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Seminar
PROCEEDINGS



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Foreword

Of all the crises affecting modern man, none is more pressing than the crisis in family life. Although the Christian Life Commission seeks to maintain a continuing concern for applying Christian principles in family life, there has been an increasing sense of urgency about the need for some specialized meeting in which national family life leaders and Southern Baptist leaders could be brought together. Plans for that specialized meeting were made in 1972 and brought to completion in the first part of 1973.

The conference on "A Future for the Family" was held in Charlotte, North Carolina, March 19-21, 1973. More than 700 registrants from across the nation heard and dialogued with an outstanding array of program personnel who brought professional expertise and Christian insights to bear on topics of special concern in the whole area of family life.

The addresses from "A Future for the Family" are provided in this printed form primarily as a reportorial service to the seminar registrants. Since the speakers prepared these addresses for oral presentation to a live audience, this material should not be judged as if it had been carefully written for formal publication in book form. It is hoped, however, that these printed messages will enable those not attending to learn from the authorities, sense the hope, profit from the discussions, and catch the insights that characterized the conference.

Special acknowledgment is due to the entire staff of the Christian Life Commission who worked long and hard to make this particular seminar a special success. As director of program development for the Commission, Dr. Elmer S. West, Jr. had the primary responsibility for planning and conducting this conference; and his clear insights and hard work deserve special tribute. Thanks are due, too, to Mrs. Faye Russell, who was responsible for the typing of manuscripts and the reading of proofs for this publication.

It is the Christian Life Commission's hope that these printed *Proceedings* may substantially enlarge the usefulness of the seminar and contribute to a larger Christian involvement in making "A Future for the Family."

FOY VALENTINE, Executive Secretary
The Christian Life Commission of the
Southern Baptist Convention

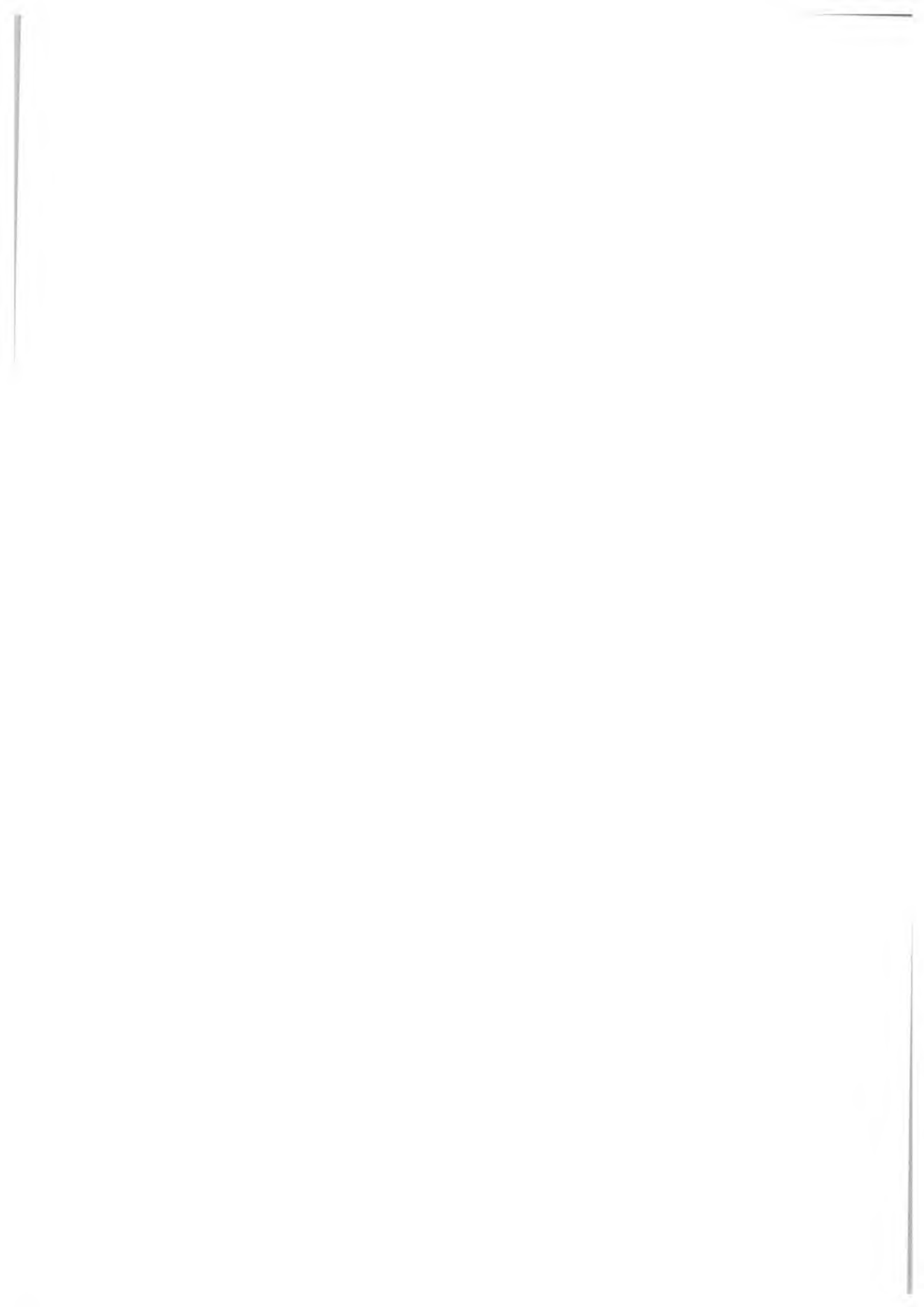


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I. "The Decline of Intimacy"

