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DOCUMENT NO.	FORM	SUBJECT/TITLE	PAGES	DATE	RESTRICTION(S)
001	Receipt	FedEx US Airbill	1	05/25/2006	P4/b4;
002	Email	Fw: Letter from Dr. Dobson to Mr. Bolten - To: Karl Rove - From: Tim Goeglein	1	05/24/2006	P5; P6/b6;
003	Letter	[Letter] - To: Josh Bolten - From: James Dobson	1	05/19/2006	P5; P6/b6;

COLLECTION TITLE:
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SERIES:
Subject Files - FG006-27 (Office of Senior Advisor - Karl Rove)

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FG006-27

Barcode Scanning Sheet

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Staff Name: **KARL ROVE**

Document Date: **5/25/2006**

Correspondent: **DR. JAMES DOBSON**

Subject/Description: **RE: INFORMATION ON KARL ZINSMEISTER**

407

1000 [redacted]

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202-456-2020

202-456-1907 FAX

TO: DR. JAMES DOBSON	FROM: KARL ROVE
COMPANY: FOCUS ON THE FAMILY	DATE: MAY 25, 2006
FAX NUMBER: 719-531-3327	SENDER'S PHONE NUMBER: 202-456-2020
PHONE NUMBER: 719-531-5181	SENDER'S FAX NUMBER: 202-456-1907

RE: INFORMATION ON KARL ZINSMEISTER

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RE: INFORMATION ON KARL ZINSMEISTER

Home

THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE Online
POLITICS, BUSINESS, AND CULTURE

Three P's in a Political Pod

By Karl Zinsmeister

Politics has three elements: personalities, principles, and process. On the personalities front, America is currently in the midst of an unusually lively and healthy election season. Whatever else may be said of today's stable of presidential racers, none of them are lacking in vigor or skill. Compared to some of the snoozy, dwarfish contests of the recent past, we're witnessing strong prizefights right now. And in politics as elsewhere, stiff competition is the best way to separate the worthy from the not.

Voter turnout has rocketed up this year, and much of the public interest has centered on the personal character of candidates. This is a predictable response to Clintonism and other late warnings of moral rot. Having long been told by media smarty-pants that mature voters should look at "policies" and not "personal life," Americans seem to be discovering that, actually, personal life is pretty darn important.

As former White House speechwriter Peggy Noonan has written, "In a President, character is everything. A President doesn't have to be brilliant.... He doesn't have to be clever; you can hire clever.... But you can't buy courage and decency; you can't rent a strong moral sense. A President must bring those things with him."

It was actually Noonan's boss who re-established the primacy of character as a presidential essential. "Ronald Reagan represented the end of the rule of the planners, the eggheads, the technocrats who believed that the North Vietnamese could be beaten if we ran enough punchcards through the Pentagon computers," notes columnist James Lileks. "He didn't win because he was smarter than Carter. He won because he was manlier."

Reagan wasn't just a moral force, however. His emphasis on character and virtue was combined with dogged devotion to some big, hard, very specific ideas and principles. Reagan was certain communism was evil and unworkable and would be dangerous until wrestled to the ground by free men; ignoring elite mockery, he went for the pin. Reagan wanted a beefed up navy and a missile defense shield; he refused to take no for an answer. Reagan viewed government regulations as frequently counterproductive; the page count of new rules shrank dramatically on his watch. Reagan believed top tax rates shouldn't exceed 30 percent; he dragged them down.

None of the current frontrunners have aspirations as concrete and focused as these. One can tell McCain, Bush, Gore, and company badly want to be President; but they give little evidence of specific things they're aching to do once in office.

If you're devoted to ideas and principles, it's hard not to be disappointed in

contemporary politicians, with their reflexive preference for soft platitudes over hard proposals. John DiIulio, Michael Barone, and Christopher Hitchens (who occupy rather different parts of the political rainforest) all agree later in these pages that "there are no substantive issues in this year's election." This illustrates a kind of 3D consensus of dismay with modern, focus-group, forget-principle-just-feel-their-pain campaigning.

On the one hand, conservatives shouldn't be overly perturbed to see a politics grow up that is more supervisory and tinkering than boldly activist. In keeping with our general interest in seeing the state wither away, leaving societal problem-solving to other, less Jurassic institutions instead, the disappearance of 12-point political crusades shouldn't be a matter of wrenching sadness.

On the other hand, we do have serious problems—like dreadful urban public schools, and a Social Security system headed for bankruptcy in half a generation—that can't be fixed without government action (even if the ideal action is simply to back the state out of the picture). So it can be painful to watch today's pusillanimity and paralysis on the Potomac. Particularly frustrating is the slavishly poll-based style of "leadership" that Bill Clinton has developed to a high art.

Keep in mind, most Americans neither know nor care much about politics. Having never lived under a truly dysfunctional system of government, they take politics for granted, focusing instead on other things like children, faith, jobs, and "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?". In the January 2000 Gallup poll, only one out of 20 Americans could identify the Speaker of the House. (Eleven times as many knew game show host Regis Philbin.) In this environment, it's crazy to cower before public opinion. Leaders have to create support on tough political questions, not wait on it.

Through his stubborn (to critics, stupid) devotion to a handful of bedrock political ideas, Reagan pulled the country into new agreement on topics that many people previously didn't even know mattered. Reagan's broken-record tutorings on small government, individual freedom, and moral virtue—made possible by his inner confidence, and his lack of care for the disapproval of fashionable elites—allowed him to manufacture a consensus rather than just follow it.

Some political commentators are saying the winds have shifted against any recurrence of this triumph. "The conservative movement, which accomplished great things over the past quarter century, is finished," wrote Bill Kristol recently in the *Washington Post*.

I don't see that at all. On topics like abortion, race preferences, missile defense, taxes, and crime, there's not a dime's worth of difference between the positions taken by Ronald Reagan and the positions taken by today's Republicans George W. Bush and John McCain. And on front-and-center topics like education reform, Social Security, fixes for Medicare, and the role of religion in solving social problems, both Bush and McCain are now positioned to the right of the strongest positions Reagan ever took. Reagan never dared breathe a word of support for partial privatization of Social Security, education vouchers, federal funding for religious charities, or market-based cashouts of Medicare. Public receptivity to these conservative mega-reforms was simply not yet ripe. Today, the nation's thinking has evolved to the point where those sorts of proposals are Bush and McCain standbys. If having its

reforms become mundanely mainstream means the conservative movement is finished, well, we're all for that.

Along with personalities and ideas, the third important element in politics is the political process itself. John McCain is just the latest candidate to make hay on the idea that our current system is broken and in need of fixing.

Certainly there are things that want correction. In his troubling article on page 42, TAE senior editor Scott Walter sketches one electoral corruption in drastic need of repair. (Interestingly, George W. Bush has been much braver on the problem in question than John McCain, while Al Gore is an actively harmful force.) And a rather rotten reason explains why this particular rip in our democracy has gone as far as it has: The beneficiaries of the scam are lawyers (who make up more than four out of ten members of Congress).

Shortly after it was reported a couple years ago that attorneys are something like 12 times as prevalent in Washington as in the rest of country, a joke went around about how the National Institutes of Health were starting to use lawyers instead of white rats in their lab experiments. For three reasons: Because there are more lawyers than white rats. Because there are some things even rats won't do. And because scientists sometimes grow attached to the rats.

Tapping into America's distinctly rodentish view of Washington generally, John McCain has been declaiming loudly against "money in politics." This part of his message, unfortunately, is just showboating. Total spending on all campaigns for federal office by all candidates (major and minor)—including independent expenditures by unions and trade groups, all party payouts, all convention costs, etc.—came to $1.5 billion the last time we elected both a Congress and a President (1996). Meanwhile, that same year, Americans spent $2.0 billion on chewing gum, $21.5 billion on other kinds of candy, $2.7 billion on bowling fees, $27.8 billion on cigarettes, $13.9 billion on movies, $4.6 billion on potato chips, $12.8 billion on athletic shoes, $91.7 billion for alcoholic beverages, and $3.5 billion on coin-operated pinball and video games. We are a high-income nation of 273 million people. Spending a third of what we shell out annually for potato chips in order to sort and select our national representatives is some kind of scandal? I don't think so.

Nor are horrible fatcats buying elections. George W. Bush collected his current war chest from 173,000 different donors giving an average of $335 each. That sounds to me like democracy, not corruption.

In an era when Washington is increasingly dictating how Americans can use their land, educate their children, run their businesses, and so forth, it's ridiculous to complain about people giving reasonable sums to candidates who represent their interests. This is legitimate political action, and quite unavoidable unless you're going to muzzle free expression. If John McCain, Russ Feingold, and other alarmists on this subject really want to get money out of our politics, they should first get politicians out of our money. Until the feds stop interfering in so many aspects of our economy and community life, energetic defensive efforts to influence D.C. decisionmaking will be inevitable.

That's the kind of chicken-versus-egg reality that no one expects a liberal Democrat (who would be unwilling to shrink government's reach in any case) to understand. But we expect better of "conservative-to-midstream Republicans."

Published in *Winning Election 2000* April/May 2000 Issue

THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE Online
POLITICS, BUSINESS, AND CULTURE

Marriage Matters

By Karl Zinsmeister

The meaning and worth of love...is that it forces us...to acknowledge for another the same absolute significance which, because of the power of egoism, we are conscious of only in our own selves.

—Vladimir Solovyov

I have an acquaintance, about my age, who had a job selling cars locally. His daughters are close friends of my seven-year-old. Let's call him Kevin.

There was no violence in Kevin's marriage, no drinking or drugs. Husband and wife are both pleasant people. But a couple months ago it became known that Kevin had become involved with a woman about 15 years younger who worked as a secretary at his dealership. Kevin and his wife were in crisis. In school, their girls were describing sad scenes at home. Friends and associates expressed concern.

But some people expressed more concern than others. The leaders of their church didn't intervene, even though the girls are enrolled in the parish's Catholic school, where this trouble is well known (and overflowing into other families' lives through the children). Kevin's employer, however, did get involved. The owners of the dealership are a close, old local family with young grade school children of their own. They know Kevin's wife, who is willing to take him back. They offered to give Kevin time off from work so the two of them could work their problems through. They offered to pay for them to take a trip together. They offered him money for counseling. They told Kevin that saving his marriage was worth it, and important to them as his employer.

And when Kevin refused their offers of help, they fired him. And the secretary he was consorting with. They contested his application for unemployment benefits on the grounds that he hadn't been laid off but rather dismissed for refusing to follow company standards of personal conduct. And in our small town, I'd say there's a pretty good chance they let other potential employers know what they thought about the man.

