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Families exist in a universe. They are surrounded by other bodies that make up the interrelated system necessary for the family to work. These bodies are the neighborhood organization, civic club, ethnic organization, local political club, family business, local union, church or temple and thousands of informal groups. It is this universe that gets much of the work of America done. It is this universe that provides the gravity that holds America on course as our great institutions and their systems increasingly fluctuate, wobble, veer, and fail.

It is important to stress that this universe has inseparable parts. To injure one element is to injure all. Thus, in our older, inner city neighborhoods, if the entire universe around the family is strong, the family will do its job. But if the universe weakens, the family fights a losing battle.

It is this family universe that has been under systematic if unintentional assault for years as a result of the policies of Democratic and Republican administrations, conservative and liberal legislators. At the family-eye view, you can see results. As the neighborhood savings institution begins to take all of the neighborhood savings and invest in the growth of suburbia, a part of the family universe dies. As the community schools become centralized and their purposes defined by professionals, a part of the family universe dies. As government advantages large corporations and the "uncompetitive" neighborhood enterprise collapses,

a part of the family universe dies. As doctors, lawyers, social workers, teachers, counsellors and therapists are funded to provide more and more services, the functions of the local civic and ethnic associations and churches atrophy and a part of the family universe is dead. As television replaces the local political club as the vehicle for selecting our representatives, a part of the family universe dies.

Finally, the family is alone - a sun with no planets, burning out. The basis for an economy for family survival - the authority, tools, skill, capital - have been taken away.

If you wish to reverse present trends and support the family universe as the working center of America, there are three policy directions that are appropriate. First, eliminate policies that disempower the family universe. Second, insure a legitimate, protected space for the family universe so it has an opportunity to compete with the huge monopolistic corporate, service and bureaucratic structures. Third, provide interim economic support for the survival of family and neighborhood life.

We haven't the time to go into detail regarding the options these policies suggest. However, we would like to provide brief examples in each area.

1. Policies that disempower the family universe.

Government policies are replete with programs that promote the division of families by age. This is most vivid in the case of the elderly where public programs encourage care by institutions rather than families. This process is described in detail in my attached paper titled "The Need for Oldness." We need a bias toward

age integration if family is to persevere.

Many government programs are also injurious because they allocate massive resources to professionals who basically see the family as a client in need of treatment and therapy. The result has been disastrous in two ways. First, the service professionals have the increasing effect of convincing families that they are incompetent to know, care, teach, cure, make or do.

Second, the professional servicers take increasing proportions of public money that is desperately needed by the poor and consume it in the name of helping poor families. In one Chicago neighborhood, for example, for every \$1.00 received in cash income by a person forced on welfare professional medical carers receive 50 cents. This is only one of many professional services financed by government to treat rather than empower the poor. We need a radical new policy that reexamines these service transfer payments in terms of their potential to promote new investment for competence. At the very least, poor families ought to have a choice between income or prepaid doctors who cost one third of their income.

2. Insuring a legitimate space for the family universe.

There is a social and economic space necessary to insure the working capacity of the family universe. Our public policy is biased against that space by favoring large scale corporations to the disadvantage of small scale family and neighborhood enterprises as well as the small family farm.

It appears that this administration, like its recent predecessors, sees the economy of the family as a trickle down beneficiary of large scale production systems. That policy has failed and will fail. Our cities are filled with desperate families unneeded by our corporate systems of production. But those families can make a life and renew our cities if you will allow and enable new tools and transfer authority so we can enfranchise families to produce rather than consume; to be the center of making rather than holding a cup to catch the trickles down from the great corporate and professional service systems. If you want to empower families, why not hold hearings on neighborhood economy, tools for community production, legal authority to create local energy management corporations and family enterprise?

3. Providing interim economic support for the survival of family life.

Out in our neighborhoods, until the first two policy initiatives are taken, many of our families will be forced to stand alone and depend on government money to survive. We are good at surviving. That is the greatest skill of our families. We have eaten lots of rice to fill our stomachs. We know the taste of dog food. We've worn your old clothes for years. We stand in line for everything. We have time. It's often a very bad life - but with our family, we survive. It's an old story.

What is new, what is absolutely outrageous is to hear our new government telling us we have to tighten our belt,

accuse us of cheating, suggest we're lazy and then ask why the family isn't strong.

Many of our isolated families will be forced to take new measures to survive in the face of the current attack on the real income of the poor family. Therefore, in neighborhood after neighborhood, we see the economy of last resort developing - the drug industry building its market system in the vacuum created by a government that puts urban neighborhoods last, poor families at the end.

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