

Worthy Words

While experiencing and explaining this personal war, I have become more aware of the large-scale war waged on the American family. As one minister shared with me recently, and as reminded by Promise Keepers years ago, men are desperately needed to “stand in the gap” in the most critical crisis of our time, our society, and our culture.

As a parent—though alienated from my children—I am also acutely aware of the privilege of being a parent; therefore, to those who have and do commit themselves to this most valuable vocation, your children and their children will come to appreciate it. To the alienated or separated parents who, as I, want the same; I hope and pray for reconciliation and restoration of these relationships that your children and their children will come to appreciate it, too.

One additional party that has not been directly mentioned is the grandparents who suffer the losses—and most often, through no fault of their own. My experience and observations have witnessed a growing of grandparents that are becoming de facto parents because of failing parental responsibility. But at the other extreme is those grandparents denied access to grandchildren for whom they may have been deeply involved, even caretakers as well. This second of the two is among collateral damage described in the last and prior chapters. On the subject and importance of grandparents, Judith Wallerstein and Sandra Blakeslee write in *Second Chances*:

Grandparents can play a particular role, especially if their marriages are intact: symbolic generational continuity and living proof to children that relationships can be lasting, reliable and dependable. Grandparents also convey a sense of tradition and a special commitment to the young that extends beyond and over the parents’ heads. Their encouragement, friendship and affection has special meaning for children of divorce; it specifically counteracts the children’s sense that all relationships are unhappy and transient.

In my own experience, these folks (of a bygone era of parenting) cannot generally comprehend the conduct that occurs in the courts today; they cannot conceive the sanctioning of purposeful destruction on the premise of personal rights and wants—rather than the sustaining of families on the proof of sacrifice and responsibility.

Many of these folks grew-up in an era when commitment and promises meant something—as did marriage and family. Individuals who defied such customs and rites were punished rather than promoted in their cause—if not by the family, than by the community and greater good. I'm certain that their "era" had its injustices and shortcomings but, in the collective, represented a much more viable and valued period for parents.

The appraisal of the present product of no-fault divorce as "the greatest social crisis" is not my doing; but rather, the determination of those who have researched and reported at much greater depth and acumen. For the rest of us, and particularly those who are casualties of the war, the "crisis" is very real and personal. For the balance of society however, a distorted view remains; and the special interests are busy ensuring status quo. As long as they are able to dupe the greater society—or until society is enlightened to the facts—fathers and family continue moving toward endangerment, the fabric of our society continues to unravel, and the sacrifices and responsibility of past parenting will be no more.