

resources bailing water out of a sinking boat when it would make so much more sense to just plug the hole. Do we continue to manage the symptoms, or do we go for the cure? That's the choice we're looking at.

### **THE CALL GOES TO EVERYONE**

We're calling on religious leaders who have been, so far, ineffective in combating divorce to start praying, fasting and taking action to influence public policy. It's time for the prophet to address the king, to speak truth to power, to bring the word of the Lord to the "city gates" concerning marriage and family.

We're also calling on corporate America to start taking responsibility for the culture in which they prosper. A recent study by Life Innovations, Inc. entitled "Marriage & Family Wellness: Corporate America's Business?" demonstrates how healthy marriage improves the corporate bottom line. In other words, **investing in healthy marriage even makes good business sense.**

In summary, we must all –the Church, government and corporate America- do our part to turn around a cultural mindset of acceptance of easy divorce to one of valuing, once again, the institution of marriage and working together to restore traditional marriage and the natural family. **It must become a national imperative,** or our posterity will pay the price for our inaction. Yes, we must address climate change, beginning with the climate in our immediate surroundings -our own marriages and families. We dare not wait any longer. **We must plug the hole!**



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# Marriage: A National Imperative

By  
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## **MARRIAGE: A NATIONAL IMPERATIVE**

### **RECOGNIZING THE REAL CRISIS**

Again, I heard someone talking about the dangers of *global warming*. So I thought, “How serious is this problem? How many people have died because of *global warming* or *climate change*? How many have become ill? How many have become impoverished? How many have been adversely effected in any way?” The answer? Zero!

On the other hand, **each and every hour of each and every day 125 families are devastated by divorce.** Every hour the lives of more than 100 children are forever changed in a way that causes them to function way below their potential. Many of them develop fears and insecurities that researchers have termed as overwhelming.

Families are plunged into poverty. Victims of divorce suffer higher rates of illness, both physical and psychological. Children of divorce, as a class, function on a lower level than those who grow up in secure families. Our prisons are filled with young men who have never known healthy loving discipline, and have therefore opted for the discipline of the correctional system.

This isn't some theory to be debated. **This is real life in America today!**

Yet, as a nation we are pouring billions of dollars into managing the effects of divorce while totally neglecting the root cause.

### **A SINKING ROWBOAT?**

It's like continually bailing water from a sinking rowboat while the hole in the bottom of

the boat remains open, when all we have to do is plug up the hole! If you saw someone frantically bailing water while neglecting to plug the hole you would no doubt think, “How stupid!” Well?

So what if the water is warmer. The boat will still sink unless you plug the hole. In fact, it is already sinking, now, today, while people are debating the temperature of the water. Remember the Titanic? We're debating the positioning of the deck chairs!

Yes, I know it's easier to talk about some esoteric theory on climate change than it is to deal with an immediate problem that calls for action, but nevertheless, it's time we came to our senses and started working to plug the hole in the boat, by putting our money and our energies into restoring the institutions of marriage and family.

### **WE MUST CHANGE OUR NATIONAL PRIORITIES.**

In 2006, according to the Department of Health and Human Services, almost 14 Billion dollars (\$13,749,319,134) was sent to the states in TANF Funds (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) for social programs. My state, New York, received nearly three billion dollars (\$2,848,954,440). Under that umbrella, we're funding single parent households, domestic violence programs, housing for the homeless, education for single moms, after school daycare programs and a myriad of other programs necessitated by the breakdown of the American Family. Yet until 2007 **not a red cent was put toward healthy marriage programs. We're obsessed with bailing**

**water instead of simply plugging up the hole.** It just doesn't make sense, unless of course you have a vested interest in bailing water. Some may even have started a water bailing company, in which case they need that hole to remain open to stay in business.

This is precisely what is happening in our social services industries, and precisely why, big government cannot be looked to for the ultimate solution. The community of faith, as well as the private sector must eventually step up to the plate, or our culture will continue to degenerate into social chaos.

In the meantime, **government has a vital role to play.** That's why we are calling on legislators on every level of government to shift the focus from bailing water to plugging the hole. In 2007 we finally got the New York State Legislature to approve \$125,000 for healthy marriages. That was a first in New York State history, but still a mere drop in the bucket. **Just 1% of TANF funds directed to plugging the hole would have provided \$24 million dollars** to save marriages *-only 1%!* Why aren't we doing it?

Currently, only two states, Utah and Oklahoma have had the sense to dedicate 1% of TANF funds to healthy marriages. They are seeing extraordinary results for their investment.

A few other states are working toward the 1% goal with the help of organizations like the Fatherhood and Marriage Leadership Initiative ([www.famli.us](http://www.famli.us)), but most states are still **wasting taxpayers' money** and human