

Family Under Threat

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As one who has grown up in, and been a part of, the counter-culture of the 60's and 70's, I want to examine the way it has radically redefined the shape and character of modern society. It is my conviction that the cultural revolution of the 60's has been as profound and as influential as any of the previous great revolutions, including the Industrial revolution, the French revolution and the Russian revolution.

The 60's cultural revolution was in part a disaffection with the unprecedented rise in affluence and prosperity of the 1950's, and the middle class values associated with it. The cultural revolution was multi-faceted, containing a number of diverse elements: a proliferation of alternative worldviews, such as the occult, and eastern religions, which coincided with the increasing secularisation of society; the emergence of the drug culture; the rock music revolution; the hippy movement; opposition to the Vietnam War; the rise of the New Left; and a general distrust of authority and authority figures.

The Role of the New Left

While many elements of the counter culture still survive today - the appeal of eastern religions and New Age thinking; the drug culture, etc. - one element has been especially powerful and influential, up until this day. That is the radical political wing of the counter culture. Known back then as the New Left, and known today as post-Marxism, this radical political movement was at the vanguard of the social revolution of the sixties.

The New Left of course was an out growth of the Old Left, part of the Marxist/Socialist tradition. The New Left differed from its intellectual forefathers in a number of respects, but I will here focus on just one difference. A large part of the New Left abandoned strict Marxist philosophy which taught that economic change, culminating in socialism, would transform the culture. Instead, it followed the teachings of Italian Communist Antonio Gramsci, who taught that a cultural revolution must precede socialism. Gramsci felt that by capturing cultural institutions like education and the media, one had a better chance of ushering in the classless society. Thus the New Left concentrated less on issues of labour movement and economic theory, and more on cultural change.

Marx's concern for the oppressed working class was broadened to include - or replaced with - a whole range of oppressed classes: women, blacks, gays, students, etc. The counter-culturalists devised various schemes to liberate different classes of people: thus the emergence of women's lib, gay lib, black power, grey power, etc. Various liberation movements developed in the 60s with the understanding that white, male European culture was inherently exploitative and oppressive.

Today's political correctness movement has its roots in the 60's liberation movements. And postmodernism, which is now all the rage in American and Australian campuses, shares this same hostility to what it calls "dead white males". Various aggrieved groups are clamouring for social justice and an end to the domination of white, male Eurocentric culture. Thus society is fracturing into myriad splinter groups, all claiming victim status and all demanding compensation from the state for alleged injustices.

Of course this culture of victimisation undermines any sense of personal responsibility. Ben Wattenberg calls this obsession, 'The Victim Dictum,' summing it up as follows: "Every Problem Can Be Assigned To A Hostile Outside Agent." This concept of victimisation, and the corresponding undermining of responsibility and duty, of course work to erode traditional moral and religious values, which assume personal responsibility and accountability.

This attempt to undermine traditional moral and cultural values has been a hallmark of both the New Left of the 60s and 70s, and the postmodernists of today. In the 60s there was a deliberate strategy to capture institutions of influence and power. Education, the arts, the media were all targeted. Indeed, as I grew up in the 60s, I and my radical friends took courses in journalism, education and political science. We knew that if we could capture these institutions, we could turn America upside down.

The Sexual Revolution

Perhaps the most important area targeted by the cultural revolutionaries was that of family and sexuality. Indeed, the sexual revolution was another important part of the sixties upheaval - and in many ways the most far-reaching. The sexual revolution was based on the belief that the old institutions like the family, marriage, traditional values, etc. were oppressive and constricting. By overthrowing these archaic and oppressive institutions, the counter-culturalists felt they could usher in an era of liberation, freedom, self-fulfillment, and self-actualisation.

The promises of the sexual revolution have instead turned out to be way off the mark. This thirty year experiment has proven to be a massive failure. Let me look briefly at some of the promises and the actual results.

Feminism and the Divorce Revolution

Easy, no fault divorce was a legacy of the 60's. By the mid 70's most western nations had adopted it. The feminist movement had made this one of their top priorities. Marriage and homemaking were viewed contemptuously as oppressive and sexist concentration camps.

The results of the divorce revolution have been decisive: divorce rates have soared, families have busted up, and marriage as an institution has lost most of its former prestige and glory.

Ironically it is women - and children as well - who are the main ones who suffer as a result. The economic costs of divorce on women are so pronounced that a new term has been invented - "the feminisation of poverty". Men are often the winners of divorce, at least in economic terms. True, they often lose out in custody battles, but in terms of material wellbeing, it is often the woman who loses out.

Even more important of course is the condition of children after divorce. A mountain of evidence now exists to show that by every indicator, children are much worse off after divorce. The psychological, emotional and social problems which children develop due to divorce will often stay for decades.

Today in Australia one million children live with only one parent. In America, 69% of Black kids are born without a father around. The problem of fatherless families is now seen as one of the great social tragedies of our day.

Feminism, which pushes careers ahead of kids, not only is responsible for the divorce revolution and its harmful effects. It is also responsible for a range of other problems. For example, women are now marrying much later in life (if they do marry at all), and are often unable to conceive as a result. Their barren wombs only reflect the barrenness of radical feminism, which has turned men against women. It has also turned women against women,, with career women pitted against stay at home women.

Another bitter legacy of the feminist revolution is the abortion holocaust. Abortion on demand now accounts for the death of some 100,000 babies each year in Australia - about half of them female. There are about 1.5 million abortions each year in America, and around 45 million a year throughout the world.

Perhaps just one story can be mentioned to summarise the nefarious effects of the feminist revolution.

