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# The Marriage Problem

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Over the course of three decades, from the mid-1960s through at least the mid-1990s, marriage as a social institution got steadily and dramatically weaker.

During these years, American adults became significantly less likely to get married and stay married. The annual number of marriages per 1,000 unmarried women dropped substantially, as did the proportion of all American adults who were married. And if they were married, they were less likely to describe their marriage as “very happy.”<sup>1</sup>

During this period, very high rates of divorce<sup>2</sup> and steadily increasing rates of unwed childbearing<sup>3</sup> produced a steady decline of the married-couple, mother-father child-raising family, and a steadily decreasing proportion of American children under the age of

eighteen living with their two biological, married parents.<sup>4</sup>

Over these approximately three decades, according to many measurements, married-couple families became less able to carry out their basic social functions of:

- Maintaining the population level.

The total fertility rate for American married couples is about 1.6. That’s below the replacement level and about half of what it was in the late 1950s.<sup>5</sup>

- Regulating adult sexual behavior.

• Socializing children and in other ways caring for family members.

During this period, familism as a societal value increasingly lost ground to other, and in some cases competing, social values, such as individualism and consumerism.

This story line of the roughly thirty-year decline of marriage is well known

among experts and in the society as a whole. Its basic dimensions are not in dispute.<sup>6</sup>

Neither are the basic social consequences of this trend any longer in dispute. Increasingly, scholars and other leaders view the weakening of marriage as a genuine societal crisis. The respected scholar James Q. Wilson recently described the weakening of marriage as “the most important domestic problem in the country.”<sup>7</sup> It drives or sustains a diversity of social problems such as child poverty, weapons-related violence, educational failure, teen suicide, child and adolescent mental health problems, teen pregnancy, and many others.<sup>8</sup>

Here’s one example: one of every three divorces in the United States resulting in the physical separation of a father from his children plunges the mother and children into poverty. Father absence due to marital failure is a primary cause of child poverty in the United States.<sup>9</sup>

These trends, while probably most advanced in the United States and in the other English-speaking countries, are to some degree global in nature, leading some scholars to speculate about a “world trend” toward the “post-nuclear family”—societies in which the married-couple, mother-father child-raising unit is no longer normative for the society as a whole, but instead is viewed merely as one of many ethically and socially acceptable personal life style options.<sup>10</sup>

## **The Marriage Movement**

In the 1990s, first a grassroots fatherhood movement,<sup>11</sup> and then a marriage movement,<sup>12</sup> emerged in the United States seeking to improve child well-being by strengthening fatherhood, improving the quality and stability of marriage as a social institution, and reducing unwed childbearing and unnecessary divorce. As a result, since the early 1990s, impressive progress has been made in changing U.S. elite and public opinion, as well as in stimulating political and grassroots action, on the social importance of marriage.

How much progress? “On the heels of a fatherhood movement,” Alex Kotlowitz recently wrote in the *New York Times*, more and more young couples in inner cities “are considering marriage.”<sup>18</sup> Kotlowitz’s *Frontline* television documentary, ***Let’s Get Married***, which aired in November 2002 on PBS, focuses on what the documentary calls the “burgeoning marriage movement.” At least at the level of the public debate, there has been much recent progress in making the case for marriage and in putting the marriage problem on the national agenda. As Kotlowitz reports: “Now, everyone from the government to intellectuals are pushing marriage.”

How much progress have we made? As the syndicated columnist Jane Eisner recently put it, there is a “growing consensus” that the question of renewing marriage—***How do we strengthen marriage as the primary social institution***

to rear children?—is now “the central question of American life.”

Reflecting on the year 2002, she continues: “Liberals, in particular, heard the wake-up call this year. No longer confined to the outer reaches of the Religious Right, the ‘marriage movement’ is moving center stage, as those on the political left are belatedly adding their voices to this necessary debate.”<sup>19</sup>

In *The Nation*, Judith Stacey, a strong critic of the marriage movement, recently complained angrily “the marriage movement is busting out all over, a harbinger of ‘faith-based’ approaches to social reform.”<sup>20</sup> The *Observer* of London reported “the pro-marriage movement is gaining strength on both sides of the Atlantic.”<sup>21</sup> Last August, the *Orange County Register* reported on the “growing marriage movement meant to slow the divorce rate.”<sup>22</sup>

In the elite media, an important intellectual and political corner was turned in mid-2001, when the *New York Times*, after years of journalistic equivocation and entrenched skepticism, finally reported in a front-page story that:

“... a powerful consensus has emerged in recent years among social scientists, as well as state and federal policy makers. It sees single-parent families as the dismal foundries that produced decades of child poverty, delinquency, and crime. And it views the rise of such families, which began in the early 1960s and continued until about five years ago, as a singularly important indicator of child pathology.”

