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In defence of marriage

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It is sad to observe that in Canadian society today, about 80 per cent of the population is single, divorced or separated. The traditional definition of family is changing, with four in 10 first marriages ending in divorce. For the first time in Canadian history, there are more unmarried people than legally married people, age 15 and over, according to the Vanier Institute of the Family. Moreover, the Institute of Marriage and Family Canada estimates the direct cost, to taxpayers, of broken families to be an astounding \$7 billion annually. All this and much more can be saved if we understand the contours of marriage and society properly.

God designed life such that there is inter-dependancy and we realize the worth of the relationships and because of this, grow sensitive and responsible.

As Somerset Maugham said, "We are not the same persons this year as last year nor are those we love. It is a happy chance if we, changing, continue to love a changed person."

While this sounds like the perfect explanation for why western societies have such high divorce rates, Maugham lived before that process began. Guess what has changed?

First, divorce ceased to be a social taboo.

In times past, social and economic pressure kept unhappy spouses together in marriage until they finally got old enough to be able to cohabit with a minimum of strife.

Until the 20th century, the primary purpose of marriage was to raise children to become the workforce of the future and to provide for parents in their elder years. For most young and "modern" people, work and material possessions are the main focus and family comes a distant second.

They don't know how to succeed as married couples, because they have not been taught the skills.

These skills are teachable, but unfortunately they are not taught today on a broad scale. We also don't teach young adults the skills of parenting. So we find many conflicts within couples and within families.

Successful marriages and successful family raising can be done in today's world. It's a good idea to suggest that marriage skills be taught to individuals who intend to be part of a couple. What's radical is the idea that the education system should alter curriculum to accommodate this "new" social necessity and make people more honest in their relationships.

A marriage that is based on mutual sharing, trust, compromise, love and affection can withstand the test of time and lays the foundation to a stable and growth-oriented society. Hence it should be the effort of all to provide training and motivate youngsters to marry and abstain from unwanted illicit sex, thereby also avoiding many ills and also many diseases, both physical and mental - the latter being our stigmas and attitudes.

Statistics from Statistics Canada show that about 36 per cent of children living in "poverty" are in broken families.

Broken families are causing huge financial hardships on women and children, not to mention emotional distress. Unfortunately, policy makers refuse to see the elephant in the room and instead focus on creating new social programs to supplement incomes.

The only lasting solution is to return to values that promote more stable families.

There are no quick fixes, unfortunately.

Part of the solution would involve better education, so that people avoid getting into bad relationships and men are less prone to dumping women whom they have impregnated.

The sooner our society fixes this, the better it is going to be for humanity.

Many would like to believe that marriages are made in heaven.

True - but marriages are to be enjoyed on Earth and also need to be saved from break-ups for the greater good, on Earth.

A society with married couples is a sure bet for growth of life and all its wealth.

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