If more of our community institutions reacted to individual marital breakdowns like the employer I've described above (and fewer like the do-nothing church), our national rates of marital collapse would surely be less shameful. William Bennett has written that "civilization needs cultural guardrails, certain reliable standards of right and wrong that may not be enforceable in law but must be enforceable through conscience and consensus." Defending marriage and maintaining guardrails around the family is just such an undertaking. It is not so much a task for politics or law as a responsibility of each of us in our roles as neighbors, employers, pastors, and local compatriots.

If we took this responsibility seriously, many grave problems could be averted. For today's flood of marital collapse is distributing great wreckages of human hurt, childhood trauma, and social and economic damage across American society (see pp. 39-44). And there is nothing inevitable about this. Other industrial nations have divorce levels only about half ours. (A side-by-side comparison is printed in Indicators.)

Marriage is the cornerstone upon which most of the rest of our social order rests. A man and woman linked in a lifelong childrearing union are the original microcommunity—the building block of all broader forms of trust, cooperation, and productivity. So long as these basic collaborations remain as weak as they are in present-day America, all other forms of community will be shaky, and social problems will be rampant.

That's why marriage reclamation must precede other forms of societal reform. A practical example: I have several dedicated friends who are currently devoting much time and energy to an attempt to build up a "fatherhood" movement. Fatherlessness, they say, is America's most important social problem.

Goodness knows this country needs more men who put their responsibilities to their children ahead of their own selfish desires. But as I told these individuals when a small group of us gathered a few years ago to launch some fatherhood-supporting organizations, I believe talking about fatherhood off on its own is not likely to influence daily behavior much. For most men, fatherhood is part of a package deal—a wife, the kids, a serious attitude toward career and earnings, a settled, disciplined, and responsible role in the community.

At some point in early adulthood, most males trade the irresponsible freedoms of the "bachelor lifestyle" for the deeper, subtler satisfactions that spring from being the progenitor of a household and a capable contributor to society. Under the best circumstances, becoming a father is the crowning event of the transition from a "natural" male state (where basic appetites and instincts dominate) to the civilized male role (where these crude impulses are productively sublimated into a quest for social honor). But fatherhood is usually only the "clincher" in the transition from male to man; for most men it is not the main bait. The first and foremost incentive is a woman.

Lots of things go into the civilizing of men, including religious experience, the gradual absorption of social codes and ethical standards, disciplinings from older or more powerful men, and a re-channeling of innate aggression into structured competition. But the biggest single influence that makes most men grow up and join the world is the desire to win and keep a good lifemate. Hunger for a strong mental, emotional, and sexual partnership is the main force creating the good husband, good father, good employee, and good citizen.

In a world where marriages are falling apart, desirable male qualities like disciplined work, mentoring of children, and responsible citizenship will also go into decline. And attempts to fix those secondary breakdowns without first fixing the marriages will be very inefficient. That isn't just my opinion. Look at the social evidence: the number of fathers who stay heavily involved with their children after the father's relationship with the mother has crumbled is very small—maybe 5 to 20 percent

based on the research I've studied.

In other words: no solid marriage, no good family man. (The sidebar on page 46 discusses this in more detail.) Even men who've been solid soldiers for years can quickly revert to puerile behavior and the eerie lackawanna of adolescence once their loyalty to a wife crumbles. Which brings us back to the "package deal." The only reliable way to closely integrate most men with children, hard work, and dependability is to get them settled into a stable, satisfying, lifelong pair bond. Marriage. It's the keystone.

So, reviving marriage (and discouraging divorce) is important. How to do it? The first thing to acknowledge is that marriage is not always an easy or natural state. As Barbara Dafoe Whitehead suggests in our lead essay, every married couple has to wrangle with the sharp biological differences between men and women. There's a lot to work out.

Traditionally, women have used marriage to govern male sexuality, gaining in the process some security and protection during their highly vulnerable period of childrearing. The fact that feminists are among today's leading critics of enduring marriage would astonish women of other times and places. "A woman in favor of divorce is like a turkey in favor of Christmas," as an Irishwoman once put it—an analogy whose general truth has recently been borne out by data showing that easy divorce is one of today's leading impoverishers of women.

Another cautionary about marriage is that, even under the best of circumstances, no lifelong partnership can be thrilling all the time. Once they come down to earth after their initial romance, many married couples struggle, worrying that their love has dissipated along with their ecstatic feelings.

Perhaps you've heard the story about the teacher who was quizzing his students on vocabulary. He was reading words out and the children were shouting back the definitions. "Monotony," he enunciated part way through. "Having only one wife or husband," came the answer.

Both the "boredom" problem and the "clashing sexes" problems intrinsic to marriage are captured in one of my favorite country music songs. It's titled: "My Wife Ran Off With My Best Friend. And I Sure Do Miss Him."

Without question, the love that takes the form of an intoxicating fever between man and woman is perishable. But real marital love is what goes on after the intoxication is gone. "Love is a decision, not a feeling, a choice to befriend someone for life rather than just use them," says essayist Joe Breighner. The fickleness of love is, in fact, one of the main reasons marriage is needed. As a woman I know says, "marriage is what keeps you together until you fall in love again."

Marriage is a complicated cultural invention that requires upkeep. That vital practical work is exactly what Mike McManus focuses on in our second feature article. McManus is himself one of the founders of the marriage-saving movement—a grassroots mobilization that has demonstrated dramatic successes in combating the contemporary drift toward disposable marriage. Amazingly few of the couples who end up in divorce court have tried any mediation or counseling. One of today's most

vital social missions is to introduce more Americans to the simple programs, organizations, and ideas discussed on pages 28-34 of this magazine. They are effective, and we as a people badly need this particular salve.

Of course, even proven therapies will fail if there is no will to change. Though most Americans have been sobered by the bitter fallout of various 1960s liberationisms, there is still a significant group—disproportionately influential in the media and among "experts" on college campuses—who may deny the very premise that lifelong marriage is desirable, and divorce to be discouraged as much as possible.

Even among America's sensible middle class, there is a tendency to think of our "broken family problem" and the obviously poor upbringing of many of today's children as being mostly a function of illegitimacy in inner cities rather than divorce in suburbs. When Dan Quayle revisited his famous Murphy Brown speech about family breakdown two years ago, he said he hadn't meant to include children of divorce in his warning. Well, he ought to have. While illegitimacy probably is today's most threatening family dysfunction, divorce is in much the same league in terms of the frequency and severity with which it affects children. Both problems annually drive more than a million children into single-parent families. Both increase child poverty. Both cause serious behavioral problems.

But let's treat this as an open question for the moment. Could it be, as some would have us believe, that the withering of marriage is no big deal? Perhaps a rich, modern society doesn't need lifelong commitment the way simpler ones did.

One problem with this view is the historical record. History suggests marriage is the oldest and probably most indispensable of all human institutions. It varies in name, and sometimes in detail, but as anthropologist David Gilmore says, "all societies have marriage—there are none that do not." And the reason is simple: marriage regulates sex. And sex, as everyone knows, is humanity's original impulse.

Of course over the last generation, attempts to regulate sex have had all the popularity of a good nosebleed. In a book looking back at his experiences as a 1960s radical, Peter Collier illustrates the contempt his colleagues felt toward marriage. "Two of my Movement comrades decided to get married," he writes. "After a ceremony filled with gibberish about liberation and the Third World, there was a reception, featuring a large wedding cake frosted with the slogan: Smash Monogamy." Needless to say, that marriage didn't last long.

Bill Bennett tells a story of two of his students who married back when he was a professor. They too spouted lines about how they weren't going to own each other, would have an open marriage, didn't believe in sexual slavery, and so forth. For his wedding present, Bennett gave them paper plates.

Like it or not, monogamy is fundamental to any equitable society. A world without marital boundaries is a ruthlessly every-man-for-himself place, as author George Gilder explains:

> Monogamy is egalitarianism in the realm of love. It is a mode of rationing. It means—to put it crudely—one to a customer. Competition is intense enough even so, because of the sexual inequality of human

> beings. But under a regime of monogamy there are limits. One may covet one's neighbor's wife or husband, one may harbor fantasies of teeny-boppers, but one generally does not act on one's lusts. One does not abandon one's own wife when she grows older to take a woman who would otherwise go to a younger man. One does not raid the marriages of others. Thus a balance is maintained, and each generation gets its only true sexual rights: the right to a wife or husband and the right to participate in the future of the race through children.

This "is not a ruthlessly strict system," Gilder notes. Some small number of divorces are inevitable. But he warns that "the essential rules are necessary to a just and democratic society. A breakdown in the sexual order will bring social ills and injustices far more grievous than the usual inequalities of money and power."

There have been utopian experiments in sexual freedom throughout human history, with results ranging from painful failure to explosive collapse. From the Oneida Community (which practiced a complex communal marriage in mid-1800s New York) to the early twentieth-century Israeli kibbutzniks (who were deliberately promiscuous out of antipathy for the bourgeois family), the verdict has been consistent: societies lacking expectations of sexual fidelity are quickly split by dangerous rivalries and divisions. On the kibbutz, for instance, extra-marital sexuality quickly proved so unsettling and destructive to the community that it had to be squelched. Adultery was severely censured and subsequently became quite rare. Adolescent and other non-marital sex was also soon discouraged on the kibbutz. (Our article beginning on page 52 has more on the kibbutzniks and Oneidans, in other contexts.)

The preference for monogamy thus seems to be a kind of Iron Rule of human culture. Even in today's hyper-liberated America, the instinct retains a powerful grip on us: The data in Indicators show that the proportion of married people having sexual relations beyond the marital boundary is only a few percent a year.

If that comes as a surprise, it's because the national images projected by Hollywood are so contrary. The danger of course is that this imagery becomes self-fulfilling. Cultural portrayals of married life do matter: Margaret Mead once observed that no society exists anywhere in the world in which people stay married without enormous community encouragement and pressure to do so. In every human system there will be sociopaths, and deadbeats, and just plain selfish folks, and society must have ways of holding those individuals accountable for their bounced checks, discarded obligations and abandoned family members. As Michael Medved notes in his wonderful essay on page 47, there are multiple stakeholders in every marriage—including the other spouse, his or her family, and sometimes children—so deserting one's vows is more than just a private matter.

For this reason, the aim of society and civil law has traditionally been to protect marriage. Until recently, that is. Today, our family laws and informal culture work to ease marital dissolution rather than discourage it. The consequences are often pitiful to behold.

Take, for instance, the newlyweds behind that "Smash Monogamy" cake. They eventually gave up playing Comrade Housemate and went their separate ways. We

may hope they learned something useful from their crack-up and are now at peace. But unfortunately their recklessness touched lives other than their own. You see, this throwaway marriage left "in its rubble, a pair of pathetic children." Collier reports he still sees them occasionally, "walking around Berkeley looking like the survivors of an airplane disaster."

The longstanding essence of legal marriage has been to provide security for children—to "fix the obligation" toward such offspring as may result from a sexual union. Our current generation has junked this traditional understanding, and the result is that, as William Raspberry says, "our children are less happy, less healthy and less secure than we were."