And:

“From a child’s point of view, according to a growing body of social research, the most supportive household is one with two biological parents in a low-conflict marriage.”<sup>23</sup>

Not only newly marriage-friendly sensibilities in the media and elsewhere, but also new pro-marriage public and private sector policy initiatives, are beginning to emerge.<sup>24</sup>

In the early 1990s, for example, few scholars, and even fewer academic professional associations, dared even to address the topic of marriage, much less suggest that marriage might be a beneficial institution worthy of societal support. In fact, two of the most relevant professional associations, the National Council on Family Relations and the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy, consistently refused to address this subject. (Yes, it’s actually true that an organization with the word marriage in its name had by the mid-1990s long since abandoned any commitment to, or even interest in, marriage.) That refusal led Diane Sollee, a marriage therapist and a member of both organizations, to start a new group, the Coalition for Marriage, Family, and Couples Education, now popularly called Smart Marriages. In 1997, Sollee’s first Smart Marriages conference drew 400 participants. The 2002 Smart Marriages conference drew about 1,700 participants.

Interestingly, responding to the success of Sollee’s organization and other recent marriage initiatives, even the

older organizations are slowly beginning to re-engage the issue.

The 2002 annual meeting of the mostly academic National Council on Family Relations featured a debate on the question, "Is Strengthening Marriage to Reduce the Divorce Rate a Workable Strategy for Policy and Intervention?" The announced theme of this group's 2003 annual meeting is, "What is the Future of Marriage?" These topics would have been unimaginable for this group even five years ago.

In 1990, the number of grassroots efforts aiming to strengthen marriage was extremely small. Today, there are hundreds of such efforts, including broad, well-structured, community-based efforts in Grand Rapids, Michigan; Chattanooga, Tennessee; and Cleveland, Ohio, and a regional effort called Families Northwest based in Seattle, Washington. Marriage Savers, a recently founded ministry devoted to strengthening marriage, now has multi-denominational, church-based "community marriage polices" in about 150 communities in thirty-five states.

The Institute for American Values' work in this area has also helped to shape public arguments,<sup>13</sup> conduct and disseminate scholarly research,<sup>14</sup> incubate key books and articles,<sup>15</sup> convene leaders,<sup>16</sup> and launch initiatives<sup>17</sup> that have contributed to building the marriage movement.

Government policy makers have also become more interested in this issue. Since the late 1990s, several states—Florida, Oklahoma, Utah, Louisiana, Minnesota, Maryland, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Arizona—have

passed laws or initiated programs aimed at strengthening marriage.

At the level of federal policy, many analysts believe that the welfare reforms of 1996 have led to modest but measurable positive influences on trends in marriage and family formation among low-income Americans. In addition, a leader of the marriage movement, Wade Horn, was appointed by President Bush in 2000 to serve as assistant secretary for Families and Children at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Horn, who was president of the National Fatherhood Initiative, has been the point-person and a leader within the administration in developing and proposing legislation intended to continue and enhance efforts at marriage education and family formation as a part of welfare re-authorization. He also has initiated several funding, research, and public education efforts within HHS aimed at promoting marriage.

Finally, consider some encouraging (if tentative) demographic news. A series of recent independent reports, based largely on data from the 2000 Census, suggest that the trend of family fragmentation, which many analysts had assumed to be unstoppable, largely stopped in its tracks in about 1995. Up until then, yearly increases in unwed childbearing and divorce had resulted in ever-greater proportions of children living in one-parent homes.

The proportion of all American families with children under eighteen that were headed by married couples reached an all-time low in the mid 1990s—about 72.9 percent in 1996

and 72.4 percent in 1997. But since then the number has stabilized. The figure for 2000 was 73 percent. Similarly, the proportion of all American children living in two-parent homes reached an all-time low in the mid 1990s, and has since stabilized. In fact, the proportion of children in two-parent homes increased from 68 percent in 1999 to 69.1 percent in 2000.

