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Society needs Parent's Love
Empirical studies in the USA on Belonging and Rejection

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Good morning. I am going to be talking on “Belonging and Rejection”, which is the dynamic in the family. Everyone of us and a child in particular needs to belong. When there is rejection in the family, the child suffers.

This slide is meant to summarize the research that's been very well established in the United States. The closer mother and father are to each other the better the child does.

There is a major body of research that has developed in the United States in the last 15 years on the impact of religious practice on many, many areas, on health and everything else. But looking on its impact on family life what we find is that the more the father worships the better he does and the better the relationship is with the wife and the more the mother worships the better she does and the better the relationship is with the husband. And when both of them worship the relationship is even better still.

I am not going to enter that research, but I am glad to make summaries of it available to the network, so that you can gather it at least in English. It's a broad body, very deep and very growing in the United States and I think it's very important.

And the more the father and mother are closer the better the child does. On the other hand, the more the father and mother are separated - or what begins to happen often in America is that the mother says this, the father says this and the communication gets further apart - the more the child suffers. The more split the child is the less happy the child is. So the biggest gift that the child can get to reach his or her potential is a father and mother who love each other. Not love the child, yes, love the child of course, but the biggest is that father and mother are very close because then the child is very close automatically. You don't get a father and mother who are close and a child who is distant. You often get a mother who is close to her child and distant from the father and the child suffers. What the child needs most is a father and mother who are closest to each other.

And now we are going to look at the data from the biggest survey of adolescent teenagers in the United States. Around 1996/97 a survey of 19.000 children or adolescents from age 13 to 18 was done. So this is a picture, a snapshot picture of the United States.

And first, before looking at the data, I want to explain the family categories. The first one here is the always married intact family. Father and mother married with their children. The second one is the step family, which normally is a divorced parent remarried. The next two are cohabitation. This cohabitation is natural parents, not married, but always together. And this cohabitation is normally the children with the biological mother and another man but not the father. This is the single divorced mother normally, could be single divorced father, but

normally mother. And this is the never married, always single mother. So two categories where the parents always belong. And the second category where the parents have split in different ways, different family structures.

This here is *running away* from home, it's a measure of things going wrong in the family, when children run away. So there is less running away in the two belonging and much more running away in the fractured families.

Now I go quicker through the next slides, because we will just see much the same pattern between the two belonging families and the families with the rejection between father and mother.

Now we are looking at the same by church attendance. This is weekly, going to church every week, going to church a couple of times a month, going to church a few times a year and never going to church. Same thing: *running away*. And you'll see the slope.

So, running away then by family structure and by church attendance gives you this big picture.

That's very complex, so we make it simple. Now we reduce it to four. The always intact family that worships very frequently, the always intact family that worships little or none, the rejection between parents family that worships frequently and the rejection family that worships little or none. Now when I said rejection family, the family belongs, but the biological father and mother have rejected each other. And the rest of the patterns we will go through now.

Now, a very important one. Great point average: *how well the children are doing in school in maths and in language*. This is a snapshot of adolescents in the United States by family structure. Interesting here: the lowest is the cohabiting with a different father and the highest of course is the intact always married. For modern economies this is very important. The future of the modern economy is going to be strongest with the intact married family. The same great point average math and English by religious attendance: weekly, couple of times a month, couple of times a year, never. A very clear slope. So the impact of religion on achievement at school is very significant. And then combined, great point average math, English: intact married and worships frequently, intact that does not worship but little. Broken family that worships a lot and then the lowest is the fractured family that worships little or not. And a very big difference between the two.

Question from the audience: what is the total range of the numbers? Between 0 and 4. 4 would be perfect, 0 is nothing. But the important thing: this is a picture of school achievement in the United States, national picture, very accurate. And I would propose because of the indications of the research, it's much the same the world over. Slightly different scores, but same pattern.

The number that is very important for the future family structure is the *sexual experience of teenagers*. Let's not worry about the scores, just watch the pattern. For anybody who wants it, I can give the scores in more detail later, but the bigger idea is to see the pattern of the scores. Here: *number of sexual partners* least in the intact married families, highest in the step and in the divorced. But this here is the best: *the least amount of sexual partners for teenagers, for girls*. This is the church attendance: weekly, couple of times a month, couple of times a year, never. And combined. The big difference, pretty much the same. For boys the scores are higher actually, but still, the two lowest and then the high. These two, the two parents, always together, the natural family, there and there.

And family structure: *getting into a fight*. Not perfect in the intact married family, but less than all the others.

Use of drugs, this will be the heavier drugs. The use of drugs by family structure: the natural family and the never married very low. The others, where there is the experience of rejection, is the high.

Getting expelled from school by family structure. Running away, we saw this one before.

Shoplifting, stealing from shops: the natural family.

Getting drunk in the last year, too much alcohol.

Grand theft, big thieving, stealing cars is one of the biggest.

Looking at the same now by church attendance. *Number of sexual partners of the boys* by religious attendance. Not too much difference among the two groups, that and this. And a little religion sometimes is more dangerous than nothing. That pattern isn't always there, but frequently there on many things. Sometimes a little, a couple of times a year is dangerous.

Getting into a fight, church attendance. *Use of hard drugs*. *Getting expelled or suspended from school*. *Running away from home*, we saw this one before. *Getting drunk in the last year*. *Grand theft by church attendance*. *Shoplifting*.

