

North Dakota Family Alliance

Merry Christmas!

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6

A note from Tom Freier:

As you gather with family and friends, let me on behalf of the NDFA board and staff wish you a Merry Christmas as you celebrate the birth of our Savior. Let your celebration be filled with joy and peace, let it be filled with hope and love, and let it be filled with grace and truth for all these are embodied in Jesus' birth, Whom we celebrate.

North Dakota Marriage Task Force



The North Dakota Marriage Task Force was formed to ask the foundational, convicting questions: What is the state of marriage? Is it in trouble? And is it in need of saving? Why? What from? What can be done? By whom? Should we take this on—even if the world around seems to be conceding that it may be too late?

The initial two Marriage Task Force meetings have energized us with a resolve that gives us great hope. While we have heard the less than optimistic statistics of the decline of marriage, increase of cohabitation, out of wedlock childbirths, and continued high rates of divorce, we heard words of encouragement supporting the sanctity of marriage.

In his book, "The Ring Makes All The Difference" Glenn Stanton, with Focus on the Family, substantiates that hope with two books, 1) the book of Scripture, the Bible, and 2) the book of science, thousands and thousands of pages of documented research supporting the benefits of marriage.

We will share more information as the Marriage Task Force continues to do its work. Please consider getting a copy of Stanton's book, and take the time to read the articles in this newsletter.

Christians Have a Far More Beautiful Story to Tell

by: Glenn T. Stanton (Focus on the Family)



Christians have a far more beautiful story to tell about the glorious nature of human sexuality than any other story occupying the culture stage now or ever. None of the rivals are even close.

The Christian story of sexuality is true to the fullness in which God made us as humans and true to the nature of what is ultimately behind everything in the universe: God, who is love and who dwells in loving intimacy. We shouldn't be shy about telling it with the power and beauty of our lives.

- We tell it to the world when we make deliberate decisions to protect our sexual health and wholeness from the ravaging wolves of premarital and extramarital sex.
- We tell it to our spouses when we give our total selves exclusively to them, desiring to give and serve rather than to take. We tell it when we affirm, honor, and protect, their femininity or masculinity, whether we're alone or in front of others.
- We tell it to our spouses and children when we honor our spouses with our fidelity. This isn't just physical, but also mental and emotional.

.... for more of Glenn's article, look to page 4 inside.

Dysfunctional Nation (*Abridged Version*)

by: Dr. Pat Fagan (Family Research Council)



The recently released Index of Family Belonging and Rejection gives the best read (using Bureau of the Census data) so far of the strength and weaknesses of the American family. Rather than concentrating on out of wedlock births or divorces, it zeroes in on the key data: what proportion of our children have grown up with their mother and father married? What proportion who enter adulthood have experienced family as a place where the parents belong to each other and to their children? Or how many had parents who rejected each other and said: "I want you out of my life, forever."

The news, not surprisingly, is grim: only 45 percent of American children have lived with their married biological parents throughout their childhood. If you think this is bad, keep in mind that when the above children were born (fifteen to seventeen years ago) the out-of-wedlock birth rate was 28 percent. Last year it was 41 percent. Marriage rates have also dropped precipitously since then. Given this, probably only 30 percent of U.S. children will have grown up in an intact family by the time this year's newborns reach the age of seventeen.

In this year's Index, Black Americans emerge as most disadvantaged: only 17 percent with intact families.

.... for more of the article, look to page 4 inside.

"Then the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in the manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!'" – Luke 2:10-14

Saving Marriages:

Saving Babies, Saving Marriages, Protecting Our First Amendment Rights to Live Out Our Faith



A special note from: Tom Freier, Executive Director

As we have celebrated Family Week, Thanksgiving, and are heading into Christmas, we appreciate the blessing of family, the importance of family, and families spending time together. But what is it about these holidays, as well as others, which draw us together as families? Very simply, God created the family. He created man and woman, and procreation. He wants us to be together.

This is not just for Judeo-Christians, for He created all. And intrinsically, He has given us a feeling, a longing to be together. For it is within the family that we share our greatest joys and seek our deepest comfort during times of sorrow. As we are created in His likeness and He wants a personal relationship with each of us, it is only natural that we long for a deep relationship with those in our family.

Central to family is the institution of marriage, foundationally the bedrock of the family. For God created them male and female, *He created them....And a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall be one. The family was born. God loves the family. It is His creation.*

Throughout history, on many occasions man has turned away from God, and in most cases disavowing His ordinances on marriage. Marginalizing the sanctity of marriage has resulted in the breakdown of the family, and soon may cause the collapse of society and the nation.

