

Child and Family

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February 27, 1981

C. Everett Koop, M.D.
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Dear Dr. Koop:

Congratulations on your new appointment. It is a ray of hope in these troubled times.

I am a Fellow of the American Public Health Association and have attended meetings annually since 1944 with the exception of 1980. I attended in my capacity as a faculty member of a Department of Family and Community Medicine, as the full time public health director of the Oak Park, Illinois Health Department from 1949 until 1974 and as an editor (now past) of the Bulletin of the American Association of Public Health Physicians.

Over a 35 year period I have witnessed a steady erosion of public health philosophy to the detriment of good medical practice, the family, and in some instances the individual. It is a specialty which has lost its soul to many a voluntary and federal agency as well as to the drug industry. Many federal agencies, in particular, assisted by advisory committees of establishment experts have been dominated by vested interests to become puppets of some voluntary health and social agencies and drug firms. Public health today is more ruled by agency public relations departments whose talent is to make failure look good than by the considerations of the truly objective professional person.

What comes to mind is the Salk Inactivated Poliomyelitis Vaccine program of 1955 when government health officials controlled by Basil O'Connor's National Foundation permitted the sale of a vaccine containing virulent live poliomyelitis viruses to save face for the National Foundation and certain government officials. In more recent years we have had the Swine Flu Vaccine fiasco whose failure was predicted by non-establishment figures (including myself) months before the vaccination program was launched. I do not talk lightly

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about these two examples, there are many more. The documentation is available.

I, also, have in mind the year state health departments were notified by the federal government that 90% of allotted maternal and infant health funds had to be used for family planning services; this despite the fact of the United States' dismal infant mortality record, one of the worst among developed countries and today still one of the highest.

But the above nearly pales in significance when compared to the insidious and not so insidious overall damage done to traditional family life by public health personnel espousing nearly every modish anti-family movement that appeared on the scene. I do not have to enumerate.

This brings me back to why I believe you are a ray of hope in these troublesome times. From what I have gathered about you you seem to grasp the following:

1. That the basic issue that confronts America is the survival and preservation of the traditional family---one of the most enduring and resilient realities of human history. Aberrations and deviations, innovations of one sort or another come and go, but never thrive or survive. Because the traditional family is based on nature, it has a habit of burying its own undertakers.

2. That most of our social problems are symptomatic of the insecurities engendered in early childhood by virtue of the dysfunctioning family, a dysfunction brought about by a seduction of parents from their nurturing roles and the lack of moral support of the family by society's institutions. These problems run the gamut from alcoholism to suicide to sexual escapism which has now descended down through adolescence into pre-adolescence.

3. That given the failure of current solutions (the more the establishment spends and the more it propagandizes the worse the state of affairs) a new fresh approach to the problem is imperative, an approach based on the realities of human nature and not on the infirm hypotheses of tunnel visioned experts. As Aristotle (quoted by Sir Francis Bacon in his attack on specialists) once said "Those who contemplate few things have no difficulty deciding." The momentous problems that are facing our country are simply too important to be left in the hands of public health specialists. We desperately need at the helm an experienced and broadly knowledgeable

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physician dedicated to life and to the enduring values of the traditional family, a physician who has the character and the stamina to be independent of the pressures from voluntary agencies and those social engineers who ignore common sense and the lessons of history.

Thank you, then, for accepting the appointment. I know of no one better prepared for the position. I believe I speak not only for my readership but for the numerous parents I've had the opportunity to dialogue with through the years of my lengthy association with La Leche League and other such organizations devoted to good parenting. Children are the hope of the future. With our birth rate plummeting below replacement levels and with 75% of couples now infertile by virtue of venereal disease, The Pill, the IUD, abortion and voluntary and involuntary sterilization children are more precious than ever and more needed than ever by our country.

Best wishes in your work,

Yours sincerely,



Herbert Ratner, M.D.
Editor