



Church Connection February 2017

Family Matters

*Strengthening,
Preserving
& Promoting
Marriage,
Family, Life &
Liberty*

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it...

Children, obey your parents in the Lord for this is right...And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Ephesians 5:25, 6:1 & 4

Mark Your Calendar!

Feb. 21 - Spring non-partisan primary election

March 23 - Wisconsin Family Council's **Day at the Capitol**. This only happens every other year. Space is limited. Lunch is included. Sign up now for this opportunity to connect with your state legislators, learn about the heritage of our state Capitol, participate in a Q & A time with Julaine Appling and more!

To register, call 888-378-7395, or online at wifamilycouncil.org.

Family matters—a lot. Family was created by a loving God (Gen. 1:27-28, Matt. 19:4-6) for His glory and mankind's good. Everything God made was good—in fact it was “very good.” That includes the institution of family. This God-created institution blesses men, women and children and is the foundational unit of society.

Not only did God create the family, He also gave explicit instructions about how family is to form and function. Family begins with marriage—the lifelong union of one man and one woman. When a marriage is blessed with children, the parents are to provide for and educate the children (Eph. 6:1-4, I Tim. 5:8). Because of God's common grace, marriage and family done as God prescribes, benefits and blesses believer and unbeliever alike. These universal benefits and blessings then flow to entire societies through this foundational institution.

Family structure is not for us to determine. It is not for us to decide what is right or best as it relates to marriage or family structure, nor do we need to, because God has spoken.

When we decide our ideas about family are better than God's, we run into trouble.



Our current situation shows quite clearly that society suffers negative consequences when it chooses to ignore and/or replace God's pattern for the family.

Consider this: early in 2016 researchers released a list of the 10 most “miserable” cities in Wisconsin. They used 7 criteria to rank Wisconsin's 169 largest cities: percentage of residents with a college degree, average commute times, unemployment rates, cost of living, percent of married couples, percent of home owners, and poverty rate. The top 4 most miserable Wisconsin cities, based on this data, are Milwaukee, Kenosha, Racine, and Beloit.

These are cities where we have some of the worst family *continued on back*

Pray...

- For your pastor, his wife and family
- For the marriages and families in your church to be strong and to grow in faith
- For our new President and for our state and federal elected officials to support policies and legislation that strengthen and promote the family
- For the work and financial needs of Wisconsin Family Council

Pastors, church leaders and everyone concerned about the health and well-being of the family in our society should take advantage of the information and statistics on marriage and family in the following sources: *Wisconsin's Cultural Indicators*, 2014 edition, Wisconsin Family Council; *Wisconsin Family Prosperity Index*, available online at wifamilycouncil.org; and the December 1, 2016, final report by the Governor's Future of the Family Commission, available online at dcf.wisconsin.gov/future-family-front-page.

The statistics cited in the body of this edition of "Church Connection" can be found at: www.roadsnacks.net/these-are-the-10-most-miserable-cities-in-wisconsin

statistics. Relative to marriage the 4 most miserable cities have an average marriage percentage of 38%, while the 4 "happiest" Wisconsin cities—Elm Grove, Rib Mountain, McFarland and Waunakee—enjoy an average marriage percentage of 63%. Four of the other criteria are likely greatly impacted by this marriage reality: college education, home ownership, poverty, and unemployment.

Social science research continues to show marriage is not just good for the individuals in a marriage—it also profoundly impacts the public good. Children brought up in homes of married dads and moms are more likely to finish high school, go to college, get good jobs, not experience poverty, and own their own homes than are children brought up in any other kind of family structure. Just as important, children brought up in homes with married moms and dads are significantly more likely to experience positive relationships as adults, including getting married. All of these benefits contribute to the public good.

What do we have in Milwaukee, Kenosha, Racine and Beloit? Lots of never-formed families, single-parent households, and rampant fatherlessness. Breakdown of the family is a recipe for community-wide disaster.

We should not be surprised by the reality that a society is truly only as strong as our natural families—that is, families headed by married dads and moms. After all, that was the plan of an all-wise, all-good Creator. The issue is how will we respond to what is happening in our communities and in our state? Will it make a difference in our laws and our policies? Will we seek to do what is demonstrably in the best interests of all, or will we continue to pursue or tolerate courses of action that undermine God's exceedingly good plan for marriage and family?

If it's true that only action changes the world (*cf.*, James 2:18), then we need families, churches, communities and government to act. Unless there is positive action for change, we will continue down a road of self-destruction. Love for neighbor should compel us both to model and communicate the goodness of God's plan for family. At the very least may we as God's people demonstrate to a lost and confused culture why family matters.

About Wisconsin Family Council

Wisconsin Family Council is a 501 (c)(3) organization that has been advancing Judeo-Christian principles and values in Wisconsin since 1986. We have largely done this by informing Wisconsin citizens, policymakers and churches about the important legislative and cultural issues so that they can be involved in strengthening and preserving marriage, family, life and liberty in our state.

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