We in America are at a crossroads. Marriage rates are on the decline, cohabitation on the increase, out of wedlock births on the rise, and the divorce rates holding. Documented research overwhelmingly substantiates that the very best environment for children is living in a home with their biological parents. The very best environment for men and women, if they choose an intimate relationship, is in marriage.

And yet, statistical data shows we continue to gravitate towards the environments providing the least benefit to men, women, and especially children. It is in these environments our children will be disadvantaged physically, emotionally, financially, and spiritually.

So what is the answer? Well, our NDFA Marriage Task Force is prayerfully seeking an answer as well. Surely, it must begin with prayer, earnest and passionate prayer. For nothing is so central to our lives, and has such an influence on our lives, as God's gift of marriage.

Next, we will need to raise the level of awareness through appropriate communications, sharing the critical nature of responding to the importance of the sanctity of marriage. Our pastors, priests, and churches must partner in addressing the issue of fatherhood, womanhood, abstinence until marriage, marriage preparation, and pulpit initiatives endorsing the sanctity of marriage. Lastly, a coalition must endorse legislative measures which will promote marriage.

Even during times when it appears the institution of marriage may be under duress, there is always hope. And we know where that hope comes from, and to Whom we need to turn. And especially during this most holy and celebrative season, let us turn our hope toward the One our Father sent to be that hope—Jesus, Emmanuel, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Thank you for all you do for the people
of North Dakota and mankind.

– W. & L. S.

I praise and thank God for you, ND Family Alliance
and all who stand firm.

– V. H.

*“Yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant. But did He not make them one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring.
– Malachi 2:14-15*

A Shaky Foundation for Families

by: Brad Wilcox



Judging by the relationship status of the current occupants of Gracie Mansion in New York City and the Governor’s Mansion in New York, cohabitation is enjoying unprecedented acceptance among American adults. Indeed, the number of cohabiting couples in the United States has grown 14-fold since 1970. Millions of adults seem to enjoy the freedom and flexibility that cohabitation affords them.

“Cohabitation is harmful because it does not institutionalize commitment in a way that is easily understood and honored by romantic partners and their friends and family.”

But cohabitation looks a lot less appealing from the vantage point of children who find themselves in a household headed by cohabiting parents. Children in cohabiting families are about twice as likely to drop out of high school, use drugs, or end up depressed, compared with children in intact, married families. They are also at least three times more likely to be physically, sexually or emotionally abused, according to a recent federal report.

Yet today, more than 40 percent of American children will spend some time in a cohabiting household — either by birth or because one of their parents moved in with a new partner — more than will see their parents divorce. These trends led a group of 18 family scholars, led by me, to conclude that “the rise of cohabiting households with children is the largest unrecognized threat to the quality and stability of children’s family lives,” outpacing even divorce as a risk to the well-being of today’s children.

Why is cohabitation so risky to children? Compared with marriage, cohabitation furnishes less commitment, stability, sexual fidelity, and safety to romantic partners and their children. Consequently, cohabiting couples are more than twice as likely to break up and four times more likely to be unfaithful to one another, compared with married couples. All this has obvious implications for children in these homes.

But is cohabitation really the problem, or some deeper factor—like poverty or relationship troubles that predated the cohabitation? The truth is that these other factors account for some of cohabitation’s negative impact but the best studies suggest that cohabitation also has an independent negative effect, precisely because it does not institutionalize commitment in a way that is easily understood and honored by romantic partners and their friends and family.

Dessert Before Dinner?

by: Jeff Kemp



Dessert before dinner...we’ve got that freedom, but will it be good for us?

I think it was Mae West who said too much of a good thing is great. That’s true, if you want the good thing and little else, as in companionship, friendship, empathy, growth, insights and life stories woven together, especially when it comes to taking care of the children that may result from intercourse.

Human relationship experts have tracked the sequences of bonding that lead to deeper and deeper intimacy and bonds. Sex comes last in that sequence because every stage offers to give and gain from the other person something that is more and more personal, vulnerable and thrilling.

Dessert before dinner...a roof before a foundation...a wine before its time?

If the thrill is given first, or before the other gifts, the human weakness for the short cut, the cheap thrill, will take what tastes great before what best nourishes.

I guess we can look at the results of several decades of sexual progressiveness...how’s the happiness level, the divorce rate, the cohabitation breakup rate (even higher), or the outcomes for kids. The data shows that the more sexual partners one has, the lower their sexual satisfaction and higher their risk of divorce when they do marry. Many are scared of relationships these days, and understandably so, with divorce so high among parents and peers. So it’s sad and ironic that early sex is making it even harder to figure out, “will this person and this relationship go the distance?”