L. D. Johnson

Genesis 2:18-25

The need for intimacy is fundamental to the human spirit. Intimacy is relationship which permits persons to be themselves while sharing the lives of others involved with them. It is the experience of giving and receiving closeness and affirmation. Intimacy is not having a wall between you and those with whom you are involved, but a door which opens and closes without threat to the relationship.

The inspired parable of creation in Genesis expresses man's timeless need for intimacy and affirms our faith in the God who honors the need by providing a companion. "Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone.'" The state of being alone is ultimately dehumanizing. Man never fully overcomes his aloneness, but he cannot function if he never approximates it. Solitary confinement is still the most inhumane punishment.

Alone, Adam will not long be "adam," man. Thus God resolves to "make him a helper," to provide him a counterpart, a receiver and a sender of signals of his own humanness. "So out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air." The work was well done; the animals—creatures of the earth out of which man himself was formed—are his kinsmen. But there was no "helper," no companion for man, to give more than the strength of the ox, the beauty of the eagle soaring on the wing, the faithfulness of the dog, the entertaining chatter of the chipmunk, and the enthralling notes of the lark's song. He needed a helper. So God gave him one.

She was made woman, both sharing man's limitation and liberating him from it. His limitation was that he was man. Moreover, soon—and by the woman's consent (with typical male chauvinism, he said it was by her encouragement)—he took upon himself the terrible burden of sin. Her liberation of him was to bestow the incalculable gift of intimacy. He was not God—he tried that and found himself excluded from the Garden. And he was not of the lower animals. They could serve him, but they could not fulfill him. Only she who was both part of him and separate from him, could meet his need for intimacy, the union of spirit with spirit, flesh with flesh.

The simple statement of the mystery and wonder of that point-counterpoint, the two units which become a unity without losing their separate identities, has not been surpassed. "And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed." The Bible does not blush at sexuality. People have bodies and when male and female are brought together under God the sacramental union of their persons is en fleshed and actualized. Shame in a trust relationship expresses the sense of need to shield oneself from exposure to the other lest the trust be unable to hear the truth. Shame, like uncalled-for anger or fear or unexplained apathy, is the giveaway that something has interfered with the intimacy. The man and woman were wholly open to each other—naked—and they were not ashamed. It was sin which brought on the first case of false modesty. Sin produces fear, mistrust, the desire to conceal oneself. Guilt sewed together the fig leaves. We are all children of Adam.

Man is always torn between openness and covertness, between intimacy and self-defensive isolation. At this juncture in time I judge that intimacy is on the decline. This statement is made despite the evidence offered to prove the contrary, such as the popularity of widely varied and differently conducted group exercises in disrobing—figuratively or literally or both—in the presence of virtual strangers. Indeed, it appears likely that the desperate and compulsive need so many express to "tell all" to somebody who couldn't possibly care about them except on the most short-range and superficial basis, while being tongue-tied at the thought of discussing the most simple problem with those who do care deeply about them, is one of the clear indications of our contemporary loss of intimacy. Intimacy and exhibitionism are not the same thing.

There are logical explanations for the decline of intimacy. Some have to do with the kind of technological, computerized, dehumanized culture we are immersed in. Gibson Winter has put it eloquently: "Modern life has intensified our need for intimate relationships. It has also weakened our capacity to sustain an intimate relationship."¹

Genuineness in relationships is difficult to sustain in a climate where "fitting in" is cultivated and richly rewarded. Almost from the beginning of our life people let us know that things go better for us if we don't make waves and don't cause other people trouble. So we become experts very early at meeting other people's expectations.

In a superbly-written essay called "Nightwords," George Steiner deplors this technocratic assault on intimacy in these moving words: "Future historians may come to characterize the present era in the West as one of a massive onslaught on human privacy, on the delicate processes by which we seek to become our own singular selves, to hear the echo of our specific being. This onslaught is being pressed by the very conditions of an urban mass-technocracy, by the necessary uniformities of our economic and political choices, by the new electronic media of communication and persuasion, by the ever-increasing exposure of our thoughts and actions to sociological, psychological, and material intrusions and controls."²

Well, if the kind of world we live in makes intimacy less likely, the family ought to be dedicated more diligently to creating it. Unfortunately it, too, is more of a victim and a product of the culture than a defense against it. The family in far too many cases is part of the problem rather than being a solution. Many a modern home, with all its electrical miracles, is what Peter Bertocci has termed a "psychological slum-dwelling—not to say a spiritual orphanage"³ for its children. In such an atmosphere, Bertocci claims, a human being finds it difficult to do much more than keep alive.