Looking only at white, non-Hispanic children, a study by Allan Dupree and Wendell Primus found that the proportion of these children living with two married parents stopped its downward descent during the late 1990s, and even increased slightly from 1999 to 2000, rising from 77.3 to 78.2 percent. Another study from the Urban Institute found that, among all American children, the proportion living with their two biological or adoptive parents increased by 1.2 percent from 1997 to 1999. During the same period the proportion of children living in stepfamilies (or blended families) decreased by 0.1 percent and the proportion living in single-parent homes decreased by 2 percent. (The study found that in 1999 about 64 percent of all American children lived with their two biological or adoptive parents, while about 25 percent lived with one parent and about 8 percent lived in a blended or stepfamily.) Among low-income children, the decline in the proportion living in single-parent homes was even more pronounced, dropping from 44 percent in 1997 to 41 percent in 1999.

Here is perhaps the most promising statistic. From 1995 to 2000, the proportion of African American children living in two-parent, married-couple homes rose from 34.8 to 38.9 percent, a significant increase in just five years, representing the clear cessation and even reversal of the long-term shift toward black family fragmentation.<sup>25</sup>

These changes are not large or definitive. But they are certainly suggestive. And if they continue, they will change the lives of millions of American children and families for the better.

What can be done to nurture and accelerate this progress? What new strategies and arguments can be deployed by fatherhood and marriage leaders to turn these hopeful developments and glimmers of good news into a sustained marriage renewal, leading to more children growing up in stable, two-parent homes? In short, what's next for the marriage movement?

### ***The Marriage Movement's Current Strengths, Weaknesses, and Challenges***

In 2000, the signatories to *The Marriage Movement: A Statement of Principles*, made this public commitment:

"We come together to pledge that in this decade we will turn the tide on marriage and reduce divorce and unmarried childbearing, so that each year more children will grow up protected by their own two happily married parents, and so that each year more adults' marriage dreams will come true."

Today, a little more than two years later, are the signers—now numbering over 3,000—making good on that pledge? What are our movement's current strengths, weaknesses and challenges?

Here is a summary assessment.

The movement's strengths include:

1. Significant recent intellectual progress in conceptualizing and publicly presenting "the case for marriage."
2. A continuing shift in academic research and scholarly writing, now approaching a rough consensus, at least among the leading scholars in the field, emphasizing that healthy marriages are good for spouses, children, and society, and that the weakening of the married-couple, two-parent home in recent decades has been a harmful social trend.
3. A significant increase in more favorable attention being paid by the news media to the marriage crisis and the marriage movement.
4. Steady growth in the number and diversity of grass-roots civic, religious, and educational leaders, initiatives, and programs focusing on marriage.
5. An increase in the number of state governors embracing and acting on marriage issues.
6. Some academic and political recognition<sup>26</sup> that welfare reform has likely had a small but positive effect on marriage and family formation trends.
7. A push within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to promote marriage, including linking marriage education to welfare reform and possible increases in federal funding for community-based marriage programs.
8. Positive connections being made between fatherhood and marriage initiatives.
9. A fairly broad base of support—generally considered by the public as nonpartisan—although critics at times describe it as "right-wing" and "Christian."
10. Some tentative demographic evidence that the decades-old trend of marital disintegration may have come to a stop in the late 1990s.

Our weaknesses and challenges include:

1. The case for marriage is no longer a "new" idea—as it was in the late 1990s.
2. It's far easier to put an issue on the national agenda than it is to keep it there. The former is mostly about consciousness-raising and problem description, while the latter must be about defining realizable goals, proposing specific and legitimate solutions, and engaging newly reactive critics in ways that advance rather than impede progress.
3. Demographic evidence of a marriage turnaround is weak and inconclusive.

