivalent of racial discrimination. The court found: “In common sense and constitutional sense, there is a clear dis-

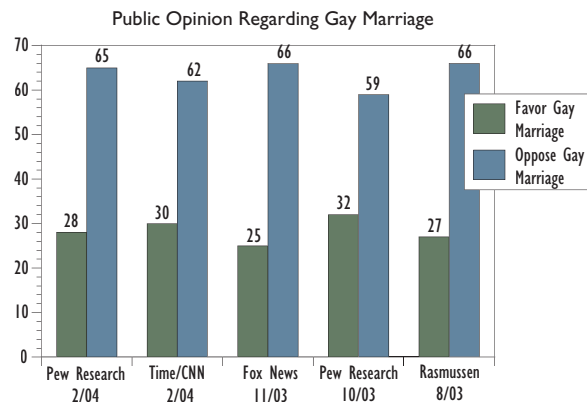
tinction between a marital restriction based merely upon race and one based upon the fundamental difference in sex.”

Similarly, in October 2003, a three-judge panel of the Arizona Court of Appeals ruled unanimously against two homosexuals who argued in a lawsuit that marriage is a fundamental right, and that prohibiting it for same-sex couples violates constitutional protections for due process. The court found that the state’s ban on homosexual marriage “rationally furthers a legitimate state interest,” and thus does not discriminate against homosexuals by depriving them of their constitutional rights.¹⁸ The court further noted: “Recognizing a right to marry someone of the same sex would not expand the established right to marry, but would redefine the legal meaning of ‘marriage.’”

When gay activists and their supporters cry “discrimination!” they conveniently avoid the question of whether homosexual relationships merit being granted equality with marriage. Yet this question deserves our close examination, for the danger posed to our society by redefining marriage is no less than permitting unqualified individuals to fly airplanes.

Americans Reject Gay Marriage

Typical of polls on the subject, a Fox News poll conducted after the Massachusetts ruling found that Americans oppose same-sex marriage by an overwhelming 66 to 25 percent margin.¹⁹





A majority of Americans also support a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage. A Fox News/Opinion Dynamics poll in August 2003 reported that 58 percent of respondents favored amending the Constitution, with 34 percent opposed.²⁰ A Zogby poll released in February 2004 found that, by a 51 to 43 percent margin, voters agreed that a constitutional amendment should be passed limiting marriage to a man and a woman.²¹ Similarly, a February 2004 Gallup poll found that 53 percent of respondents favored a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage, with 44 percent opposed.²²

Homosexual marriage is a potent political issue, with opponents ever more dedicated to preserving the traditional definition of marriage. A follow-up Pew Research poll conducted in February 2004 found: “Gay marriage has surpassed other major social issues like abortion and gun control in its influence on voters. Four in ten voters say they would not vote for a candidate who disagrees with them on gay marriage, even if they agree with the candidate on most other issues.” The poll reported that “voters oppose gay marriage by more than two to one (65 percent to 28 percent), a margin that has remained generally steady since October.”²³

Polls Cite Moral Objections to Homosexuality

A Pew Research poll released in November 2003 reported: “The most common reasons given for objecting to gay and lesbian marriage are moral and religious. ... More than eight in ten opponents of gay marriage (82 percent) say it runs counter to their religious beliefs, with 73 percent completely agreeing with that sentiment.”²⁴

The poll found that the top two reasons for opposing gay marriage are that “The Bible says it is morally wrong/a sin” (28 percent), followed by the response that homosexual marriage is “against my religious

beliefs” (17 percent).²⁵ Unexpressed religious beliefs are reflected in the next two largest categories of responses. Sixteen percent of respondents based their opposition to gay marriage on the fact that the “definition of marriage is a man and a woman,” followed by “It’s just wrong/I just don’t agree with it” (12 percent).

A Barna Research poll, also released in November 2003, confirmed that Americans consider homosexual behavior to be morally objectionable. Only 30 percent of respondents agreed that “having a sexual relationship with someone of the same sex” was morally acceptable. By comparison, the respondents considered “getting drunk” (35 percent), “using profanity” (36 percent), sex outside of marriage (42 percent), cohabitation (60 percent), and gambling (61 percent) all to be more acceptable than homosexuality.²⁶

IT IS OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF THIS PAMPHLET TO DISCUSS THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING REGARDING HOMOSEXUAL BEHAVIOR. SEE THE FRC BOOKLET “KEEPING THE CHURCHES MARRIAGE FRIENDLY: HOW THE BIBLE AND TRADITION REFUTE THE ‘GAY THEOLOGY’” (AVAILABLE AT WWW.FRC.ORG OR BY CALLING 1-800-225-4008).