Wow! Thank you for all the terrific materials you sent us for our county fair booth.

– T. P.

Love you guys!!

– M.S.

Really appreciate what you are doing at NDEA. Our prayers are with you.

– S. H.

“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

continuation of Glenn’s article....

Husband, do your wife and children see you looking at other women or treating other women more kindly than you do your own wife? Wife, do you use sex as a bargaining chip with your husband?

Married couples should give of themselves freely and exclusively, without demanding from one another.

- We tell the Christian story when we treat our spouses as reflections of God upon the earth, not as objects for our own pleasure or usefulness.
- As your friends and children observe your life, what do they learn about sexuality? Do they get a distinctly Christian picture of sexuality? Do they see that you seek to please God and reflect His nature by honoring and serving your spouse? How we quietly care for and live out our sexual lives in front of others is a powerful lesson to them about how we view God, others, and ourselves. Remember, there’s much more to our sexual lives than the activity that takes place behind closed doors.

Loving Christ in your sex life means being pure. It means being chaste. Purity is so much more than what you don’t do. It’s who you are. Both purity and chastity are positive virtues and not merely an absence of wrong behavior.

To love God in our sex lives means to be pure in the fullness of the person God created us to be—physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. To do so is to live in wholeness.

continuation of Dr. Fagan’s article...

Asian Americans are most advantaged (62 percent). American Indians and Alaskan Natives suffer greatly (24 percent), while Hispanics are in the middle of the ethnic group ranking (42 percent). Only 54 percent of White Americans grow up in an intact family.

Utah is the highest ranked state (59 percent); New Hampshire is second (58 percent). Mississippi is the lowest (31 percent), though the District of Columbia is in even worse shape (16 percent). America is now sexually dysfunctional. Most of us cannot stand a spouse long enough to raise the children we have brought into the world (the fundamental purpose of the conjugal act).

Sexual taboos, those societal and cultural defense mechanisms - most easily seen in more “primitive” societies - serve crucial roles in social stability. Small tribes could not afford untrammelled sexuality by their youth, which sows chaos within; their enemies could then easily overcome them. Our “enlightenment elite” have spent two centuries tearing down our taboos. Now we pay the price in broken families, lower educational performance, more poverty, less revenue for government programs coupled with more demand for such programs from needy mothers and children. States and cities are on a collision course with fiscal realities: the fewer married people, the less revenue states will collect.

This problem has deep ramifications for the survival of our republic because the first government is the marriage between fathers and mothers: they are the democratic government of the fundamental society, the family. As that government collapses, there is no way a democratic republic can sustain itself. That sort of government necessitates a virtuous citizenship, in private and public. Unless we reverse this trend, kiss the Constitution goodbye—which is what Planned Parenthood got the Supreme Court to do in *Eisenstadt v. Baird* in 1972—

giving legal protection (rather than negative sanction) to the sexual act outside of marriage. Since then we have had a gradual unraveling that has affected every essential institution - family, church, school, marketplace, and government.

The sexual act is the prime energy of human creation; from it all else springs. Nothing human comes to be without it. It is more powerful than nuclear energy. As with that technology, there are natural ways necessary to contain it and maintain safety. Just as there are artificial ways to decouple the nucleus from its atomic subcomponents resulting in massive destructive energy so too there are artificial ways to decouple the sperm from the egg and in the process release massive destructive energy. How far do we have to go before we get truly alarmed? Can a nation that permits this social weakness internally have the strength to protect weak nations externally? Who benefits? Poverty experts and activists; porn pushers; contraceptive manufacturers, medical specialists in the diseases contracted; antibiotic manufacturers; crime specialists and jail builders; education rehabilitation specialists and addiction experts; rape crisis experts and services; child abuse and neglect service providers. Now, every single one of these is going to cry “foul” if we seek to protect marriage, but none of their professional organizations cry foul over the breakdown in marriage and its debilitating effects on children. Not one.

It seems to me at moments that we are so far gone socially that we are beyond political reform. Only one reform offers hope: the most fundamental reform: conversion.

Whither comes the reform? We all know: He approaches soon in Bethlehem.