That's a scandal. It's our own fault. And it can be fixed.

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THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE Online
POLITICS, BUSINESS, AND CULTURE

Faithful Community Life

By Karl Zinsmeister

Over the last generation, many historians, politicians, and journalists have labored to downplay the significance of religion in making American society what it is. That's not easily accomplished, though. There's just too much concrete evidence of the importance of our religious roots.

Nearly half the men who signed the Declaration of Independence had some seminary training, and John Adams's description of the American Revolution was that it "connected, in one indissoluble bond, the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity." In their marvelous story starting on page 20 (built on a year of research) Michael and Jana Novak debunk today's conventional portrayal of George Washington as a man influenced mightily by Greek and Roman paganism but not much touched by Christian ideals. To the contrary, they report, Washington's Christianity was critical to his fathering of our nation.

David Gelernter looks at different historical evidence and finds that America is deeply stamped with the Judeo-Christian ideas and practices first brought to this continent by Puritan settlers. Stepping back even further in Western history, professor Rodney Stark concludes that Christian principles were decisive in allowing Europeans to vault out of the static misery that most humans had to cope with through the centuries. Not just compassion, moral equality, and democracy, but even seemingly secular innovations like liberty, limited government, and science were products primarily of Christian insights. And these religious understandings made Western civilization more successful and more humane than other societies.

This issue of The American Enterprise doesn't concern itself with all of the ways Judeo-Christianity has influenced us, but focuses specifically on how religion creates social bonds—how it knits people and communities together. The common view among liberal intellectuals today is that religion is something that divides people, a "wedge," a force that corrodes unity. Everything from today's "culture wars" to the recent marauding of disaffected Muslims through European cities is blamed vaguely on "too much religion."

That is a crude reduction of the actual effects of religious belief on most people. It's true that religion is a potent influence on all aspects of a civilization. "The beginning of culture is cult," reminds Michael Novak. Often, religious views have soaked so deeply into the social fabric that most citizens are no longer even conscious of them, even as their culture continues to be shaped by echoes of faith.

In particular, it is the religious impulse that makes typical men and women capable of concern for their fellows. The verdict of history, says Novak, is that "apart from the worship of God, human beings cannot transcend themselves in the large numbers needed to sustain a civilization. Unless human beings have a vision of something beyond the bounds of their own natures, they cannot be pulled out of

themselves."

America has a richer and more varied tradition of religious community-making than any other country on Earth. The Puritans, Quakers, Catholics, and other persecuted believers who first arrived on these shores came specifically to set up faithful societies denied to them elsewhere. Anabaptists, Shakers, Jews, Moravians, and many others followed them across the ocean so they could cohere with other worshippers in congregations, neighborhoods, and towns. Then there were rafts of homegrown religious communities: pioneer Methodists, Christian Scientists, the Oneida Movement, Seventh-Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Lubavitchers, Latter-Day Saints, and many others.

Religious communities in the U.S. are not just some historical remnant. Mormons, Chabadniks, various Anabaptists, orthodox Catholics, and broad spectrums of evangelical Protestants are burgeoning in number and prospering within close-knit home places sprinkled from New York City to Nashville; Wheaton, Illinois to Moscow, Idaho; Grand Rapids, Michigan to Waco, Texas. There are entire cities in this country—as different as Provo, Utah and Kiryas Joel in upstate New York—that are built on religious fraternity. Informal groupings of believers lean on their fellow saints in towns like Santa Paula, California (profiled on page 33), inside hundreds of megachurches in a range of U.S. localities (page 28), and even in brand new communities built around a religious core—like Ave Maria, now being constructed on Florida's prosperous Gulf Coast.

Religious communities continue to attract people because they function differently, and feel quite distinct from other places. In a statistics-laden paper given at the American Enterprise Institute, MIT economist Jonathan Gruber recently presented some pioneering documentation of this. People who reside near co-religionists not only participate in worship at a higher rate than more isolated believers (as you might expect), but also conduct themselves differently in other ways. Being surrounded by a community of believers inspires more work, study, and marriage, and less divorce and freeloading. A 10 percent increase in the density of co-religionists in your neighborhood, Gruber found, leads to an extra half year of education, an increase in income, a 4 percent rise in marriages and equivalent decline in divorces, and 16 percent less welfare use.

"Religion...is more needed in democratic republics than in any other," wrote Alexis de Tocqueville. The untrammelled individual autonomy fostered by U.S.-style governance needs to be balanced by a sense of responsibility and communal loyalty. Only when religious parameters discipline personal appetites and imbue citizens with authentic concern for others will a people be able to live entirely free, without despots over them, Tocqueville concludes.

Thankfully, some invisible spring (which has gone dry in Europe and other places) keeps refilling American breasts with religious convictions and truths. As early as just a few decades after our nation's founding, people like Ralph Waldo Emerson were gloomily predicting the death of Christian principle in America. Yet everyday believers have repeatedly confounded the authorities—religious passion remains alive and well in the contemporary United States. To take just one indicator: sales of religious books have jumped 20 percent in the last five years (while sales of all other books have fallen 7 percent over that same period).

Of course, enemies of religion cite this bubbling passion as something to fear in American society. They obsessively warn that our nation is in danger of being swept

by a dark "religious fundamentalism." However, the facts of daily life in the U.S. bear out Tocqueville's judgment that deep and yeasty religious feeling is a good thing in a free culture like ours. Evidence I assembled in TAE's previous issue (SCAN) indicates that religious believers continue, right to the present day, to do most of the altruistic work that keeps our communities healthy—everything from blood donation, to philanthropy, to military service, to childraising, to volunteer work.

Contrary to the claims of skeptics, religious enthusiasm has actually proven to be a unifier of Americans. In an article explaining why Muslim immigrants have been much more comfortable in America than in Europe (and therefore vastly less likely to become alienated from their fellow citizens, and radicalized), New Republic contributor Spencer Ackerman finds that America's religiosity actually reinforces our tolerance and pluralism, rather than impeding it. He quotes a Muslim-American leader saying that when he ventures into America's religiously conservative heartland "it is true that, for some people, the way I pray is peculiar. But they don't think I'm hallucinating when I say, 'It's prayer time.'"

This same Muslim immigrant notes that America's Bible Belt is indeed the place he feels least threatened. "Where's the heart of the Islamic Society of North America? Plainfield, Indiana! That place hasn't been bombed. It's not in the heart of cosmopolitan America. It's in rural Indiana!" states Eboo Patel. "For American Muslims," Ackerman concludes, "the opportunity for a publicly visible expression of religion removes a tremendous source of frustration" that leaves many young men in more secularized countries dangerously disaffected.

Serious religious conviction thus need not be a "wedge" at all. Rather than a force for division, it is more typically a way of uncovering common humanity with others. Even when creeds block agreement on specific details of conviction, common belief under God provides citizens with the mechanism for accepting and encouraging their fellows to pursue a good life in their own way.

There are a great many forces today—from complex cultural clashes to simply the frantic pace of modern life—that discourage human fraternity. Amidst all that, religious faith is one of the most reliable inducements to unity, an orderly and wholesome society, and real feelings of community. Isn't that something to be guarded, not tossed away?

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POLITICS, BUSINESS, AND CULTURE

Why Encouraging Daycare Is Unwise

By Karl Zinsmeister

There is an old saying that goes "Children have a special way of spelling love: T-I-M-E." What the very young hunger for more than for anything else in the world, modern researchers confirm, is closeness with their mothers and fathers.

Unfortunately, children are getting less of their parents' time today than in any previous era. A favorite cartoon of mine suggests how far we've strayed. It shows a corporate type speaking to his secretary from behind a large desk. "I've decided to spend more time with my family," he announces. "See if you can find them."

One professor I know illustrates the problem by way of an analogy. "Let's assume you had some other industry," he says. "The industry made shoes, and then you took a large chunk of the labor force out, something like 40 percent, and you changed nothing much else—you wanted to make the same amount of shoes of the same quality with the same technology. Everybody in the world would think you'd lost your mind. Well, that's basically what we did to parenting."

One reason the flight from parenting has been so fast over the last generation is because lots of self-appointed experts have advised the American public that there's no reason *not* to veer off into other pursuits while leaving the daily raising of children to surrogates. "The care of the young is infinitely better left to trained professionals rather than to harried amateurs with little time nor taste for the education of young minds," insists feminist Kate Millett.

Responsible authorities who ought to have challenged this kind of foolishness mostly failed to do so. One national statement on the family released a few years ago actually defined "parents" as "adult persons who care for children"—making their equivalence to babysitters and day care workers quite explicit. No sensible person actually believes this, of course, but it is becoming our official national orthodoxy anyway, because few people will speak against it for fear of being called the many names that now get slung at someone who defends the natural family.

Ours isn't the first era to experiment with substitute parenting on a large scale. There were, for instance, earlier periods when many European aristocrats relied on wet-nursing and nannying for the basic acculturation of their children. Historians tell us three factors encouraged this. One was a decline in the social status of mothers. Another was weakened regard for children. A third was rising narcissism.

Unfortunately, all three of those factors are present in our current era. Which is troubling, because the earlier experiments in surrogate childrearing did not end well. There is evidence that the eventual decline and decay of the European aristocracy, in fact, had much to do with the increased distance between parents and young children.

Over the last decade or two, many discoveries have been made that help explain why a child's early bonds with his caretakers are so important. Authorities used to believe that babies were essentially passive bundles, unable to perceive or seek out much from their environment. Any social responses were thought to be, as one scientific curriculum put it, "a figment of the over-involved mother's imagination, since baby's behavior is random, uncontrolled, essentially autistic."

Experts asserted that children needed only feeding, protection from danger, and other basic care until they were a year to a year-and-a-half old. And after that, it was said, the young mostly needed discipline and behavioral conditioning. Yale professor Arnold Gesell, the leading child developmentalist of the pre-World War II generation, believed that basic human capacities were biologically programmed into infants, and that they unfolded in stable, predictable ways without much relation to home conditions. Little credence was given to the idea that parents and small babies could have a relationship. Even "as late as the 1960s," Stanford University psychologist Anne Fernald remarks, "some people thought infants were cabbages."

That "expert" view has now been demolished. Against the old assumption that newborns are unable to perceive or seek out much from their environment, researchers have recently demonstrated that babies are sorting and responding to stimuli virtually from birth.

For instance, studies have shown that a one-week-old child will choose his mother's smell over any other. Five-day-olds will turn toward a pad soaked in their mothers's milk, while clean pads produce no response. The journal *Science* has reported that newborns will respond to poems their mothers read out loud before birth, but not to poems previously unheard. In another experiment, one-month-olds became upset when photos of their mothers were accompanied by recordings of someone else speaking. University of Washington psychologist Patricia Kuhl has discovered that six-month-olds can distinguish between their native language and foreign tongues.

