

North Dakota Family Alliance

A Trusted Voice Impacting Our Legacy

NDFA NEWS!!! August 25th, 2011

Marriage....

Is it in trouble? Why? Is it worth saving? From what, from whom? How can it be saved? What can we do to save marriage? What can you do? These are the questions we have to ask.

The NDFA Marriage Task Force will ask these convicting questions, seek a discerning analysis of research and gathered information, and then offer wisdom filled findings to share with the people, pastors and churches, and if in the public policy arena—with our legislative body.

The NDFA Marriage Task Force will hold its initial meeting on Tuesday, September 27th in Bismarck, with another scheduled to be held in Fargo on November 15. The meeting dates and locations will be posted on our website at www.ndfa.org or you may call the office. The public is invited to attend the task force meetings.

A great line up of presenters will share over the course of the next months, including Glenn Stanton from Focus on the Family. When asked of the importance of marriage and the NDFA task force effort, he replied, *“Marriage has been - in every human society anthropologists, historians and sociologists have been able to study – humanity’s most fundamental and effective cohering and civilizing social institution. But unfortunately, marriage rates have been declining in most places. This is having real, measurable negative consequences for our communities and our neighbors in expanded child and family poverty, abuse, health problems, crime and many forms of increased violent behaviors to name just a few. NDFA, through the ND Marriage Task Force, is wisely bringing needed leadership, solutions and hope to this growing social problem. They are demonstrating good citizenship by doing so.”*



Glenn Stanton from Focus on the Family

Understanding we must do something, Chris Gerstan with Coalition for Divorce Reform applauds the NDFA effort, *“We know a lot about how healthy it is for men, women, and children to live in intact married families. We know that married men live almost nine years longer than single men. We know that children do better when raised in two-parent married families on every measurable variable of well-being.”*

Speaking to the key component in a marriage, commitment, Michelle Wiener-Davis, marriage counselor, shares *“What separates people who make it over the long haul versus those who divorce is one thing only; couples who stay together and have loving marriages learn how to work through their differences. They know how to manage their conflict.”*

Author Gary Thomas shares some very key foundational information to be considered: God created marriage as a loyal partnership between one man and one woman, that it would be the foundation of the family, and would mirror His covenant relationship with His people.

Pastor Doug Vandermeulen is looking forward to the comprehensiveness of the Task Force study, addressing honestly and frankly—all the issues having an effect on the state of marriage today. He shares, *“Today, many are calling for a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage believing that it is morally wrong and corrupting both families and society. They are not wrong! However, those seeking same-sex marriage are dwarfed by the numbers of people seeking divorce or having families out of wedlock. According to one source 50% of teens in non-college households do not live with both parents. More damage is being done to marriage, family, and society by the sheer volume of people seeking divorce or willing to have children without getting married than those seeking same-sex marriage.”*

The North Dakota Family Alliance foundational Christian principle is that *“marriage is the cornerstone of the family, and family the foundation of society, and that as the family goes so goes society, and so goes the nation.”* The importance of marriage is paramount.

We are confident the Marriage Task Force will wisely discern a means to impact the sanctity of marriage and preserve the institution of marriage. We look forward to sharing the work of the task force with you over the next months.

Facts:

- On average, from 2005-2009, annually North Dakota has approximately 4200 marriages, 1915 divorces, of which 900 involved 1600 dependent children
- In 2008, 55% of American children turning 18 years of age had experienced a breakup of their family of origin
- Marriage rates have fallen, birth rates have decreased
- Cohabitation has more doubled since 1990, and has risen more than fourteen-fold since 1960
- 41% of all births to non-married women



MARRIAGE: *Are children in the middle of their parent's love?*

As NDFA is foundationally preparing for the Marriage Task Force study (September) and our Family Week Celebration (November) which will focus on marriage, we are seeking God's word to lead the way. The purpose of the Marriage Task Force study is to determine how we might not only preserve and protect the institution of marriage, but magnify the sanctity of marriage. Likewise, our Family Week Celebration is to lift up marriage and its importance to the family as a whole.

So scripturally, what should be front and center? Well, immediately we would cite Jesus in Matthew 19:5, *'for this reason man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'*. In this passage, Jesus reiterates Genesis 2:24, clearly providing for the basis of marriage, and then throughout the gospels adding further guidance and direction.

Many other passages speak to the issue of marriage, but one that reveals a powerful message can be found in Malachi 2:14, *'yet she (he) is your companion and your wife (husband) by covenant'*. We immediately see the word *covenant* and understand the gravity, the importance of Malachi using this word *covenant*. We are well aware of God's covenant with Abraham, His covenant with Noah, and then Jesus sharing the *New Covenant*. We understand the fullness of God's eternal promises, *His covenant, 'I will be your God and you will be my people'*. God honors His covenants and Malachi is reminding us that marriage is a covenant relationship.

Then God reveals another vital component of marriage, in Malachi 2:15 *'He seeks godly offspring'*. Not only has God ordained marriage for the loving relationship of a husband and wife, but that that relationship might be home to children in a 'godly' environment.

God wants Mom and Dad loving each other. He wants children to be caught in the continuous overflow of you and your spouse loving one another, not loved instead of you loving one another. If that spousal, intimate love is allowed to drift, to diminish—not only will your marriage suffer, your child's security is in jeopardy. Even though your child is being loved, they are missing what they want and need—to be in the middle of your love for one another.

If your marriage has been blessed with children, please give them the biggest gift they are asking for, *'Mom, Dad, can I be in the middle of your love?'*

All who enter into this covenant relationship we call marriage are directed to seek God's love and guiding word that we might joyfully maintain our commitment to our spouse and God. God wants to bless His institution of marriage, and He wants to bless our marriage.

As we search His word and seek His will, we should petition God in prayer to bless our marriage.

Matt 19:5, Malachi 2:10-16, Gen 2:24, Deut 24:1-4, Matt 5:31-32, 1 Corinth 7:1-4

"And said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.'" Matthew 19:5 NKJV