<p><i>I want to help NDFA promote and uphold family policies and values in North Dakota!</i></p> <p>“Friends of the Family” \$1.200 for year 2011 _____</p> <p>\$1000 _____ \$500 _____ \$350 _____ \$250 _____ \$100 _____ Other _____ (Make checks payable to: NDFA)</p> <p>Monthly pledge _____ Contact me about credit card donations _____ or NDFA Action)</p> <p>_____ Contact me about automatic bank withdrawals _____</p> <p><i>Please print clearly or affix your return address label.</i></p> <p>Name _____ Spouse _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>City _____ State _____ Zip _____</p> <p>Phone _____ E-mail _____</p> <p>_____ Register my e-mail address for the most timely information (via e-mail alerts and e-newsletters).</p> <p>_____ To save on postage costs, please remove my name from the mailing list and ad it to the e-mail list.</p> <p>Contributions to the North Dakota Family Alliance are tax deductible as stated under IRS code, 501 (c) (3).</p> <p>Contributions to the ND Family Alliance Action are not tax deductible as state under IRS code, 501 (c) (4).</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">NDFA</p> <p>3220 18th Street South, Suite 8 Fargo, ND 58104</p> <p>701-364-0676 admin@ndfa.org www.ndfa.org</p> <p><small>NDFA is a non-profit organization. All gifts are tax-deductible. NDFA Action is a 501-c-4 and gifts are not tax-deductible. Please contact our office for more information.</small></p>
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Upcoming in 2012!!!

Faith, Family & Freedom Banquet

Thursday, February 2nd, 2012
Holiday Inn, Fargo, North Dakota

Save the date—mark your calendars! It’s going to be a great evening; memorable, exciting, and inspiring. It will be a celebration of the family. Look for details soon!

Giving Hearts Day

February 14th, 2012

NDFA will once again participate in this one day great event on Valentine’s Day presenting opportunities for many generous people to support the great causes of 140 non-profits in the area.

Please encourage family and friends, on this day of love and caring, to use this opportunity to support the valued work of the NDFA. Last year, in our first year of participation, faithful supporters contributed over \$11,000. This year’s goal is \$25,000. Will you help us?

For more information, go to our website at www.ndfa.org or feel free to call the NDFA office.

Rummaging for the Family!

June, 2012

Join families around the state as you plan your 2012, spring rummage sale, and donate the proceeds to a dedicated NDFA initiative, NDFA Action, or the NDFA general fund to impact the legacy we leave our children and grandchildren.

Plan the rummage sale as a family, a neighborhood, or in your church. For more information, please contact the NDFA office. We look forward to hearing how God will bless our efforts.

Sharing Opportunities

As we near the end of the year, NDFA is requesting you prayerfully consider two giving opportunities.

Would you consider dedicating your generous contribution to our Marriage Task Force Fund? We have held two very successful Marriage Task Force meetings and 3-4 more are planned. We need your prayers and financial support.

As you plan your year-end tax deductible giving, would you consider a \$20, \$50, or even \$100 contribution to support our mission, your mission to impact our childrens’ future? We understand the significance of each contribution to you, and please know that it is doubly meaningful to us.

Please know that any tax-deductible contribution to be claimed for 2011 tax purposes must be postmarked no later than December 31st, 2011. Thank you for your prayerful consideration.

“Then little children were brought to Him that He might put His hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked Him. But Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.’” – Matthew 19:13-14

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Enoch Thorsgard Reed Soderstrom
Steve Cates

Our Mission: to strengthen families and to protect our family values and religious freedoms.

We do so by equipping, informing, and educating policy leaders and concerned citizens on the issues that impact the family.

Our vision: to be a trusted voice impacting our legacy.

UPDATE:

Religious Liberty Restoration Amendment

The Religious Liberty Restoration Amendment (RLRA), constitutional measure #3, will be on the June 12th ballot for North Dakota voters for approval.

The North Dakota Family Alliance led a coalition group, including the North Dakota Catholic Conference, in gathering over 30,000 petition signatures to place the measure on the 2012 June ballot, and will be working with partners to guarantee passage of the measure.

Daily our religious liberties are under attack and being infringed upon. "Passage of the RLRA, measure #3 will go a long way in protecting our First Amendment rights, as intended by the framers of the constitution," states Tom Freier, from North Dakota Family Alliance.

The formal campaign to pass measure #3, the RLRA, will begin early in 2012. Please be ready to join our team. We need your help.



The North Dakota Family Alliance Action (NDFA Action) has completed its NDFA Action Scorecard. The 2011 North Dakota Legislative Scorecard reflects votes taken on bills important to the family.

You can view the scorecard on our NDFA Action website at www.ndfa.org (Legislative Watch, 11 Scorecard), or contact our office for a copy.

The selected bills included legislation dealing with life/abortion, marriage, abstinence, hate crimes, and others important to the family. Votes on the final passage of the bills provide a record of legislator's support or opposition for NDFA's preferred position on those issues.

Along with NDFA's voter guides, the scorecard provides a valuable resource as voters gather information in preparing to cast ballots in the next general election in 2012. Please review the scorecard and contact us with any questions.