

Life without **Father** by David Popenoe

In one of several sources of information applied to *A Once and Always Father* (see Web page, “Always Father”), ***Life without Father*** offers much in terms of the destruction steeped on the family through divorce (the industry). In the pages that follow, I will *touch-on* some points of his work; namely, part one on the “decline” and “carnage” of fatherless America...

To understand that the publication was 1996 – over a decade ago – the trend toward of a decline in marriage continues. This statistic – largely fostered through divorce – has been central to the destruction of fatherhood in our country; according to Popenoe:

But the larger truth is that most divorced fathers in America, for whatever reason, lose almost all contact with their children over time...Childrearing is one of the most time-intensive of all human activities, and it is difficult to perform it will in absentia.

The author offers a collection of causes for divorce (in America); and among them, the changing laws. In identifying the cause (or source) of the laws:

Initiated and promoted by divorce lawyers through state legislatures, divorce law over a period of less than twenty years...shifted from being based on fault – requiring a finding that one party is guilty and the other is innocent – to the principle of no fault.

These changes in the law have been largely responsible for escalation of divorce rates and, quite possibly, the decline of marriage on whole. In the span of twenty five years, the percentage of life-long marriages has gone from the highest in recorded history (1960 was a 62% of marriages) to the lowest in history (1985 was at 43%). As of 2008, the figure is around 50%**

Popenoe makes a striking conclusion to these and other causes to the decline of fatherless America:

The end result of many cultural, social, and economic trends...is a society surprisingly unsupportive of fatherhood. Indeed, if one were specifically to design a culture and a social system for the express purpose of undercutting fatherhood and men’s contribution to the family life, our current society would be close to what would result.

He elaborates on this conclusion with the following “key elements”.

- **Make marriage into a weak institution:** Say that marriage is just a piece of paper (e.g. a license)
- **Sexualize the society:** inundate and saturate society with sex
- **Institute an educational system** that disregards the fact that childrearing is a major adult responsibility and that marriage is important to childrearing: teach no family values and as far as sex, assume everyone is already having sex and thus should be offered contraception – rather than abstinence

** This comparison may be misleading because marriage (as an institution) continues to be on the decline; thus more households are not married...non-marital cohabitation.

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- **Base society (or economy) on materialism and consumption:** thus, men are reduced to the work...and not the families
- **Develop a society that stresses individualism:**
- **De-emphasize the importance of children:** using the media, culture and society to exclude the mention or presence of children...
- **Overlook the importance of fathering when discussing male-gender roles:** stress that men must learn to become less aggressive, less competent and less interested...but to be self-centered...
- **When fathering is discussed, don't mention the unique role of fathers in the family...**

But the “unique role” is being disregarded and downgraded – even in spite of the alarming statistics that bear out the consequences of absent fathers. More recently, Warren Farrell in his book, ***Father and Child Reunion***, addresses the crucial role and responsibility of the father. In the days to follow, I will share some of Dr. Farrell’s findings in a more-recent setting.

Among these statistics, one of the most profound involves sexual experience among teenage girls: in 1988, 1 out of every 4 15-year old girls had experienced sexual intercourse – compared with less than 1 out of 20 in 1970. As I share these out-dated data with you, out-of-wedlock pregnancy among teenagers continues to grow (as a percentage of total births) in America.

Where have all the father’s gone? To use the refrain or melody from a popular 1960’s song, some fathers have gone to divorce courts...”every one”; and following the divorce comes the fatherless status of his children – who need him and have depended on him...prior to divorce.

Besides the loss of their father, children must endure the risks of either a single-parent home – without the benefit of both parents – or the much greater arrival of a step-parent. Based on a study performed at the time (of the publication), a daughters chances of being sexually molested are 7 times more probable with a step-father than the biological father. **The determination was that 1 out of every 6 daughters was sexually abused when the step-father was the principal figure.**

Studies also show that mothers tend to be more abusive when they are the single-parent (versus dual parenting). Popenoe writes:

A mother is far more likely to be abusive and to allow others to mistreat her child when she does not have the support of an actively involved father.

Abuse is not restricted to the physical type. In my own experience, for instance, my oldest son was threatened by his mother that – according to his comments – “if he had any contact with his father, he (his father) would be put in jail...” **This form of abuse, a threat aimed at generating fear, is regrettable and reprehensible – and breeds anger in combination with fear in the life of child...**

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The “abuse card” is a matter that I will address in later writings; ironically – and as I have previously described – a “system” aimed at protecting the abused...can be abused by those who make such claims of being a victim. **The trouble with posing as a victim is that eventually those who know the person (on a personal basis)...come to realize the ploy – and subsequently stop playing into it.** They “get wise” – and sympathy gives way to the usual course of being duped: disbelief, disappointment, disgust...and distrust.

On abuse as a whole, the conventional family is actually a “safety-net” for wives (and children) – according to Popenoe. He writes:

In fact, marriage appears to be a strong safety factor for women. A satisfactory marriage between sexually faithful partners, especially when they are raising their own biological children, engenders fewer risks for violence than probably any other circumstance in which woman could find herself.

In his closing comments, the author makes these statements about fathers:

The negative consequences of the fatherless are all around us. They affect children, women and men. Evidence indicating damage to children has accumulated in near tidal-wave proportions. Fatherless children experience significantly more physical, emotional, and behavioral problems than children growing up in intact families.

With the overwhelming evidence supporting this plight of children, the question remains: **“Why don’t the courts (or legal system) give due attention...and change in the best interest of the children?”**

While some changes may be underway (for the better), the question posted above remains unanswered. The fact is that divorce is a money-making industry and, propagated by legal community, enables the league of lawyers to fleece the American public while total disregard for the children. Much as a segment of the medical industry profits from abortion, the legal community profits from divorce. **Both pursuits are heartless and beneath contempt, yet each continues to make a killing by killing: the first before their born; and the second, after...**