4. Opinion leaders and the public continue to view marriage less as a social institution that society should uphold and to which individual couples should seek to conform, than as a private lifestyle choice about which law, policy, and society at large must remain largely non-judgmental.
5. The “divorce culture” ripple effects are likely to be hard to reverse and are likely to more deeply entrench the intergenerational transmission of divorce. In a high-divorce society in which the ideal of marital permanence is relatively weak, not only are unhappy marriages more likely to end in divorce, but more marriages are likely to become troubled and unhappy.<sup>27</sup>
6. Advocates for same-sex couples are making dramatic progress in the United States and internationally in the spheres of law and public opinion. (This is a topic the marriage movement is divided on and has sought largely to avoid.)
7. Changes in marriage law proposed by prestigious legal groups in the United States and Canada threaten the integrity of marriage as a social institution by arguing that the laws cease to make distinctions between married and non-married persons in sexually bonded relationships. Meanwhile, legal reform efforts intended to make the law more, rather than less, supportive of marriage—such as extending the waiting period for divorce—have largely come to a halt.
8. State and local-level marriage initiatives seem overall to be running their course, without yielding hard proof of success, and without new initiatives emerging to replace them.
9. Little credible evidence exists that current grassroots marriage initiatives are achieving success in improving the quality and stability of marriage, or reducing unwed childbearing and unnecessary divorce.
10. Both the U.S. Census Bureau (with respect to the proportion of U.S. children living with their two married parents) and the National Center for Health Statistics (with respect to the divorce rate) are failing to collect and publish some of the most important data regarding the state of marriage in the United States.
11. The Bush administration’s current marriage initiative—adding a marriage education component to welfare reform—while serving currently as the major “public policy face” of the marriage movement, is quite modest in its scope, relevant only to a tiny fraction of the American adult population, and not currently able to win broad political support in Congress. Even were it to become law, it would be highly unlikely to make more than a small dent in the problem of non-marriage in the inner city.
12. Intellectually, the marriage movement seems to be running out of

gas—lacking fresh ideas and especially lacking a broadly shared understanding of the public policy, intellectual, civic, and cultural contests that the marriage movement should seek out, and seek to win, in the coming decade.

## **An Intellectual Strategic Plan**

### **Major Goals**

In light of the marriage movement's current strengths and weaknesses, especially the movement's current intellectual status and needs, what should be our movement's primary intellectual goals for the coming months? Considering the movement as a whole, let me suggest these major intellectual goals for 2003:

1. To convene influential marriage scholars and leaders to commission and discuss papers, deliberate, and produce a joint statement describing the status and proposing the future direction of the marriage movement, including its major social and policy objectives for the coming decade.
2. To collect and disseminate credible data showing which marriage programs are succeeding in strengthening marriage and reducing divorce and unwed childbearing.
3. To draft and urge passage of a U.S. congressional resolution on the benefits and importance of healthy marriages.
4. To respond intellectually to the new critics of "the case for marriage," whose emerging argument appears to be that, while happy marriages are beneficial, troubled or unhappy marriages are not, especially for women.<sup>28</sup> This argument seeks to revive the long influential but recently discredited<sup>29</sup> Jesse Bernard thesis of "his marriage/her marriage."<sup>30</sup> It also seeks to shift from a sociological and anthropological discussion of marriage as an institution to a therapeutic discussion of individual (good and bad) marriages, which ignores and indirectly undermines the possibility of evaluating a collective interest in marriage. This naturally leads to evaluating society's legal and other interests in marriage.
5. To change scholarly and public understanding of the consequence of divorce for children by building on Judith Wallerstein's insight that the effects are best measured not by examining "symptom lists," but instead by looking at the inner lives—emotional, moral, spiritual—of the children of divorce, particularly as those children enter young adulthood.
6. To document the continuing shift in the academic treatment of marriage by quantifying the main trends in U.S. academic research and scholarly writing on marriage since 1977.
7. To collect and publish information on recent U.S. trends in marriage and family formation, especially regarding the proportion of U.S.

children living with their two, biological, married parents. This information will largely be drawn from census data.

8. To seek improvements in how the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Center for Health Statistics collect and publish data regarding the state of marriage.
9. To evaluate and report on recent scholarship on marriage among African Americans, paying particular attention to evaluating critically those studies suggesting that marriage is less beneficial to African Americans than to others.
10. To measure and report the economic consequences of divorce, including both private and public-sector costs and transfers, at both state-by-state and national levels.
11. To jump-start a focus on marriage law reform by examining and critiquing currently influential family law scholarship and proposing alternative directions; examining empirically the relationship between state-level divorce laws and marriage and divorce rates; considering a range of possible state-level divorce law reforms; and making recommendations for pro-marriage legal reforms to state policy makers and marriage leaders.

