LIFEWATCH
A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF ALLIANCE FOR LIFE INTERNATIONAL
AUGUST 2025

IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILD, PART II

We continue our focus on the need for a children's rights movement as promoted by authors Kathy Faust and Stacy Manning in their book: *Them Before Us.*

We are reminded how adult decisions impact children in instances such as marriage, divorce, cohabitation, same-sex unions, and the use of reproductive technologies.

In our previous *LifeWatch*, we examined how children living with a biological parent and a non-related partner in cohabitation, can be subject to abuse and live in grave danger.

Divorce is another lifestyle that inflict untold pain on children. They suffer trauma from their parents' divorce, especially if they were unaware that their parents were experiencing marital difficulties [1]. That's often when the child stops feeling safe and secure and becomes profoundly unhappy. In order to thrive, children need a father and mother that love them, *and* stability [2]. Even when children live in affluent circumstances, the divorce of their parents still affects them negatively. Only 45% said they were "doing well", ten years later [3].

The incidence of no-fault divorce is making matters worse, especially for children. Divorce used to be very rare: from 1867-1915, one per 1,000 people. In the 1940s, it was two per 1,000. But with the incidence of no-fault legislation in 1969 in the state of California, it rose steadily and it spread to other states. It is now at 3.2 per 1000. This is an artificially low number because the decline in divorce rate matches the decrease in marriage rate [4]

In no-fault-divorce, any spouse can initiate divorce proceedings for any reason at all, regardless if the couple has (cont. p.2)



ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE ARE FROM OUR PRESIDENT, LOUISE ALLARD

AN UPDATE FROM UGANDA

We have been staying this side of the Atlantic due to a health condition which required monitoring and finally, eye surgery just a few days ago. The doctor is pleased with our progress and would like to do the same for the other eye in a few weeks. God willing, we shall be able to return to the field soon. All is relative, as you know.

Weekly meetings with Emily, the Pregnancy Resource Center and Bakery Manager, allows us to manage operations and make progress.

Two weeks ago, we welcomed Ben, an experienced baker to replace Adelou who went back to school after working with us as an apprentice baker. He is studying to become a dentist. We gave him a warm sent-off and registration fees. He was ecstatic. When he came to us, he had no money to fulfill his dream. He acquired baking skills, worked for us as a paid apprentice, saved for tuition, and even found a sponsor. We were blessed **(Cont. p.3)**

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young children at home. In contrast, the previous at-fault model encouraged couples to address their marital problems instead of divorcing because they knew that the judge would be hard on the guilty party if they were to seek a divorce [5].

Sociologists have studied the matter and concluded:

- In high-conflict marriages where domestic violence or frequent verbal outbursts are the norm, separation will provide the lesser evil for the children
- One-third of divorces occur in high-conflict unions
- The children suffer the most when their parents' relationship was low-conflict but resulted in divorce nevertheless [6]

Why does it matter? Children experience long-term suffering which they carry even into adulthood. For example, as adults, studies show that they will be less educated than children raised in intact families; they will have lower family incomes; they will get married at a younger age than their peers but separate more often; and they will have a higher suicide rate [7]. That's in their adulthood. Their childhood would be even more traumatic.

Divorce is considered an Adverse Childhood Experience or ACE [8]. It wreaks havoc on the child's mental and physical health. Divorce has been associated with heart disease, diabetes, and asthma [9]. Annie experienced divorce as a child. She comments: "Even though I was achieving in [school and extracurriculars], inside I was consumed with anger, questions, and a feeling of wanting it all to end. Suicide was a constant thought that I battled my junior and senior years. I was in counseling most of my senior year. My health tanked. I was diagnosed with asthma, Raynaud's. and TMJ. All of these ailments didn't exist before my parents' separation [10]".

Divorce often affects the children's academic achievement. In intact families, 85% of children will graduate from high school. In broken families, it is 65-67% [11]. Children need stability to learn, an ingredient that is often missing. An adult recalls: "*For us children, it was an environment that was impossible, veering between a week with my mother and then a week with my father. It was like living on a permanent seesaw [12].*"

For the parents who both try hard to remain in their children's lives, it's the children who are expected to accommodate to different lifestyles, residences, step-parents, and half siblings, aptly described as: "a divided home, divided parents, divided loyalties, and divided lives [13]".

Divorce often means that the child will lose parental connection with the nonresident parent. In a study, 20% of divorced fathers had not seen their children during the past year [14]. In adolescence, less than half of the children had seen their fathers in more than a year. The fathers who have a new partner are less likely to maintain contact with their children compared to fathers who choose to stay single [15].

The divorce will often lead the young persons to marry in their teen years (cont. p.3)

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REPORT FROM UGANDA

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to witness God at work and do our part, thanks to donors like you. We sent a nursing student to school as well, since Anne provided a scholarship. The people we help fall into two categories: children from one-parent families engaged in primary or secondary schools, as part of our single-mothers' ministry, and young adults engaged in a career in a health-related field. This work is incidental but very needed and rewarding.

Emily continues to teach the Billings Ovulation Method and abstinence education. The connection is always church-related, usually through a women's ministry. We introduced our baking apprenticeship program as we even designed one for teens on school breaks. Schools are consuming our bread and sweets. God has blessed us with a wonderful circle of opportunities.

The St Raphael Project is evaluating revised designs for the children's hospital. We added administrative spaces in a tower structure since we plan to operate it on its own for a few years. **We thank you for your continued support for the work of ALI in Uganda. Please consider becoming a Founding Member for the hospital project and leave a legacy of love.**

IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHILD….

and to experience divorce in their own families [16]. If their parents never remarried, 45% of children of divorce will repeat the same in adulthood. If their parents remarried to a step-parent, it rises to 91% [17].

Was the parents' divorce worth it in the first place? A report shows that for two thirds of married couples who decided not to divorce, they acknowledged happier marriages five years later. As for those who divorced, they were no happier than those who stayed together [18].

How should we then live? The no-fault marriage camp views marriage as a lifestyle that will bring them happiness. As soon as it is no longer the case, one partner begins to look elsewhere. In many divorces, there is one partner that does not want the divorce. Even so, the divorce is granted and the children will be the ones that will be expected to adjust to a new life, often filled with instability and heartache.

The authors of *Them Before Us* encourage "healthy marriages", the kind that requires lifelong commitment. This means that adults entering a marital relationship must be realistic and accept that marital bliss is bound to be challenged at times and will require hard work for the duration [19]. Their children's development requires their love and the stability that only the marital union can provide.

The authors argue for a return to at-fault divorce [20]. At the very least, children's rights advocates must influence legislation that will protect the most vulnerable among us. It is easier to leave most contracts than to divorce.

When young children are involved, the court must intervene to delay the divorce if it is safe to do so and require marital counseling and education on the effects of divorce on children.

Alliance for Life International

Trusting God with Life
August 2025

Alliance for Life International is a Catholic Christian, non-profit educational and charitable organization committed to assist and encourage States in building cultures of life in which preborn children are welcome and the lives of those who are vulnerable are protected. The lack of essential medical care in Uganda is a reflection of health disparities found in socially disadvantaged countries. We are leading and cooperating with church partners to bring modern medical care in Uganda.

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