Newborns just 10 minutes old much prefer pictures of faces to blank ovals or pictures with face-like features that have been scrambled. Tests show that ten-day-olds prefer their mother's face to others'. At 14 days, babies recognize and favor their father's face as well. Babies can also distinguish among various facial expressions. We know that infants in their first months will kick their legs more for a familiar mobile than for one they haven't seen before, or one that has been slightly altered. "Even at two-and-a-half months, an infant's memory is very developed, very specific and incredibly detailed," says Carolyn Rovee-Collier, a Rutgers University psychologist.

Longstanding claims that small babies were not capable of producing real smiles (early grins were insistently labelled "gas smiles" by generations of baby doctors) have been refuted by proof that infants in their third week will smile selectively in response to their mothers' voice. Even more strikingly, we know that infants just a few hours old will suck a nipple harder to activate a recording of their mother's voice than they will for a stranger's.

So it turns out infants are not cabbages at all. "Detailed studies of the amazing behavioral capacities of the normal neonate have shown that the infant sees, hears, and moves in rhythm to his mother's voice in the first minutes and hours of life,"

summarize pediatricians Marshall Klaus and John Kennell. "A lot more is happening in infants' minds than we've tended to give them credit for," agrees psychologist Karen Wynn.

All of this confirms the importance of a child's early experiences. It also supports the conclusions of "attachment" researchers like psychiatrist John Bowlby, who hold that babies have powerful internal mechanisms that drive them to connect themselves to their parents. "The bells that the children could hear were inside them," the poet Dylan Thomas once wrote. Apparently the bells that ring within newborns lead them to energetically pursue alliance with their mother, and to become anxious if these efforts are thwarted.

Hunger for their mother isn't something babies can just "get over." It is a need wired deeply into their core. Writer Peggy O'Mara McMahon observes that the mothering behavior of different animal species

> falls into two categories: cache or carry. Species in the *cache* category are stashed in a den with other offspring while their mothers look for food, do not need to feed often, and do not need frequent physical contact with mother. The species in the *carry* category are marsupial-like. Their mothers' breastmilk is low in fat content and must be consumed almost continuously. They are not born in litters, and close physical contact with mother not only ensures frequent feeding, but also stimulates brain development.

From nutritional and other points of view, round-the-clock nursing and a carrying system of child care are not very efficient. So why do they exist in the higher animals? Because frequent suckling provides repeated opportunities for intimate interaction between mother and child—the very sort of contact that encourages higher mental processes in an infant. "Rapid onset of hunger and satiation in the baby," summarizes researcher Blurton Jones, is "a simple mechanism for ensuring that it stays with the mother."

We have unequivocal evidence that breast-fed children are physically stronger than non-breast-fed children, that they have greater verbal, quantitative, and memory abilities as preschoolers, and significantly higher I.Q. scores during their school years. This is due not simply to healthy substances in the milk, as many people assume, but also to the early mother-child relationship that breastfeeding affords.

This is not something we can easily wish away. Keep in mind that if all of human history were represented by one hour, the 200 years of our industrial era would represent only a fraction of the last second. The family arrangements that evolved during the course of human history grew up specifically because they matched human nature. Ignoring deep early childhood needs today won't make them go away; it will only produce unsettled offspring.

In an article in *The Journal of Pediatrics*, researchers Betsy Lozoff and Gary Brittenham report that the close "carrying" style of infant care traditionally practiced by mothers is a human universal that has prevailed in all cultures and places. Only very recently has this style of nurture been replaced in some social strata by an alternative more like the "nesting" practiced by birds. Under this alternative, babies

spend much less time in physical contact with their mothers. They are more often confined to cribs or classrooms. Responses to crying and social bids are less immediate. And only a minority of all babies now get the benefits of extended breastfeeding. "These remarkable transformations," the doctors speculate, "may profoundly alter infant development."

It isn't only babies who need tight human connections. Parents do too, if they are going to flourish in their role of progenitor. A hint of this was contained in a statement made by PepsiCo President and ceo Brenda Barnes when she resigned her job, to much media comment, a few months ago. "I'm not leaving because my children need more of me," Barnes stated. "I'm leaving because I need more of them."

Many talented women who devote themselves to mothering while their children are young have come to this same conclusion. They do what they do not just out of devotion to their children, but because they have discovered there are deep personal satisfactions awaiting anyone who will pour herself into the role. (See our articles by Iris Krasnow and Evan Gahr.)

A dabbling, partial commitment of mother to child is even harder to sustain than full-blown engagement, notes John Bowlby:

> Enjoyment and close identification of feeling is only possible for either party if the relationship is continuous.... Just as the baby needs to feel that he belongs to his mother, the mother needs to feel that she belongs to her child, and it is only when she has the satisfaction of this feeling that it is easy for her to devote herself to him.

A public school teacher and former day care worker I corresponded with a few years ago made a similar point:

> Parents who use day care tend not to develop the kinds of parenting skills, or the self-confidence in dealing with their children, that seem to me to be necessary.... Since we were in charge during most of the children's waking hours, parents had very little opportunity to develop.... As a result they were generally nervous around their children, and impatient with the various unpleasant aspects of caring for them.

A family friend who used daytime babysitters heavily for several weeks when she had to pack for a sudden cross country move told me that the more time she spent away from her young boys, the less adroitness and patience she had for handling them. Likewise, Ohio mother Mary Robin Craig writes of a period when she worked full time and had a nanny that, "On my off days I could see that their lives had a flow that eluded me totally."

It's necessary to get into a swing with children, and simple overlap is a big part of this. There is evidence, as child developmentalist Urie Bronfenbrenner notes, that an infant uses physical, emotional, and probably invisible hormonal tools to "'teach' his parents" how to nurture him. But this can succeed only if the pupil shows up for class.

Obviously, there will always be families where death, divorce, or poverty make it impossible for parents to be their child's primary caretakers. These families deserve our help, and first crack at the limited number of truly wonderful surrogate caretakers who are able to pour themselves into the nurture of another person's child.

It is also obvious that substitute child care is generally not harmful in small amounts. As psychologist Diane Fisher carefully puts it, "day care can be a place that does not do a great deal of harm to children if they're there for a limited amount." The problem is that rather than just being a filler of gaps, day care is becoming a substitute for parenting in many families.

The question is not whether hired day care should exist (it always will), or whether it should be made as good as possible (of course it should). The question is whether everyday middle-class Americans should produce children without the intention of nurturing them. There is a difference between a compromise made in reaction to some crisis of fate, and an arrangement made simply because one wants to maximize one's own position while ignoring serious costs to others.

By transforming day care from a necessary stopgap for the unlucky few into a normal and accepted part of average lives, we are thoughtlessly taking a step of great consequence. One liberal professional who has devoted her entire working life to overseeing municipal day care programs warns that the shuffling of millions of middle-class children into day care is creating a new kind of underprivileged child in America. We are, she says, "duplicating the sort of developmental deprivation that used to be suffered only by the poorest and most disadvantaged."

Psychiatrist Stanley Greenspan worries that this may bring us to "an evolutionary crossroads":

> For the first time in history, there is a growing trend for more and more middle- and upper-middle-class parents to farm out the care of their babies to others, often in settings not conducive to meeting children's irreducible needs.... The impact will likely be slow and insidious. People may gradually become more self-centered and less concerned with others. Thinking may become more polarized.... Impulsive behavior, helplessness, and depression may increase.

The ultimate casualty, Greenspan suggests, may be "our capacity to live together and govern ourselves in cohesive communities."

When critics look back at the twentieth century, there's a good chance they'll identify the nightmare futurism of authors like George Orwell (*1984*), Aldous Huxley (*Brave New World*), and Yevgeny Zamyatin (*We*) as the most powerful and important writing of our era. These visionaries peered deep into the heart of modernity and detected some icy hazards lurking there.

Given that they were working in quite different settings, it's striking that Orwell, Huxley, and Zamyatin all placed the very same cultural disruption at the center of their anti-socialist masterpieces: A horrifying "professionalization" of childrearing in days to come. The great modern literature of dehumanization and crushed spirits

has as its cornerstone the depiction of how societies become deranged when they let institutional methods of acculturating the young replace traditional family-based childhoods.

In *Brave New World,* babies are brought up scientifically, under the care of white-uniformed nurses, in "state conditioning centres." As a consequence, "irrational" traits such as loyalty, altruism, humor, and love have nearly disappeared. The protagonist of Zamyatin's *We,* product of a child-rearing factory, grows up to crave a mother who will regard him as "a piece of herself." In *1984,* the natural family has been stripped of its childraising functions, and all offspring of the ruling class are reared by specialists. The result is shriveled human bonds and a sharp decline in intimacy. Only among the ragged, tradition-bound "proles" are children still tended by their parents, and this sentimental practice makes the proles hopelessly uncompetitive in a world built around work, production, and social control.

The thing that makes these cautionary tales so chilling is their plausibility. They depict modern life going awry in ways that are wholly conceivable to contemporary observers. If these authors were able to make us shiver at a world where mothering and fathering had disappeared altogether, that's because they only had to extrapolate from trends already under way.

As parental oversight of children weakens, what is to be done? For a start, we might admit that many of the excuses we give for proceeding along our current course are phony. In a little essay titled "The Tyranny of the Urgent," writer Charles Hummel notes that the pressing mundanities of daily existence will often push aside the truly important things in life if we don't resist. I see this regularly when it comes to day care, where the excuse is always that people put their kids into the hands of others because they "have" to work. But is that really true?

"It's easy to get addicted to the stimulation of the work environment and a certain standard of living," cautions author Stephen Covey. "As a result, parents are held hostage to these lies, violating their conscience but feeling that they really have no choice." Researcher Arlie Hochschild has found that, contrary to their rhetoric, certain parents are actually *choosing* overwork, as a refuge from the responsibilities of family life. Recent headlines like "Lies Parents Tell Themselves About Why They Work" (*U.S. News*), and "The Myth of Quality Time: How We're Cheating Our Kids" (*Newsweek*) suggest this is sinking in with the public.

So: One part of any solution to our child care predicament must be to encourage all parents to face facts, make tough choices, and change their private lives so they can be there for their children when they are needed.

Another part must be public efforts that acknowledge the high contributions and heavy burdens of conscientious parents, and offer assistance to mothers and fathers who make responsible choices. Given the slightest bit of support, many parents are ready to spring into wholesome action. Asked in a survey commissioned by the Independent Women's Forum to describe an "ideal balance between work and family" in their own lives, seven out of ten Americans said they would prefer either having one parent at home full-time, or having part-time work set around the family schedule. Only 15 percent chose "both my spouse and me working full-time with child care in or outside of our home" as their ideal.