The Validity of Moral Arguments

The oft-repeated mantra “you can’t legislate morality”—the contention that moral arguments have no place in formulating public policy—is absurd. It is the duty of legislators to evaluate the *right* legislation needed to correct some *wrong* or *injustice*, or promote



some *positive* or *good* result. Many of the same people who wish to exclude religiously informed moral arguments from the debate about marriage are little troubled by the use of moral and religious arguments when discussing other issues such as racial discrimination, capital punishment, or the war in Iraq.

The conviction that human sexuality is rightfully expressed within marriage between a man and a woman is deeply rooted in our history and Judeo-Christian beliefs. Over a century ago, in *Maynard v. Hill* (1888), the U.S. Supreme Court recognized that the understanding of marriage springs from the fundamental morality of a people. The Court described marriage as “creating the most important relation in life, as having more to do with the morals and civilization of a people than any other institution.”

Similarly, in *Baker v. Nelson* (1971), the Minnesota Supreme Court affirmed the Judeo-Christian roots of the definition of marriage: “The institution of marriage as a union of man and woman, uniquely involving the procreation and rearing of children within a family, is as old as the book of Genesis.”

Homosexuality is Unnatural

The advocates of anti-marriage and anti-family sexuality face yet another foe: divinely created nature itself. According to the above-mentioned Pew Poll, the next most frequent reason given for opposing gay marriage is that “homosexuality is not natural/normal” (9 percent). This response is followed by “the purpose of marriage is to have children” (4 per-

cent), which also recognizes a purposeful—and thus “natural”—design for human sexuality.

In his epistle to Christians living in Rome, the Apostle Paul speaks of an undeniable “law” regarding normative human behavior that is written on the hearts of mankind “to which their own conscience also bears witness.” Those who would reject this law find themselves in opposition to the Divine intent for mankind, a reality that every culture from the dawn of civilization has either recognized—or failed to acknowledge at its peril.

The power of the innate realization that there is something fundamentally “unnatural” about homosexuality—even among those who consider themselves non-religious—should not be underestimated, and may well provide the vital motivation that will turn back the seemingly invincible juggernaut of the gay agenda.

The Gay Agenda vs. Nature

In their 1989 book, *After the Ball: How America Will Conquer its Fear and Hatred of Gays in the '90s*, homosexual activists Marshall Kirk and Hunter Madsen presented a strategy for achieving the full acceptance of homosexuality in American culture. Kirk and Madsen write: “In any campaign to win over the public, gays must be portrayed as victims in need of protection so that straights will be inclined by reflex to adopt the role of protector.”

That this strategy has met with considerable success is undeniable. But wait! The subtitle of Kirk and Madsen’s book reveals the confident presumption that America would conquer its (purported) fear and hatred of gays *in the '90s*.

Yet America did not, as expected, embrace the homosexual agenda with open arms. When queried regarding homosexuality as a *behavioral lifestyle*—as opposed to a civil rights issue—many Americans continue to register strong negative reactions.

A *Public Perspectives* survey found that 69 percent of those surveyed report being “very much” or “some-what” bothered by seeing a person “kissing someone of the same sex in public.”²⁷ This hesitancy is not limited to those holding to traditional morality. No less than the liberal icon *Glamour* magazine reported the results of a readership poll in which 59 percent of the respondents were “put off” by a lesbian kiss shown on network television.²⁸

This “*ick* factor,” far from irrational, is rooted in the subconscious realization of what is normal and what is not, and which forms an inescapable part of our being. And it may be that by underestimating the power of this innate understanding, gay activists have made their greatest tactical error.

A Coming Spiritual Revival?

Camille Paglia, a self-confessed radical lesbian and atheist feminist, addresses this fundamental miscalculation of gay activism, which, “encouraged by the scientific illiteracy of academic postmodernism, wants to deny that there is a heterosexual norm. This is madness.” Paglia warns that eventually “the insulting disrespect shown by gay activists to religion ... would produce a backlash.”²⁹

Paglia notes: “History shows that massive spiritual revivals are a fundamental, recurrent element in culture.” She further warns that “there may unfortunately be deep, slow-moving forces at work like those

that led to Christianity’s triumph over cosmopolitan, sexually permissive, but ethically weak late-paganism during the Roman Empire.”³⁰

Gay Marriage: A No Show in History

Some scholars claim that marriage between homosexuals has been commonly practiced and accepted by various peoples throughout history. One prominent advocate of this view, William Eskridge, contends that same-sex unions and even “marriages” have been common in other times and cultures.

