Oh, How America Has Changed

by Phyllis Schlafly August 19, 2011

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USA TODAY published one of its colorful front pages last week detailing how America has not only grown dramatically in population over the last two decades, but has radically changed ethnically, geographically, and culturally. The most costly of the many changes is the fact that having children has become increasingly detached from marriage.

Illegitimate births for all Americans have risen from 26 percent in 1990 to 41 percent today "and could be headed higher." Among Hispanics, illegitimacy is 53 percent, among blacks it's 73 percent, and among whites it has risen to a shocking 29 percent.

This extraordinary change is the primary reason that government budgets, both federal and state, are so bloated. Without fathers to provide for these millions of children, their mothers turn to Big Brother Government.

The economist Robert J. Samuelson recently concluded that "the welfare state is winning the budget war." The bipartisan budget deal, which slashed our military budget but kept welfare-state handouts mostly off limits, turned out to be "a triumph of the welfare state over the Pentagon."

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The Heritage Foundation reports that 77 types of federal means-tested handouts already cost $522 billion per year before Obama took office. He increased this giant amount to $697 billion per year in the first half of his term, and now half of

Americans depend for their living expenses in whole or in part on government handouts paid by the other half who pay income taxes.

That was exactly what Obama planned to do when he told Joe the Plumber he wanted to redistribute the wealth and told Chicago's WBEZ-FM that his favorite Supreme Court Chief Justice, Earl Warren, wasn't radical enough because the Warren Court "never ventured into the issues of redistribution of wealth."

Estimates are that, over the next decade, the federal government will spend $7.5 trillion on means-tested welfare. That's in addition to the nearly $200 billion a year doled out by the states.

In Ronald Reagan's famous caveat, when you subsidize something you get more of it. So the subsidies to women who have no husbands in the house have promoted more and more children growing up without fathers.

The American public has been alerted to the effects of family breakup ever since Daniel Patrick Moynihan's 1965 report called "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action." We can now see clearly that giving cash and benefits to single moms, beginning with Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, destroyed families by making fathers unnecessary and even a barrier to the women receiving free money.

This common-sense analysis was confirmed by British commentator Melanie Phillips, who described the current London riots as the result of "the promotion of lone parenthood" and "the willed removal" of fathers from the family unit by the Welfare State and the "ultra-feminist wreckers" of the traditional family with its male breadwinner. She calls for removing "the incentives to girls and women to have babies outside marriage" and for dismantling "the concept of entitlement" from the Welfare State.

The religious Left has injected itself into the U.S. budget debate by corralling a list of leftwingers to sign a statement called "Circle of Protection" opposing any cuts to

welfare-state spending. This group made a political splash running newspaper ads featuring the provocative question, "What would Jesus cut?"

I wouldn't presume to try to read Jesus's mind or announce His political opinions, but I think it's hard to make the case that He would approve subsidizing, and thereby encouraging, illegitimate births. That's exactly what the means-tested welfare handouts have been doing ever since Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty.

Michael Gerson defended the religious Left's Circle of Protection in the Washington Post. He calls the billions of dollars of government spending on poverty "essentially irrelevant to America's long-term debt." I guess we now know why George W. Bush wasn't more conservative: Michael Gerson was his speech writer.

Gerson is wrong. Welfare-state spending is a major cause of our debt, and it is also morally costly because it chases fathers out of the homes. The Heritage Foundation figures don't even count the social and fiscal costs of the drugs, sex, suicide, school dropouts, runaways, and crime that come mostly from female-headed households.

Also, welfare spending is a failure; it doesn't advance us toward any constructive goal, such as helping recipients to get on their feet economically. It merely increases dependence on government handouts and votes for leftwing politicians.

The Obama strategists know their political bread is buttered on the side of creating more and more women dependent on government. Republicans will lose the budget battle unless they face up to the fact that traditional husband-provider marriage is the mainspring of economic solvency, and Republicans will lose elections unless they stop the redistribution of money from taxpayers to dependents on government.