In a March *Washington Post* survey, fully 68 percent of Americans agreed it would be better if mothers looked after their children at home. Asked which mothers of preschool children they respect more: those who work full time outside the home or those who stay home full time, the public chose at-home moms by 51 to 20 percent. All types of women—from full-time careerists to full-time mothers—said by margins of at least two-to-one that they respected at-home mothers more.

So the issue is how to encourage more families to translate their aspirations into reality. One thing policy makers could do to slow down the day care steam roller and increase parental caretaking would be to encourage more "flex-time" work, part-time jobs, and home work (all things that labor unions strongly resist). See Richard Miniter's article (page 51) on this subject.

Another much-needed reform would be to stop favoring parents who hire childminders (by letting them claim tax credits for their day care expenses) while offering no similar credit to parents who provide their own care. One way to do this would be to eliminate the child care tax credit entirely. Another way would be to extend the same financial support to at-home parents.

While we're at it, sharply raising existing tax exemptions and credits for young children would be a very good idea. Allowing families to keep more of their own money would improve child-rearing while also acknowledging in a fair way that parents molding our next generation are doing society's most important work.

"Income splitting"—a reform that would let a one-income family divide its earnings for tax purposes between husband and wife, bumping them down into lower tax brackets—is another long-overdue remedy. This would both fix our current tax code's marriage penalty, and also make it easier for families to survive with one parent primarily at home.

Other suggestions for what an intelligent child care policy should look like were offered recently by former *New Republic* editor Michael Kelly:

> It would seek to strongly discourage out-of-wedlock births. It would seek to strongly reinforce the idea that it primarily takes not a village but parents—two of them—to raise a child. It would offer help for parents who must work, but it would send an unmistakable message that, whenever possible, it is better that one parent stays home with the kids.
>
> The policy put forward by the Clinton administration...is irrationally biased toward the form of child care most parents like least—institutionalized group care—and against what most parents want most: to be able to afford to have one parent stay home.... Why does the administration seek an economic incentive for parents to choose work over childrearing? ...If the administration is serious about the best interests of the children, it will correct the anti-home-care bias in its policy.

Not every American child will enjoy the primary energy and devotion of his own parents when he is young—no matter what assistance is offered toward that end. But that ought to be our goal, the ideal toward which all of our encouragements are

aimed. It's a simple, practical, and wholesome aspiration.

So what are we waiting for?

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Fatherhood Is Not for Wimps

By Karl Zinsmeister

Men sometimes fear that when they enter fatherhood they will have to acquire a difficult and foreign set of skills. But fathers needn't remake themselves or put on masks to succeed in family life—normal male traits are useful in the home. A child doesn't need two mothers.

Many commentators call for a "new," highly sensitive kind of father. Feminist Letty Cottin Pogrebin, for instance, devotes a whole chapter in her book *Family Politics* to celebrating men like the fellow from Albuquerque who "loves being a father so much that he wanted to share his enthusiasm with a father-to-be. He gave his best pal a baby shower at which men friends gathered to toast the forthcoming baby with good will, good food, and a rap session about father feelings."

I'm sorry, but efforts like that are going nowhere fast with most fathers. There is nothing wrong with emotional sensitivity, but we oughtn't expect fathers to act like mothers. When New Age types hold up the Albuquerque model of fathering as something to be emulated, they only scare average men away from responsible fatherly duties.

Fathers will bring their basic natures to the family just as mothers will bring theirs. If actress Ali McGraw actually thinks she is going to get her wish for a husband "brave enough to say 'I feel fragile and inadequate right now, and I'd like some time to myself to cry,'" well, let's hope she has a very affectionate cat. It's unrealistic to expect that most men will ever act this way, and destructive to suggest they should.

Modern fatherhood is already too much of a goofy, ineffectual, surrendering sort of role. More sofa's-edge dithering is the last thing we need. Instead, we ought to be reassuring young men that there are authentic, active forms of fatherhood that go well with traditional masculine imperatives and interests. And we don't have to invent any "new models of behavior" for them to emulate. Men becoming fathers should be allowed to follow their male instincts, which now have few other outlets. For many men fatherhood is the last natural, deeply male niche left to them, and ought to be embraced as such.

Living in cramped cities, wearing pressed clothes, laboring in chatty, confining, rule-bound bureaucracies, cut off from nature, increasingly passive and powerless as individuals—males today are primally thwarted in many ways. Where are modern men now to find the vigorous autonomy of their classic roles of wilderness tamer, knight, shepherd, hunter, warrior, chief, tender of the earth, monk, or even "head of household"? Most men do, however, still have the opportunity to be fathers. And as co-leaders of their own small tribe they have a chance to make a difference, to create a micro-world where they really matter.

In their pre-fatherhood and post-fatherhood phase, contemporary men can be somewhat comical, at times even pitiful, to behold—self-engrossed and pleasure focused, terribly interested in toys and games of all sorts, obsessed with physical decline, sensitive of ego, existentially insecure. Whether mirror-gazing, self-expounding bachelor or golfball-chipping retiree, the little boy in many men is never too far from the surface. Fathers are of course not wholly different from men of other types or phases, but because they have a "project" and are surrounded by palpable reminders of their immediate personal importance and social responsibility, they tend to be less uncertain, and silly, than many of their modern counterparts.

A man's residence in his family is a billboard-sized tribute to his willingness to accept the consequences of his actions. And in the drives to provide, protect, exemplify, teach, judge, discipline, and comfort there are goals and fulfillments aplenty. Most men become even more aware of their distinctive maleness after becoming a father than they were before, and they ought to be encouraged to revel in that feeling—and then take up the serious responsibilities that go hand in hand with it.

"Good heavens," I can hear critics howling, "he's calling for a return of the Neanderthals." Stoked by kneejerk academic attacks on "patriarchy," opponents of traditional fatherhood continually fume that the only thing men want to do is lord it over others.

There is such a thing as male domestic tyranny, and I am not defending such households. But what most men wish to do for their families is not to control and manipulate but to secure and support, in love and justice. When men are thwarted from filling those instinctual leadership roles they actually become more rather than less likely (in their frustrated impotence) to resort to petty power-mongering and violence. Fathers granted a measure of social respect and personal authority will be far saner, fairer, and gentler than men denied leadership roles altogether.

That is the message of the classic Lorraine Hansberry play *A Raisin in the Sun.* At one point, Mama, the family matriarch, upbraids her daughter for humiliating her brother Walter, the senior "man of the house," during his moment of weakness. "What you tell him a minute ago? That he wasn't a man?" chides Mama in a powerful speech. "Child, when do you think is the time to love somebody the most; when they done good and made things easy for everybody? Well then, you ain't through learning—because that ain't the time at all. It's when he's at his lowest and can't believe in hisself 'cause the world done whipped him so."

Mama also prods Walter's honor. When their African-American family must face a climactic showdown with a hostile neighbor, she quietly defers to Walter as the household's representative, and then insists that Walter's son should witness the proceedings. "Travis, you stay right here. And you make him understand what you doing, Walter Lee. You teach him good. Like Willy Harris taught you. You show where our five generations done come to. Go ahead, son." In the end, the previously wavering Walter stands up for the family honor in a moment of crowning courage. Bursting with joy afterwards, Mama confides to Walter's wife, "he finally come into his manhood today, didn't he?"

It's because they don't have the elemental satisfaction of proudly sustaining a clan

that so many underclass men today resort instead to pointless "provings" of their manhood through bravado and bluster. The most elemental male creed is, "I shield and support, therefore I am." Men not involved in shielding and supporting find other ways to prove their existence: "I hurt, therefore I am," is one twisted alternative. The graffiti boy's proof is, "I deface, therefore I am." The gangbanger reasons, "I kill, therefore I am." The street libertine says, "I impregnate, therefore I am." At the other end of the economic spectrum, too, there are now rows upon rows of rich hedonists who can only babble, "I feel pleasure, therefore I am." And contrary to feminist claims, these are all expressions of a *stunted*—not an exaggerated—masculinity.

It is true that masculine nature needs to be carefully bounded. Biological factors work against male monogamy, child nurture, and full family participation. Men have an innate tendency to flee from their sexual effects. The family may be a natural environment for females, but it's relatively artificial for males.

That's why novelist Franz Kafka said the bravest thing a man can do is to marry and have children. Being a good father requires great self-mastery. It also takes cultural reinforcement—men have *always* had to be won over, or prodded, into taking up their family responsibilities. The good family man represents a triumph of mind and morals over raw nature.

Civilizations don't achieve this without continuing effort. Young men have to be led—by their own fathers, and by the fatherhood-reinforcing rituals of civilized culture—into becoming responsible progenitors. So long as fatherhood remains an expected and honored state, however, the conversion to family provider occurs fairly readily, and brings real fulfillment to the young male. "Rather than seeming to intrude on his freedom, the state of fatherhood will grant him a special dignity, an *identity*," writes psychiatrist David Gutmann.

It's when a culture stops upholding the paternal rituals, rules, and rewards that fathering withers. Today, we're no longer sure we're willing to make the social compromises necessary for good fathering. Some people have actually convinced themselves families can do fine without fathers. They're wrong. Wherever men are not lured or corralled into concerning themselves with their children and mates, decent human

The Danger of Unisex Fatherhood

By Christine Vollmer

It is an unequivocal fact that societies today, to the degree they weaken the marriage bond and allow fathers to be absent, are causing their own destruction. What is less obvious is *why* societies are tolerating the destruction of the family.

If I were to put it all into one word, I think it would be *unisex*—the confusion that exists about the differences between men and women and their tasks in life. That confusion has become much more acute since childbearing ceased to be considered a gift from God and became first optional, then unpopular. In a world where children are an option rather than a reason for living and working, the vital differences between men and women become much less meaningful, and of course, less necessary.

society rapidly fades.

And men themselves are among the first to pay the price. Outside the family, men are enormously vulnerable. They suffer far higher rates of homicide, suicide, accidents, disease, and mental problems, as well as *causing* vastly disproportionate amounts of crime, sexual violence, terrorism, and military adventurism. Anthropological studies reveal that the less fathers are connected to families, the more violent a culture tends to be. Men outside families are also much less economically productive—statistically more likely to be out of work and unwilling to work as long and hard.

It is fruitless to hope for easy "solutions" to the problems of underproductive, frequently dangerous males drifting outside of families. As the distinguished sociologist Alice Rossi puts it, "the machine cultures of the West have shown no inventiveness in developing new social institutions capable of providing individual loyalty and social integration to replace the bonds of the family." Alternate ways of restraining male energies simply don't

But beyond fertility, man senses a need for a real woman in order to be more man, and woman senses the need for a real man in order to be more woman. And if this were not so, there would be very little literature!

The essential differences between men and women, which any child with two parents instinctively feels, are obscured in a world dedicated to proving that men and women make equally good professionals, a world where more and more individuals have not had the full experience of mother and father in harmonious contrast.