Australian feminist Dr Anne Summers, author of *Damned Whores and God's Police* gave a talk at the launch of the second edition of that book - the first edition written twenty years ago. She said the most memorable things about writing the book was the number of women who came up to her afterwards thanking her for giving them the courage to walk out of their marriage. Imagine that. Summers' greatest thrill was knowing how many marriages and families she helped to break up. That says a lot about feminism. (Of course feminism sees divorce as a liberation from an oppressive institution, not a break up of a sacred trust.)

It is worth recounting this episode because Dr Summers was not just some feminist theorist, but an advisor to the Keating government on women's affairs. This explains a great deal why Labor's policies were so hostile to marriage and family.

The Homosexual Revolution

Very briefly, the homosexual revolution which started about thirty years ago has now all but won. The radical homosexual lobby has made tremendous advances in just a short period of time. Let me illustrate by way of a quotation.

"Even in purely nonreligious terms, homosexuality represents a misuse of the sexual faculty and, in the words of one...educator, of 'human construction.' It is a pathetic little second-rate substitute for reality, a pitiable flight from life. As such it deserves fairness, compassion, understanding, and, when possible, treatment. But it deserves no encouragement, no glamorization, no rationalization, no fake status as a minority martyrdom..." The author of this remark? Fred Nile: Tim Fischer? No, *Time* magazine, Jan. 21, 1966. *Time* magazine of course would never make such a comment today.

I don't need to go into all the gains the homosexual lobby has won. Suffice it to say that today the only vice is not to be homosexual, but to be homophobic. Normality has been turned upside down, and the key virtue today is to be tolerant of all lifestyles. Only intolerance of homosexuality is today regarded as wrong.

Sex Education

Other areas which are a result of the sexual revolution can here only be briefly mentioned. The sex education lobby, like the homosexual lobby, has largely achieved its aims. In most public schools, extensive and graphic sex education takes place from kindergarten through year twelve. This is often true of religious schools as well.

The only thing that remains is to make such sex ed compulsory. But this is not far off. Two years ago the Australian Education Union proposed at its National Conference here in Melbourne that kindergarten to high school sex ed be made mandatory, including pro-homosexual content. They even went so far as to say that any parent, for reasons of religion or conscience, who tries to keep their child out of such courses should be prosecuted by the law.

Sex education is a recipe for disaster. It is a failure for three reasons: 1) it doesn't work; 2) it treats kids like animals; and 3) safe sex is a myth. Telling kids to rely on condoms is like encouraging them to play Russian roulette. Consider just one figure: Thirty years ago there were three or four Sexually Transmitted Diseases (like syphilis and gonorrhea) - now there are 57 and counting. The sexual revolution has been a grievously costly revolution.

We cannot here mention other aspects of the sex ed agenda, such as the gender-bending nonsense that was so prominent at the Women's Conference at Beijing. Suffice it to say that the push for comprehensive sex education has done as much to harm the family and the institution of marriage as anything else that might have been devised.

Pornography

A last result of the sexual revolution that deserves very quick attention is the explosion of pornography. The 60's radicals promised that rape and sexual hang-ups would decrease, if not disappear, once restrictive censorship laws were removed. They promised that we would be all more free and more loving as a result. But just the opposite has occurred. Where censorship laws have been liberalised, sex crimes have gone up.

It comes as no surprise that the mass murderer Martin Bryant had a collection of 2000 violent and pornographic videos. Indeed, most serial killers and mass murderers have been up to their ears in such material.

Again, the rapidity at which this revolution has taken place is alarming. In 1953, the year I was born, *Playboy* magazine was launched. When I was growing up it was difficult to get access to porn - one had to go to a seedy part of town. Today it is everywhere - in milkbars, petrol stations, in advertising, on the television, in films, on video, in magazines.

Today there are more hardcore porn outlets in America than there are MacDonalds restaurants. Considering how ubiquitous MacDonalds is, that's a pretty frightening figure. The FBI estimates that porn in America is a \$10 billion a year industry. In Australia it is also big business. The pornography plague is growing every day, and is taking many hostages as it rolls along. The freedom promised by the counter-culturalists has instead resulted in the enslavement of millions.

Conclusion

Many other examples could be given. But it should be clear that the radical revolution of the 60's has unleashed a tidal wave of social problems, which we are now struggling to overcome. The counter-culture of the 60's must take major responsibility for these disasters. This grand experiment has turned into one horrific disaster.

However, any forthcoming apologies are unlikely. Except for the occasional renegade, like myself, who has repudiated and repented of the 60's nonsense, the false philosophies have now become the established wisdom. Indeed, the antiauthority, antifamily, anti-everything values of the 60's have now become mainstream. The 60's radicals are now journalists, academics, professionals, in positions of power and influence. They are pushing an agenda which is antiauthority, anti-morality and antifamily.

The radicals of the 60's were on the margins of society. Today, those who still hold to traditional moral values are the new marginalised. We are the new counter-culturalists. We are the ones with the radical new (old) ideas which are so much needed.

That is why organisations like the AFA have been formed - to mount a counter attack on the destructive legacy of the 60's. The battle, as expressed in this talk, doesn't look good. Indeed, it can be a bit overwhelming to consider the rapid decline of Western civilisation in such a short period of time. However, we can only stand up and be counted as best we can. The real enemy is indifference and apathy. As Edmund Burke once put it, "All that is needed for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing."

Perhaps a better way to close would be to quote an influential counter-culturalist. Eldridge Cleaver was the leader of the militant Black Panthers in America in the late sixties. He had a saying which I would like to co-opt for our purposes. He said, "If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem." We owe it to our children and to our families to be part of the solution, and not part of the problem.