Responding to Eskridge, professors Peter Lubin and Dwight Duncan point out that the so-called “evidence” for homosexual marriage comes primarily from small, isolated pre-literate tribes. Lubin and Duncan point out that “a great many of the primitive societies deemed by Eskridge to be tolerant of [same-sex marriage] ... have also been known to engage in other practices, such as cannibalism, female genital mutilation, massacre or enslavement of enemies taken in war, and other practices which was once held to be the duty of the civilized to extirpate.”³¹

Furthermore, what Eskridge takes for homosexual marriage are actually male bonding rituals that he mistakenly eroticized. Alleged examples from ancient Rome, such as Nero and Elagabalus, only reveal the degree to which homosexuality was held in contempt by Roman society. In referring to Nero’s homosexuality, Tacitus wrote that the emperor “polluted himself by every lawful or lawless indulgence, [and] had not omitted a single abomination which could heighten his depravity.” This hardly constitutes an endorsement of homosexuality in ancient Rome.

Lubin and Duncan summarize: “There is no ‘rich history of same-sex marriage’ that [Eskridge] has ‘uncovered,’ that was ‘suppressed in recent Western history, and is only now coming to light.’ The ‘resistance’ to same-sex marriage is not limited to ‘Western culture’ with its age-old ‘anti-homosexual





hysteria and bigotry,' but extends to almost every culture throughout the world."³²

On the face of it, theories about the supposed widespread practice of homosexual marriage throughout history lack merit, given the biological imperative of families consisting of husbands and wives producing children, which is a basic requirement for the preservation of any culture or society.

How Does Gay Marriage Harm Your Marriage?

One might as well ask, "How does *my* printing counterfeit \$20 bills hurt *your* wallet?" Or to use another example, can you imagine a building where every carpenter defined his own standard of measurement? A man and a woman joined together in holy matrimony is the time-tested "yardstick" for marriage. One cannot alter the definition of marriage without throwing society into confusion any more than one can change the definition of a yardstick.

Homosexual marriage is an empty pretense that lacks the fundamental sexual complementariness of male and female. And like all counterfeits, it cheapens and degrades the real thing. The destructive effects may not be immediately apparent, but the cumulative damage is inescapable. The eminent Harvard sociologist, Pitirim Sorokin, analyzed cultures spanning several thousand years on several continents, and

found that virtually no society has ceased to regulate sexuality within marriage as defined as the union of a man and a woman, and survived.³³

A Federal Marriage Amendment: Protection against Judicial Tyranny

Given the strong public opposition to homosexual behavior, it is hardly surprising that no state has voted to extend full marriage rights to gay and lesbian couples. Having failed to achieve their agenda through the democratic process, homosexual activists are now focusing on advancing their agenda through the courts as well as through "civil disobedience" such as the illegal issuance of marriage licenses by public officials in San Francisco and elsewhere.

There is growing danger of activist judges disregarding marriage laws passed by a majority of the population and enshrined in centuries of legal precedence, and imposing homosexual marriage on the nation. States' "Defense of Marriage" laws will help to protect against counterfeit marriage. But such statutes can be overturned in state courts on the argument that they violate state constitutional equal protection and due process clauses.

Amending state constitutions to bar gay marriage will also offer some protection. However, observers fear that the U.S. Supreme Court could overturn state constitutional amendments on the basis of the equal protection and due process clauses in the U.S. Constitution. Robert Bork writes: "One of the last obstacles to the complete normalization of homosexuality in our society is the understanding that marriage is the union of a man and a woman. ... Many court watchers believe that within five to ten years the U.S. Supreme Court will hold that there is a constitutional right to homosexual marriage, just as that court invented a right to abortion. The chosen instrument will be the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment."³⁴

A constitutional amendment defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman offers the ultimate protection against the agenda of gay and lesbian activists such as Paula Ettelbrick, former legal director of the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, who unabashedly states: "Being queer means pushing the parameters of sex, sexuality, and family, and ... transforming the very fabric of society."³⁵

We enjoy the blessing of living in a nation that has enshrined democratic principles—but this privilege also entails the obligation to make our voices heard in the political process. Those who value the family have a God-given duty to become involved in what is shaping up as the preeminent moral issue of our day: protecting the very institution of marriage.

Our elected representatives must be put on notice that they face an historic choice between catering to the demands of a well-heeled, powerful cadre of homosexual activist organizations determined to radically alter the definition and nature of marriage, or listening to the voice of people across the nation who seek to preserve marriage as the wellspring of society and culture for themselves and their families for generations to come.

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ENDNOTES

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