As the work of fathers has taken them further and further from home, and fewer citizens have had personal experience of fatherhood, the world has lost touch with fatherliness to the point of sometimes declaring it unnecessary or non-existent, or even harmful. But the security that a child receives from the perceived strength and wisdom of a father is immeasurable (at least by current technology, although the neurological effect may soon be detectable as so many other influences are being discovered at that level).

Children also need mothers of course. As we all know and have experienced, but is now being proven by the most fascinating studies, the mother's unique and instinctive approach is vital for a child's correct development, physical and emotional. The tones of a mother's voice, her particular ways of interacting, and other distinctive womanly traits are now proven to have an effect on the baby's brain development that a man, or even a group of women, cannot achieve. Mothers are also essential for mediating, softening, and explaining the rougher aspects of the world as the child encounters them. Not infrequently, these rougher aspects are clashes with the law-giving capacity of their father!

* * *

Fathers who wash dishes, bathe babies, and do heavy work in the home are no less fatherly and no less masculine for it. In fact, the strength, kindness, and support which are central fatherly attributes are often well shown in this beautiful way by modern fathers. The problem occurs when new roles interfere with the father's natural influence as law-giver for his children.

In some views, "new" fathers are supposed to provide only comforts to their children. Authoritative fatherhood as it has existed since the beginning of mankind, inscribed in human nature and described all through Scripture, is no

exist.

Yet take these very same marauding men and link them to wives and children in webs of responsibility, and they can live radically different lives. It is not so much that their natures change as that they acquire new ends. G. K. Chesterton once wrote that "The watch-dog fights while the wild dog often runs away. Of the husband, as of the house-dog, it may often be said that he has been tamed into ferocity."

A hint as to how this makeover may take place was provided by animal behaviorist Konrad Lorenz. He showed that family loyalty is closely linked to aggressive impulses—that rituals of courting, friendship, mating, and greeting are often very slightly modified versions of battle behaviors, triumph dances, and other "characteristic motor patterns of aggression." What is taking place when animals establish loyal bonds to each other, then, is a redirection of aggressive energies into socially productive ends. In psychoanalyst Selma Fraiberg's summary, "aggression is made over in the service of love."

There is another, darker implication to all of this: Ritualized family formation is more than our ladder to cultural success—it is also our main bulwark against anarchistic interpersonal violence, specifically male violence. "Where there are no human bonds there is no motive for the regulation and control of aggressive urges," explains Fraiberg. As the number of men operating outside family commitments rises, therefore, the social tempest in our streets and schools grows grimmer.

In prior eras, the vast majority of men were routinely won over into productive family life. By what forgotten means did earlier generations achieve this?

Studies of paternal involvement among both humans and nonhuman primates show that a few critical factors make all the difference. One precondition is monogamy. Indeed, one of the very few places other than among humans that extensive paternal care exists is among the small number of monogamous primates and birds. A related precondition is certainty of birth—studies show that men take care of their children if they're sure they are the father and are recognized as such. A final factor is female encouragement for fathering efforts. Few fathers will get involved unless they have the support of the mother, and that rarely occurs unless the mother and father share the same household.

In other words, the magic ingredients needed to tie men to their children are the ancient ones: Sexual restraint and enduring marriage.

longer tolerated. I would plead that it once again become our conviction that men be encouraged to be masculine fathers, in the model of our heavenly Father: the intensely loving provider and law-giver, exacting and forgiving. And that women once again be reassured that being a mother—the intense, tender, courageous, and compassionate mediator of a child's first impressions, relations, and experiences—is inexpressibly rewarding and worthwhile.

Vive la différence is an understatement. Without *la différence,* life itself, as well as civilization, is in danger.

—Christine Vollmer heads the Latin American Alliance for the Family. This is adapted from a talk she gave to the Pontifical Council for the Family in Rome, June1999.

Since mothers, so vulnerable to male desertion, are especially dependent on the maintenance of strong family disciplines, it's astonishing that women would ever collaborate in weakening the nuclear family. And historically, women did no such thing. There has been a change, however, over the last 30 years. The sexual revolution, feminist proselytizing, and the expansion of government entitlements have weakened the case for sexual restraint and male responsibility. By abandoning much of their traditional effort at braking sexual behavior and moving instead toward the "every person for himself" position that has long been the sexual creed of selfish males, women have unleashed a new cruelness in our homes and communities.

Changed laws have also damped down responsible fatherhood. In her much-trumpeted book *Backlash*, feminist Susan Faludi noted gleefully that biological fathers increasingly lack "much of a say at all in the reproductive process." The easy availability of abortion without any limits has completely altered the incentives facing a man who learns he has impregnated a woman out of wedlock. The longstanding sense that a father has a moral obligation to stick with the mother and provide for his child is being replaced by a utilitarian selfishness that washes the father's hands of obligation. "If she wants to carry the child to term instead of getting rid of it when she has the chance," goes the thinking, "then raising the kid is her problem."

Even married husbands have no legal right today to be notified of their wives' pregnancies or abortions, much less to have any influence on the decisions made about them. Current law makes it impossible for a father to intervene on his child's behalf if the pregnant mother is abusing drugs or alcohol. Reproduction has been completely privatized as a female choice, a female right—a female problem. Writer Nancy Pearcey describes this as "a blind spot of the feminist movement," which isolates women "at just that point where male responsibility needs to be jolted."

Author Cathy Young notes that the insistence on absolute female autonomy in all reproductive matters discourages fatherly involvement. She observes that women today can, and do, get men to impregnate them unawares. She quotes a single mother's explanation of why she conceived her baby without seeking the father's consent: "It didn't matter what he wanted because I knew what I wanted."

Young notes that fathers of all sorts now face public attitudes and legal policies that suggest they are simply not important. Judges sometimes make it difficult for fathers to remain involved with their children after divorce, for instance. This is no way to get men more involved in their children's lives. "Is it fair or realistic," asks Young, "for women to say to men: The child you conceive is none of your business if that's what I decide, but you have to care for it if that's what I expect?"

Feminist Barbara Ehrenreich blandly urges that we "accept" father disappearance "as a historical *fait accompli* and begin to act on its economic consequences for women"—by which she means we should increase welfare spending for single mothers. This is a disastrous miscalculation of the long-term tolerability of father flight, and of its reversibility. Ehrenreich also misunderstands the causes of what she characterizes as "the male revolt." In truth, the turn away from fatherhood is not just a "revolt" by men but a push-pull phenomenon, with age-old male wanderlust being released and fed by ill-advised social changes that downgraded

fatherly roles. This was done; much of it can be undone.

And it should be—because meekly accommodating male absence from the family would amount to a permanent surrender to social misery and chaos. Ehrenreich herself seems aware of the risks when she worries aloud: "Are we acquiescing to a future in which men will always be transients in the lives of women and never fully members of the human family?" Her final conclusion, though, reeks of fatalism and surrender: Women, she argues, should live independently on state-guaranteed incomes because the state is less bothersome than hard-to-manage men. (She has company in this opinion. When actress Michelle Pfeiffer announced her decision to stay single while becoming a mother, she explained, "I don't want some guy in my life forever who's going to be driving me nuts.")

Here we face the core issue: The heart of today's fatherhood breakdown isn't between fathers and children. It is between fathers and mothers. Quite simply, too many men and women are at sword's points. The damaging flight of men from families, and from their children, is to a considerable degree just a side effect of the breakdown in comity and long-term commitment between men and women.

It's true, as Ehrenreich and Pfeiffer say, that establishing a permanent cooperative life with a member of the opposite sex can bring much bother and frustrating compromise. In the past, however, people have accepted this as the necessary price of devotion, lasting love, and civilized existence. Today's wide acceptance of fleeting sexual trysts against a prevailing background of sexual separatism represents a very new pattern. And one that can't last. For as journalist Paul Taylor has written, no matter how much we spend on welfare transfers, child support, crime control, Head Start, and the like, "at the end of the day, unless the whole society also learns how to revalue marriage and restigmatize broken relations between mothers and fathers, none of the rest will matter much. The empirical evidence is in: When marriage atrophies, so does fatherhood. And so does society."

I've argued that men will participate in family life only insofar as they are confident they will be allowed to do so in comfortably male ways. Unrealistic domestic expectations leave men frustrated and uncooperative. As they become alienated they make themselves scarce, and over-burdened women and needy children are left behind. I suggest a more humane and practical path:

• Accept that in most families, particularly when the children are young, women will be the child-rearing masters and men the seconds-in-command.

• Use social sanctions and encouragements to lean hard on those seconds-in-command to make sure they do not become shirkers and slackers.

• Work creatively to reconcile child-rearing realities with the aspirations of contemporary women for wider social opportunities and higher status. (Of which the largest part, in my opinion, should be a forceful campaign stressing that individuals engaged in conscientiously training our next generation are not wasting those years, but are actually making gigantic social contributions.)

• Above all, learn to accept, work within, and then enjoy the powerful, cruel, delightful impulsions that make up our unmeltable human nature. If we will reject

artificial sex roles while avoiding self-indulgence, we can carve out comfortably natural male and female roles even in this modern era. Fathers and mothers who take up their awesome childrearing duties as distinct, overlapping, interdependent partners will find success and happiness within easy reach.

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The Deep Secrets of Good Schools

By Karl Zinsmeister

Americans tell pollsters that improving schools is just about their highest public priority today. Yet there is no consensus on the best way to do this. People are profoundly uncertain of how to judge the scads of faddish educational reforms now in circulation. One of the most constructive things that can be done to improve education, therefore, is simply to observe successful schools in practice. What exactly does each offer to students? Why do they work while others fail?

For more than a year now, we've been doing just this sort of observation for you. Our investigators have visited schools from California to Connecticut, and Michigan to Mississippi. In the pages that follow, you'll find 14 intriguing profiles of schools that truly teach. Collectively, they can tell us a lot about what poor-to-middling schools (and there are far more of these in our land than you may realize) ought to be doing that they aren't.

The schools you're about to tour vary enormously—they include public, private, charter, and for-profit schools, a Catholic school and a Jewish school, a military academy, rural boarding schools, big-city schools, schools that are mostly black, others that are mostly white, elementary schools and high schools. We emphatically did not seek institutions that turn out all Harvard students. The nation doesn't want many more Harvard graduates; the nation wants a mix of perspectives, skills, and training. Our profiles are of schools that produce disciplined, striving, competent graduates ready to contribute to America in one of the thousands of ways our country needs help—whether through academic pursuits, commercial creativity, diligent military service, or just plain good character and decent citizenship.

We picked schools that do a lot with what they are handed at the start. Obviously a school packed with doctors' kids will produce high SAT scores. Big deal. What we looked for were institutions that make strong forward progress given the human potential they begin with—advancing children as far as possible from where they entered in intellect and character.