And now the combination. *Getting into the fight*, much the same, some difference, so two big categories, here family is very protective. And the lack of family, even the presence of religious worship not as protective. But the lowest and the worst and the best. And for anybody who is a statistician all these differences are significant between every group. *Getting drunk in the last year*, the best, the worst, and then in between. Here you see that religion, and we will see the same with the drugs, that the practice of religion is very protective in the *abuse of alcohol*, *drugs* are in the same. And these are *hard drugs*, even more pronounced. *Getting expelled from school or suspended*. And there the family is more important than religious practice, the monitoring of two parents is very important in the teenage boys for keeping them from expulsion and other things like that. The best and the worst. *Grand theft*. There we see the best, the worst are pretty much the same. And *running away*, best, worst are much the same. *Shoplifting*.

Now, we get towards the conclusions of what we've seen here. Let me take a little bit of time to explain here because these measures cover five different categories. There are five big institutions in society: the family, the church, the school, the market place (that's business), and government and the common good. Five tasks for society. Those same five tasks are in every individual: the task of family, the task of God (of figuring out the transcendental, right and wrong, the existence of God, man and creation, everybody has that task), school and learning (goes on all through life, a basic task), income and savings and properties (it's a basic task), and then government and the common good is a basic task. That's in every individual.

And that's what we meant there, five basic tasks: family, church, school, government, market place. It's in the family, it's in the couple. A couple in the family life have to work out the task of family, marriage, staying together, it's a big task, and raising children. That's there between the couple. The task of God, religion, every couple has that, whether they come together or go apart or they don't do anything, but that task is there. The task of learning and teaching, the biggest teaching goes from the parents to the children, the most important and the most powerful teaching. The education literature is full of that. I hear that in Germany they don't pay much attention to that, but it's very clear. The task of education, the task of income, and then the task of governance in the family will be worked out between the couple,

learning how to govern each other by agreement and how to govern their children. So the five tasks are there between the couple. Family, church, school, market place and government at the couple level.

And the tasks of family, of God and of learning most deeply happen when the father and mother are most united on those, they are very relational, very much of the spirit, of the interiority of man. And that relationship and those relational aspects are what makes the child stronger. From the unity here comes this with the child and the child learns the tasks of family, of God, of learning, of governance and even of work, the beginning of work, and later to the market place.

Switching now. What is happening across the West? This is a snapshot of what is happening in the United States, but similar things are happening all across the world. Over here somewhere is 1950 and this here is the year 2000. This is whether the parents stay together or go apart. And there are two ways for parents to go apart, as far as the child is concerned: before they are married they part, the baby is born, but not to married parents, or they get married and later on they part by divorcing. The two big ways of rejection.

In 1950, for every hundred children born 12 children entered a broken family. 4 were born out of wedlock to single mothers and of 8 their parents divorced that year. Over the next 50 years this is what is happening: Now for every hundred children born in the year 2000, 60 children entered a broken family. But the United States is not the worst in the world. This is the United States, somewhere here, Germany, Poland down here. Some of the best: Taiwan, Greece, Turkey. All down here, some of the worst: Jamaica and probably one of the worst in the world is Russia. The former communist countries are all up here, Germany here, USA, Sweden. Sweden which says to the world they are a model of social policy, is up here.

Now, regarding the methodology, these are approximations and some of these figures may have to change the more they are looked at because the survey is/are not gathered the same way and many countries don't measure exactly to give you these data. So these are approximations the best I could make, but they are open to correction. But they are not far off either.

So the implications for the social capital of these countries looking back at the data we looked. The more the rejection between parents the less well the society does. The intact married family that worships weekly is the greatest generator of social and human capital. All the data indicates that. There is not a single study I have ever seen in all my life where children from intact married families as a group did not do best. And in the area of religion research which is now very big in the United States, it's getting boring. You're going to almost tell the result before the research. Because if you go into a new area what you find is that the more frequently people worship the better they do on the good things and the less bad they do on the bad things.

So the three institutions that naturally ally together to give you the child who is going to be the strong adult are the family, the church and the school together. It's the love between father and mother, the love between the creatures and the creator, and the school that teaches that. And then the two other big institutions are stronger, much stronger, the market place and government. And government can be much, much smaller, but much stronger. And all these are all dependent on each other. Family is dependent on income. If no income, family life is very difficult. Worship and family life, if you don't have good families, you are going to have

less worship. You have breakdown in the market place or breakdown in government, it is going to affect everyone, it is interdependent.

And there is an interdependence from the macro to the micro, from society at large to the community, to the family, the child. And the fundamental relationship on which all the strength or weakness of the society depends is the marriage.

So where do we go from here for the next questions? So the big one is: what social policy should a country pursue? The belonging, the whole question of belonging. All of these graphs, all this research leads to major questions both for public discourse, for discourse in the media and for discourse in government, because clearly we are going into the wrong direction on a number of things. This is the wrong direction. This is the direction to greater and greater weakness, not greater and greater strength. So we are heading that way.

How do we begin to switch back to belonging? Belonging in the family, belonging in community and then belonging to God in the freedom of one's conscience and freedom of religion? That's where the strength of a nation lies, any nation, this nation, the United States, Turkey, China, Australia, New Zealand, it's universal. So that's the question, that's the work you have to do. All on the good side, all on the social science research points the way I am talking about. All of it. Occasionally, you get ones that you got to look closer. But when you dig everything points to belonging.

Belonging between husband and wife as the single most important human relationship on earth. And then the other belonging to God of which the first is. They are the two big things. And all the researches point in that way. So how do you get government and media and schools to pay attention to the research? And while the research is new, the ideas are very old. There is nothing new about the ideas. Thank you very much.

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