Achieving these goals will be difficult, but we can do it. In only a few years, the marriage movement has made much progress. We helped to put an important issue on the national

agenda. Amazingly, the “m-word” is almost mainstream these days in policy, academic, and media circles. Ten years ago, who would have predicted it? More importantly, we have been a part of bringing to a virtual standstill, at least for now, the most harmful demographic trend of our generation. Again, who would have predicted it? Not a bad start. Now it’s time to really get going.

## Notes

1 David Popenoe and Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, *The State of Our Unions 2002* (Piscataway, New Jersey: The National Marriage Project of Rutgers University, June 2002): 18-20.

2 The United States has the world’s highest divorce rate. Although the incidence of divorce in the United States has declined modestly since its historic peak in the early 1980s, the U.S. refined divorce rate (divorces per 1,000 married women age fifteen or older) was about 19.5 in 1998, compared to 9.2 in 1960. Of all Americans age fifteen or older in 2000, about 8.3 percent were divorced, more than four times the 1.8 percent in 1960. Of all recent first marriages in the United States, between 40 and 45 percent are likely to end in divorce. See: *United Nations Statistical Yearbook* (New York: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis, 1995). Daphne Spain and Suzanne M. Bianchi, *Balancing Act: Motherhood, Marriage, and Employment Among American Women* (New York: Russell Sage, 1996), 47. (Some evidence suggests that Russian divorce rates may now be roughly equivalent to U.S. rates.) See also David Blankenhorn, “Knowing Full Well,” *Propositions 9* (New York: Institute for American Values, summer 2000): 4-5.

3 In 2000, about 33.2 percent of all U.S. births occurred to unmarried women. See Joyce A. Martin, et al., "Births: Final Data for 2000," *National Vital Statistics Reports* 50, no. 5 (Hyattsville, Md: National Center for Health Statistics, February 12, 2002).

4 Before they reach the age of eighteen, more than half of all American children are likely to spend at least a significant part of their childhood living in a one-parent home, usually a father-absent home. About half of all father absence in the United States stems from unmarried childbearing, and about half from divorce.

5 U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Report WP/98, World Population Profile: 1998* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999).

6 Brigitte Berger, *The Family in the Modern Age* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2002), esp. chapter 5; Linda J. Waite and Maggie Gallagher, *The Case for Marriage* (New York: Doubleday, 2000); James Q. Wilson, *The Marriage Problem* (New York: Harper Collins, 2002); and Tom W. Smith, *The Emerging 21st Century American Family* (Chicago: National Opinion Research Center, 1999).

7 Remarks at the Annual Symposium of the Institute for American Values in Washington, DC, February 12, 2002.

8 Roland C. Warren, testimony to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Non-Governmental Listening Session, November 26, 2001 (Gaithersburg, Maryland: National Fatherhood Initiative, 2001). David Popenoe, *Life Without Father* (New York: The Free Press, 1996): 19-51. David Blankenhorn, *Fatherless America* (New York: Basic Books, 1995): 1-5.

9 Suzanne M. Bianchi, Lekha Subaiya, and Joan R. Kahn, "The Gender Gap in the Economic Well-Being of Nonresident Fathers and Custodial Mothers," *Demography* 35, no. 2 (May 1999): 195-203.

10 See, William J. Goode, *World Changes in Divorce Patterns* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); and Don S. Browning, *Marriage and Modernization* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, forthcoming).

11 Wade F. Horn, David Blankenhorn, and Mitchell B. Pearlstein (eds.), *The Fatherhood Movement* (Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 1999).

12 *The Marriage Movement: A Statement of Principles* (New York: Institute for American Values, 2000).

13 *Marriage in America: A Report to the Nation* (1995); *A Call to Fatherhood* (1996); *A Call to Civil Society: Why Democracy Needs Moral Truths* (1998); *Turning the Corner on Father Absence in Black America* (1999); *A Call to Family-Supportive Tax Reform* (1999); *The Marriage Movement: A Statement of Principles* (2000); *Why Marriage Matters: Twenty-One Conclusions from the Social Sciences* (2002).