As much as they differ, it's extremely interesting how many common traits are shared by the successful schools we profile. A remarkably similar basic formula applies in almost all of these places: high demands on students, strict discipline, a strong and unapologetic moral component, including a respect for religion, an emphasis on teaching intellectual basics, a preference for time-tested books and curricula, clear standards of dress, grooming, and comportment, and an insistence on politeness, respect, and courtesy.

And one other thing: most of these schools are comparatively "hard." They push kids, and demand effort. That alone distinguishes them from many other U.S. schools. In an article in The Executive Educator, an Israeli mother named Judith Koren who relocated her two children to one of the best public schools in Westchester County, New York, laments that "at the start of the U.S. school year, my son's sixth-grade class was getting about an hour of homework a day. But after three months, a group of parents complained to the school that their children were overworked.... The teachers cut back on assignments." She concludes that "no one expects very much of American kids," and warns this is why U.S. students often test

lower than foreign counterparts. Arriving from Israel, Koren reports, "my sixth-grader was a full year ahead of his classmates in mathematics, and my third-grader—who could barely read English on arrival—tested only six months below the class average."

So what secret formulas, potent technologies, and rich financing methods do overseas teachers rely on? How do they make learning so much fun for their students? The answer is, they don't. The secret ingredient in most successful education is cost free. It is exceedingly low-tech. And it has little to do with fun in the simplest sense. That ingredient is brow sweat.

Koren describes how two British women she knows became effective essayists and speakers. "Each week, they'd had homework exercises like this: While preserving every essential point, reduce a 100-word essay to 50 words, then to 20, then to 10. Reduce 500 words to 50, 1,000 words to 100. Week after week, year after year. A grind? Sure it's a grind. Who said literacy is easy? It takes practice. Few kids want to put in that amount of work. The schools have to demand it." (By the way, anyone trained in this method should contact me immediately—I have a job waiting.)

Though they hardly ever act forcefully on their knowledge, most Americans now understand that their local schools are not demanding enough of their pupils. A national survey funded by the Fordham, Gund, MacArthur, and Olin Foundations just released this fall found that only 9 percent of parents say teachers are putting too much academic pressure on their child. Only 10 percent say their child is getting too much homework. Just 11 percent say their child's school does too much testing.

Queried whether they would support a requirement at their child's school of summer classes for students who can't meet uniform standards, 81 percent of all parents answer yes. More than two-thirds say they would favor harder standards even if their own child were sent to summer school or even held back a grade.

Beneath the big commonalities of high standards and mind-stretching demands, however, the best schools vary widely in classroom practices and educational techniques—as you'll see when you read through our mosaic of profiles. This is to be expected in an undertaking so deeply personal as education.

I learned a lesson in this regard during my early years as a father. One humbling aspect of raising children for me was discovering how much youngsters can differ, even within the same family, and how strong each child's internal predispositions tend to be. Rearing children is not like kayaking, where you point the boat precisely where you want to go; it's more like sailing—you take the prevailing force as a given and simply try to redirect it. If you're good, and lucky, you'll zig-zag your way to about where you'd like to be. But be prepared to roll with the seas.

Every child has peculiar capabilities and needs, and an innate direction of his or her own. Effective schooling, like effective parenting, must begin by acknowledging this reality. Some children are delicate and in need of extra sensitive treatment; others will be ruined without a whip hand. Some students thrive on independent coursework, others desperately need structured days and inspired guidance. Some children are bursting with quirky gifts, others have a fire for competition burning within their breasts, yet others will achieve precisely as much, or as little, as is demanded of them. Some youngsters go through several of these phases at different points in their lives.

Schools must take the differing natures of children into account. To a considerable degree, this is a sorting exercise. There are, to put it simply, certain children who should never darken the door of a military academy, yet others who will blossom

only in one. When it comes to writing, memorizing, learning languages, pursuing science, absorbing music, obtaining religious training, exploring athletics, there is not strictly one answer to educational excellence. Rather there are multiple answers for children of different ages, origins, and temperaments. To reach his maximum potential, the fatherless inner-city boy will sometimes require a different regimen from the rural girl, or the offspring of dual-career suburbanites. (Of course Horace Mann, the father of American public schooling, thought just the opposite—insisting there was one "scientific" method by which all children should be educated.)

Education is a humane undertaking—a people business—and as with other people businesses I suggest what we really need if we're going to succeed is a bloom of competing options. They all need to be serious, demanding, and clear-eyed. And they must share certain universals of truth, common language, joint history, and tradition. But these fundamentals may be pursued through a variety of methods and mechanisms.

It may seem paradoxical to argue that all successful schools share certain basic assumptions while at the same time saying there is no single right way to educate. But after you've read our 14 profiles I think you'll concur. The Frederick Douglass Academy in Harlem and the Benjamin Franklin Charter Schools in Arizona could hardly be more different culturally, yet they are educational blood brothers.

Because we need wide choices to suit differing circumstances, we ought to be encouraging competition among schooling alternatives. We should require every school to disclose its results, then let parents and children select the best match for their situation—without pointlessly eliminating alternatives like private or religious schools. As even arch-liberal Brent Staples wrote recently, "the argument that millions of children must have their lives snuffed out by failing schools and incompetent teachers just to keep impregnable the wall between church and state has worn thin in millions of homes, including my own."

The great—and tragic—irony is that while education is one of life's undertakings least suited to one-size-fits-all production, America's current system of publicly financed schools is one of the most uniform and monopolized portions of our society. Compare the way we school to the way we provide doctoring, or housing, or even college education.

Our liberal elites love to criticize cookie-cutter shopping malls, standardized highways, and assembly-line hamburger chains. Yet they haven't a word to speak against the automaton blunderings of public education monopolies. For a glimpse of how rich and multi-faceted childhood education could be in a freer world of de-monopolized education, please wander through the classroom doors we open for you starting on page 18.

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The Election's Over--Now Fight the War

By Karl Zinsmeister

This isn't just any fall season in America. Our nation is at war. Instead of raking leaves in their backyards, munching freshly picked apples, and shopping for holiday turkeys, tens of thousands of our neighbors and friends and fellow citizens are currently at risk on foreign soil. They get up every day, pull on body armor and helmets, and set off on dangerous missions whose success or failure could ultimately affect the lives of millions of people. Some of these Americans will die. And they are doing this on my behalf and yours.

I'm intentionally writing about what America should do next in Iraq without knowing who our next Commander-in-Chief will be--for this task is bigger than political personalities, and the nation will have to make steely choices no matter who leads us. To me, the sharpest indictment in Zell Miller's speech at the Republican convention was his recollection of how careful Wendell Wilkie was when he ran for President in 1940 to avoid making hay against FDR in a way that might undermine America's position in World War II. Miller's expression of regret that his Democratic Party was not similarly able to run a political campaign today without undercutting our national war effort was just right. What was John Kerry's chief spokesman thinking when he handed Iraq's gangsters a ready-made opening by calling Prime Minister Allawi "an American puppet"? How sickening to see America's life-and-death fight against implacable enemies tossed into the fire to heat the boilers of partisan politics.

Presidents come and Presidents go, but pestilent enemies of America will always be lurking, probing for cracks in our foundation, gnawing at the boards and shutters of our homes, watching us, festering, plotting. Middle Eastern extremists hated us when Jimmy Carter sat in the White House; they humiliated our nation in Tehran on his watch. They resented us under Ronald Reagan, and killed our Marines in Lebanon as we tried to shelter war-ravaged civilians. They spat at us while George Bush the elder held the reins (and were surprised when we struck back for the first time in Kuwait). They loathed America under Bill Clinton, and even dared to come to our own shores to attack us--not once but several times.

Only on September 11 did we finally begin to pay attention. Middle Eastern extremists have attacked us again and again--dating back at least to 1979 and the kidnapping of U.S. embassy employees by Ayatollah Khomeini. The destruction of the Twin Towers was merely a giant double exclamation mark at the end of a long paragraph that includes scores of vile attacks, ranging from the murder of an American retiree in a wheelchair aboard the Achille Lauro to the Pan Am 103 bombing that ended 270 lives in one boom. Fanatics from Islamic nations have struck at embassies and nightclubs and barracks and office buildings. They've killed with huge bombs, and with slender knives drawn across necks. They will attack again, no matter who occupies our White House.

Americans need to start thinking of our war against Middle Eastern terror in the same ways we approached our long struggle against communism and our harsh fight to stop the Nazis in times past. We must be prepared for what JFK called a "long, twilight struggle," and remember his pledge that the U.S. would "pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty." Fanaticism rooted in the Islamic world is the giant challenge facing the current generation of Americans; we will simply not be secure and free until that part of the world is pacified. Americans understood this after the horror of 9/11. But too many with short attention spans have already forgotten what it was that dragged us to Afghanistan, Iraq, and other hellholes, and why we can't just return to our blithe innocence of September 10, 2001.

As we decide what to do next in the war on terror, the first step is to remind ourselves of the high stakes: We are fighting formidable and merciless global enemies. They have the ability to cripple our economy, to damage our culture, to undercut our international position, and to kill any one of us. Our children will not be safe until this danger is eradicated. This is a real war, a diffuse one, but one as serious as any we have fought in the past.

The second thing we must do, as we assess the war against terror, is to think clearly and with some historical perspective about the costs. It's very reasonable to ask whether our fights in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other locales are worth what we are expending in blood and treasure. Can we afford this struggle?

In 2004, the U.S. spent 4 percent of our GDP on national defense. That is far less than the 10 percent of national output consumed by military efforts during the Vietnam War. It is but a drop in the bucket compared to the 38 percent of GDP eaten up by defense during World War II.

Last year when Congress was wrangling over the request for $20 billion to help rebuild Iraq, I went searching for baselines against which I could measure that mind-numbing sum. I did some math and discovered that Americans will spend $37 billion this year on salty snacks like pretzels and potato chips. We'll collectively spend $31 billion on candy. Can we afford $20 billion to help set a free Iraq on its feet? We might better ask whether we can afford not to. Particularly when you consider that just the immediate damages done to the U.S. by the attacks of 9/11 have been estimated at $161 billion.

And then there are the costs in lost servicemen. All of us mourn these deaths and injuries (some of them people I came to admire during my times in Iraq). But there has never been a war against wrongdoing without losses, and there never will be. Over the four years of World War II, the U.S. lost an average of 300 men every single day. In Iraq we are losing an average of less than two per day. Bear in mind also that just keeping our communities safe here at home costs us one brave American about every 29 hours--police officers, prison guards, firefighters, etc. We are fortunate beyond words to have millions of men and women willing to expose themselves to those risks so their fellow citizens can remain safe. There is an inescapable blood price for civilization, and the guardians of the peace who serve here at home, and our soldiers who fight overseas, pay it for the rest of us.

