

THE NEWS REVIEW

The importance of marriage for men

By Garry Breitkreuz
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I believe the traditional family structure upon which our country was built is something worth protecting.

The past few decades have seen movements to empower women. With women pursuing higher education and entering professional fields in greater numbers than ever before, marriage rates in Canada have been declining.

Statistics also show that adolescent males are more likely to drop out of high school and less likely to go to university than 30 years ago.

The Institute of Marriage and Family Canada theorizes that a culture of marriage is crucial in helping boys become men. Married men live longer, make more money and are less likely to fall into criminal behavior or drug abuse.

Young people no longer strive, as they once did, toward marriage and the creation of their own families, and this is taking a toll on the fabric of our society.

Boys learn appropriate masculinity, how to be less violent, and how to respect and include women through the healthy role modeling that occurs most prominently through the formation of the traditional family unit.

Feminist gender frameworks sometimes illustrate men and the traditional institution of marriage as oppressive and paint masculinity as a threat.

While masculinity may be threatening when poorly expressed, we are called to raise our children in environments where they can come to appreciate the value of male role models and are encouraged to stay in school and pursue their dreams, rather than turning to lives of crime or gang activity.

More needs to be done to emphasize the important contributions fathers make in raising healthy, stable, successful children. Fathers are more than simply "sperm donors" or providers of financial support.

We are raising a generation of underachieving males, and a societal shift away from the institution of marriage is at the heart of this problem.

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While drop-out rates are decreasing for both genders, five percent more young men drop out of high school than young women. In an economy where higher education is becoming increasingly essential for finding employment and 59 per cent of university undergraduates are women, many young males struggle to become financially independent.

The number of males aged 20-29 who live at home has doubled since 1981. Half of Canadians in this age range live in common-law relationships as their first union.

Marriage rates have been steadily declining over the past 20 years, reaching 69 percent in 2006. This is having a negative effect on the role of males both in families and in society.

*2001 – 130 rue Albert Street, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1P 5G4
T 613.565.3832 f/t 613.565.3803 1.866.373.4632
www.imfcanda.org*