14 Norval Glenn, *Closed Hearts, Closed Minds: The Textbook Story of Marriage* (1997); Paul C. Vitz, *The Course of True Love: Marriage in High School Textbooks* (1998); Maggie Gallagher, *The Age of Unwed Mothers: Is Teen Pregnancy the Problem?* (1999); Dan Cere, *The Experts' Story of Courtship* (2000); Dana Mack, *Hungry Hearts: Evaluating the New Curricula for Teens on Marriage and Relationships* (2000); Norval Glenn and Elizabeth Marquardt, *Hooking Up, Hanging Out, and Hoping for Mr. Right: College Women on Dating and Mating Today* (2001); and Linda Waite, et al., *Does Divorce Make People Happy? Findings from a Study of Unhappy Marriages* (2002).

15 David Blankenhorn, Steven Bayme, and Jean Bethke Elshstain (eds.), *Rebuilding the Nest* (1990); Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, "Dan Qualye Was Right," *The Atlantic* (1993); David Blankenhorn, *Fatherless America* (1995); Maggie Gallagher, *The Abolition of Marriage* (1996); David Popenoe, Jean Bethke Elshstain, and David Blankenhorn (eds.),

**Promises to Keep** (1996); Dana Mack, **The Assault on Parenthood** (1997); Wade Horn, David Blankenhorn, and Mitchell B. Pearlstein (eds.), **The Fatherhood Movement** (1999); Linda Waite and Maggie Gallagher, **The Case for Marriage** (2000); Dana Mack and David Blankenhorn (eds.), **The Book of Marriage** (2001).

16 For example, our national consultation on covenant marriage, held in August of 1998, was one of the first times—it may have been the first time—that marriage leaders gathered together to discuss the possibility and theme of a “marriage movement.” Our marriage consultation held in January 2000 led directly to the public appeal, *The Marriage Movement: A Statement of Principles*, which introduced the term and idea of “marriage movement” in the public debate.

17 Our Council on Families, convened in 1991, constituted the first time in more than three decades that a national group of prominent scholars came together for interdisciplinary deliberation, collaborative research, and public education on the status and future of marriage. The institute also helped to give birth to, and David Blankenhorn served as the founding chairman of, the National Fatherhood Initiative (founded in 1995).

18 Alex Kotlowitz, “It Takes a Wedding,” **New York Times**, November 13, 2002.

19 Jane Eisner, “After 35 years, marriage found its spot on society’s center stage,” **St. Paul Pioneer Press**, post date January 2, 2003.

20 Judith Stacey, “Family Values Forever,” **The Nation**, July 9, 2001.

21 Maureen Freely, **The Observer** (London), November 19, 2001, p. 1.

22 Jennifer McKim, “Jumping the Relationship,” **Orange County Register**, August 6, 2002.

23 Blain Hardin, “2-Parent Families Rise After Change in Welfare Laws,” **New York**

**Times**, August 12, 2001.

24 For a summary of the evidence see the special symposium on “Marriage and Children,” **American Experiment Quarterly** 4, no. 2 (Minneapolis: Center of the American Experiment, summer 2001).

25 U.S. Census Bureau, “Families, by Presence of Own Children Under 18: 1950 to Present,” Internet Table FM-1 (Internet Release date: June 29, 2001); and “Living Arrangements of Children Under 18 Years Old: 1960 to Present,” Internet Table CH-1 (Internet Release date: June 29, 2001). Allen Dupree and Wendell Primus, **Declining Share of Children Lived With Single Mothers in the Late 1990s** (Washington, DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, June 15, 2001). Sharon Vandivere, Kristen Anderson Moore, and Martha Zaslow, **Children’s Family Environments: Findings from the National Survey of America’s Families** (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2001).

26 See Isabel V. Sawhill, “From Welfare to Work,” **Brookings Review** 19, no. 3 (Summer 2001): 4-7. Discussing the recent demographic data, the journalist and respected welfare-reform author Mickey Kaus (“The Good Big News,” [kausfiles.com](http://kausfiles.com), post date June 20, 2001) writes: “Did something conspicuous happen between 1995 and 2000 that might have caused this positive shift? Yes—or at least something happened that was supposed to cause the shift, namely, the 1996 welfare reform.”

27 See David Blankenhorn, “Pursuing Happiness,” **Propositions** 5 (Summer 1999): 8-9.

28 See Sharon Lerner, “Good and Bad Marriage, Boon and Bane to Health,” **New York Times**, October 22, 2002.

29 Waite and Gallagher, **The Case for Marriage**, chapter 12.

30 Jesse Bernard, **The Future of Marriage** (New York: Bantam, 1972) ■