Having given some sober thought to the costs of the war on terror, the third thing we need to ask is "What are the benefits--both those already realized and those potentially down the road?" Here are a few of our accomplishments since 2001:

- For more than three years, there have been no terrorist attacks on U.S. soil. As some of my soldier acquaintances put it, we are now playing an away schedule, with the fighting in this war having been shifted to the other guy's backyard--which is what an army is for.
- According to separate studies from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute and Canada's Project Ploughshares, both the number of people killed in war and the number of conflicts across the globe fell to their lowest levels in the post-World War II era during the last year. Claims that the world is now in chaos are wrong.
- About two thirds of al-Qaeda's leadership has now been killed or captured, its communications choked off, its fundraising disrupted, its training sites and sanctuaries eliminated.
- Instead of aiding al-Qaeda as in the past, Saudis and Pakistanis and Gulf Arabs have begun pitched battles against the network.
- The Pakistani ring that was selling nuclear technology to rogue nations like North Korea and Libya was exposed and broken up in 2004.
- Sobered by Saddam's fate, Libya renounced terror and nuclear proliferation, and Syria has announced it will accede to U.S. pressure and pull troops out of Lebanon, where it has long incubated international terrorists. Under similar U.S. pressure, the Saudis have finally stated they are willing to allow women to vote in the future.
- In Afghanistan and Iraq, more than 50 million people who previously lived under two of the cruelest governments on Earth are free to choose their own leaders for the first time ever.
- And Saddam Hussein, one of the most hideous despots on the globe, will soon face courtroom justice at the hands of his own victims.

None of these are small matters; we must resist the temptation to become blase about such accomplishments. Historians will look back at many of these as major milestones. And if you look over the full roster you begin to see that perhaps the sacrifices of our soldiers and our taxpayers have not been fruitless or unconscionable after all.

And the very top potential benefit of today's tough fight in the Middle East is a work still in progress--namely, our effort to nurture governments that can serve as beacons toward a less cruel way of living. The real monster behind 9/11 was not Osama bin Laden; he was merely the immediate threat. The deeper problem is the abyssmal history of oppressive rule throughout the Middle East. Amongst the 22 Arab nations, there are exactly zero decent, self-governing democracies. The dreadful governments that have immiserated these countries for the last several generations have produced only one thing in abundance: a bumper crop of homicidally frustrated young men eager to take out their shame and envy on more successful nations.

America dispatched troops to Afghanistan and Iraq to overturn their ruling parties (two of the very worst on the globe) because we realized that until that region has

models for more humane and representative governance, resentful killers will keep pouring out to savage us. This is a tough assignment, but we have no choice. It is hard-nosed practicality that motivates today's effort to remake these cradles of terror, not some sort of dreamy Don Quixote crusade for democracy. Until there is change in that forbidding ratio--22 states, zero decent governments--the shadow of Middle Eastern violence will hang heavily over us.

While fighting to establish less despotic governments in Afghanistan and Iraq is the right way to solve our ultimate problem, it is lousy politics. The politically smart thing for President Bush would have been to knock off the Taliban, dust his hands, and announce that he had saved America. He could have basked in the easy win and then coasted to re-election. That is more or less the strategy all American Presidents followed in the Middle East for more than a quarter century: Respond to attacks with pinprick reprisals, leave the entrenched despots alone in the interests of quiet, punt on all tough cases, and hand the problem off to the next guy. That eventually culminated in a colossal roar in lower Manhattan, a hole in the Pentagon, and scores of torn bodies in a Pennsylvania field.

Had George W. Bush taken that easy path, he would have been much safer politically. But America would not have been safer. The President deserves credit for tackling the deeper illness, for extending the fight outward to the next circle, for putting our enemies on the defensive on their own turf, and using his Presidency to clean out long-festering sores, rather than simply hewing to the shortsighted course that would have brought the least electoral risk.

And now that the election is behind us, I hope we as a nation will get very tough-minded about what to do next. As Becky Gibson, mother of a young paratrooper who served in Iraq, wrote to me recently, "We are in a war. Lives are on the line. We need to hunker down and unify and let the systems work."

Tommy Franks, who planned the campaigns that unseated the Taliban and the Baath Party, has warned that "We have a tendency to blame ourselves for things that we ought not. America is not responsible for terrorism against America. Terrorists are responsible." He recently told Parade magazine, grimly, that "The terrorists read our papers and see our news, and the enemy is being given to believe that they are winning." The U.S., he says with distress, "has to stop flogging itself," and instead fight to win.

Wars are not sporting matches; they are hard, they are ugly, they can be long. We don't enter them lightly, but when we do, we must show the stamina and ferocity to win. As journalist Michael Kelly (who died in Iraq last year) encouraged Americans never to forget, "accepting death is indispensable to defeating death."

We forget that despite meticulous planning and the application of every national resource, it took the demise of 2,500 brave soldiers in 24 hours for the U.S. to prevail on D-day. We forget how many "screw-ups" and "setbacks" (as they would now be quickly labeled) occurred in critical victories like Normandy, the Battle of the Bulge (where our soldiers were sent to fight in waist-deep snow without winter clothing), or Iwo Jima (where we lost nearly 7,000 Marines contesting a godforsaken stony island, measuring just three miles by four miles, in the middle of nowhere). In this age of instant gratification and fantasies of painless, push-button victories, we

must not forget how fiercely Americans have always had to fight to protect our unusual freedoms. We recall the glorious successes of the past while overlooking what it took to earn them.

We are now a year and a half into the Iraq war. At a similar stage in the French and Indian Wars, George Washington was disastrously beaten in a fight where his unit of 1,400 men took 900 casualties and ended up running away. (Washington himself had two horses shot from under him, and took four bullets through his coat.) At about this point in Washington's next experience of war, the American Revolution, the Continental army had depleted 90 percent of its military strength while losing every single battle since the Declaration of Independence. Most of the remaining soldiers declared they were going to go home when their enlistments expired, and in many parts of the new nation citizens were pledging fresh oaths of allegiance to the tyrant King George.

A year and a half into the Civil War, Lee had actually invaded the North. The federal army that marched on Richmond had been beaten with tens of thousands of casualties. Washington, D.C. was on the brink of being overrun, and it looked as if the division of the country and continued slavery were inevitable.

A year and a half into U.S. involvement in World War II, the Japanese had taken control of all of the Pacific and Southeast Asia. Our British allies had suffered the most catastrophic defeat in their history when they lost 130,000 fighting men in Singapore. The Japanese had just as thumpingly ejected the U.S. from the Philippines, and had actually occupied American soil in Alaska for most of a year. It took 1,000 American dead (more than our combat casualties in Iraq) merely to eject the enemy from their Aleutian Island foothold over a few days in the seventeenth month of the war. In Europe, meanwhile, the entire continent had fallen, death camps like Treblinka had just opened, and German submarines were in the process of wiping out our Atlantic shipping.

We've had some tough moments in Iraq this year. But every war has low points that victorious nations must grind through. The difference between civilizations that triumph and civilizations that surrender is often simply a matter of keeping your determination and fighting spirit intact through the down days. Having spent months embedded with combat troops in Iraq since the war began I have no illusions that there is anything easy about this. But there are some challenges in life that cannot be evaded.

It took years for the U.S. to launch humane democracy in Germany and Japan after World War II. In just 18 months in Iraq we have made important progress. The Shiite middle that is going to dominate Iraq (a much less fanatical group than daily headlines imply) has stuck with us through many trials.

Today's best estimates are that the armed insurgency numbers about 20,000 fighters. In a nation of 26 million, that means about one out of every 1,300 Iraqis is a violent insurgent. To put a little perspective on that, consider that one out of every 305 Americans is a Hindu. Hindus in America, in other words, are four times more common than armed insurgents in Iraq.

Let me acknowledge that the terrorists have a hold over many Iraqis. But it is the

hold of fear, not of love. In polls, seven out of ten Iraqis say they believe the lives of their family members will be in danger if they are seen to be cooperating with the new government. We have not done enough to make decent Iraqis feel that it is safe to stand up and be counted. That needs to change. But fearing the insurgents and supporting them are very different things.

Let me also acknowledge that 20,000 sadistic guerillas, many of them well-trained in the black arts of violence, can cause serious problems all by themselves. Particularly since, lacking good human intelligence in Iraq, we have not been able to pick out the piranhas as they swim through a sea of ordinary Iraqis--striking, then melting behind women and children. But Iraq is not Vietnam--its resistance is not a mass movement. There is no Ho Chi Minh, no popular platform, no bottomless well of foot soldiers, no China or Russia on the border constraining our responses.

Better reporting would make this clearer. The American public should have been told, for instance, how relieved the residents of Najaf were when U.S. and Iraqi forces kicked Moktada Sadr's gangsters out of their city at the end of the summer. This was a major and hard-won victory, achieved through a savvy combination of relentless military pressure and cagey diplomacy. Thousands of Sadr's fighters were killed without significant U.S. losses (I know one U.S. cavalry unit that killed 700 members of the Mahdi army without a single fatality of their own). The sacred shrine that Sadr's forces had made their base of operations (partly hoping we would damage it, inflaming public opinion) was saved. Units of the Iraqi army began to coalesce as a fighting force. And Iraq's top Shiite clerics, most of whom live in Najaf, hung with us through many travails (lose them and we've lost the war).

This is an achievement we can be very proud of, and a battle model we can replicate elsewhere. Chastened by the body blow he took in Najaf, Sadr is now mulling a shift to peaceful politics. If he and his militia revert to violence, I believe they will be crushed in a climactic battle in Sadr City. I also believe the U.S. military and our Iraqi allies now have the strength, fighting strategy, and political elan to clean out Fallujah, the nation's other snake pit, should that become necessary in coming weeks.

Neither Iraq nor Afghanistan will look like Switzerland any time soon. But they don't have to. If we can keep them on a path toward a rough pluralism and stability along the lines of what we've established in the Balkans, that will be an enormous accomplishment--in a part of the world where voting and real constitutions and self-rule have never, ever, been seen before. The recent election in Afghanistan and the optimism now being expressed by the Afghan people are high achievements. If we are able to pull off even a rough-and-ready election in Iraq in the next few months, future historians will look back and marvel.

Our efforts to bring civility to Afghanistan and Iraq are bold gambles, and there is no guarantee we will succeed. I personally am proud of the way our nation is putting itself on the line in an attempt to unsnarl a part of the world that has been a source of so much heartache for people all over the globe, for so many years. This is a classically daring and noble American effort--only the latest of several occasions where we've stepped forward with the aim of turning history in a less brutal direction. At the same time, this is no fuzzy-headed chase after pie in the sky; the direct benefits to us as a peace-loving people are potentially huge.

Is the price tag too high? The terrorists are certainly hoping we'll draw that conclusion. They firmly believe that modern Westerners lack the fortitude necessary to prevail in nasty fights.

"One thing is for sure: the extremists have faith in our weakness," noted Tony Blair this spring. "And the weaker we are, the more they will come after us." That's why it is time for us to pull ourselves together, fight very hard and unsentimentally over the next year or so, and win a vital war.

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