Where intimacy between parents, if it ever happens at all, is only at the pelvic level it is something of a miracle if their children know how to give and receive love. Where there is no genuine exchange of being—life to life—from parent to parent, how can the experience of trust and responsibility be taught in the home? And if it is not taught there, where? People have a hard time giving what they have not received. The loveless home is not apt to produce loving offspring. The non-affirming, non-supporting home is not apt to

turn out self-confident, achieving and affirming children. The passive, indifferent home which does not show enough concern for its children to set rules for acceptable behavior, and reasonably enforce them, need not be surprised to produce children who return such passivity with deep hostility and often open scorn.

Why do you suppose that young people run away and join communes where the discipline is strict and life demanding? Why do they "shack up," rejecting marriage while living together with "my old man" or "my old lady"? The reason is clear. The commune is a substitute family. It is the family the youth needed but never experienced, the family that promises love to all members, shows affection and offers security from the world and at the same time makes demanding claims. And the sexual partner is a substitute father or mother, not a spouse, seeking to find in the same person a parent-figure and also a mate. Whether the principle binding the commune together is religion, drugs, occultism, or whatever, it is a form of pseudo-intimacy, a pathetic attempt to create family because families haven't been willing to be families.

There is a third reason why intimacy is declining. It is because our culture has been deceived into believing that sex is a morally neutral force which may be assigned whatever value one chooses to give it. Some identify sex with intimacy, supposing that the expression, "an intimate relationship," is only a euphemism for sex relations. Now, that is an obvious truncation of the meaning of intimacy, for intimacy has a great deal more to do with relationship than with glands. The fact of the matter is that two people, for whatever reason, may decide to have sexual relations who (1) don't even know each other's names, or (2) do know but despise each other and meet only genitally out of need, or (3) have no intention that their knowledge of each other and their feelings for each other shall ever be anything more than casual. Such people fail to see that sex alone never produces intimacy, although it can be a beautifully sacramental means of expressing intimacy.

To some, sex may never have any meaning other than a pleasant pastime, one's favorite indoor sport. Sex as recreation, the partner detachable, disposable, expendable, exchangeable, means an end to sexual intimacy. An unmistakable air of arrogance lies behind the self-righteous claims of sexual liberation. To reduce sexual intimacy to "fun and games," picking up a partner like asking "Anybody for tennis?", hoping to get a challenging participant but knowing that it is only a pick-up game not to be taken seriously, is to manifest an incredible naivete about one's capacity to hurt another human being, not to speak of the desensitizing and demeaning of oneself. As Peter Bertocci puts it: ". . . My answer to persons who talk about sex for fun, or sex without guilt, is that they could find no easier way to run sexual values to the ground . . . Human beings cannot be turned into . . . vending machines set up for 'refreshment' . . . where one dime does the job as well as another, or one bottle is like another."⁴

In *Love and Will*, Rollo May makes a fascinating and disturbing observation about our sexually-saturated culture. He says it has produced a new form of tyrannical puritanism, just as repressive as the old. The old Puritanism hovered over people with heavy clouds of guilt because they had sex; the new form of puritan-

ism looks at you pityingly if you don't. "What's wrong with you?" it asks condescendingly. Meanwhile, more and more of such "liberated" modern-day puritans confess the hollowness of existence, the absence of meaning in relationships, and perhaps worst of all—the total inability to get close to anyone. The new puritanism has not freed us to see and know each other more personally; it has (in May's words) "only shifted the fig leaf from the genitals to the face."⁵

T. S. Eliot captured the spirit of the new puritanism in the familiar lines from "The Waste Land" about the woman who has just had sex with her lover:

She turns and looks a moment in the glass,
Hardly aware of her departed lover;
Her brain allows one half-formed thought to pass;
"Well now that's done: and I'm glad it's over."
When lovely woman stoops to folly and
Paces about her room again, alone,
She smooths her hair with automatic hand,
And puts a record on the Gramophone.⁶

I must say that my own experience as a college chaplain confirms that we are seeing in the new liberated puritans the diminution of intimacy, the lessening of the meaning of love-making, the anesthesia of sexual love which has become non-involved, non-committing and non-expressive of caring. The most desperately lonely person I know is a student who brags that his present quota of "scores" is four a week, hopefully with four different women. He is bored by repeat performances. He is so lonely and empty sometimes I fear he may kill himself.

The sense of the bankruptcy of intimacy through the devaluation of sex as an act of love is poignantly stated in a contemporary novel. A man who has lived a sexually-permissive, amoral life returns to where his parents lie buried in the family graveyard. He is thinking about the difference between his life-style and that of his parents, and he muses: "My father had a genuine capacity for love. All people felt it, though only my mother possessed it. For him there was never another woman . . . Not so with me . . . Somehow I had never experienced the tender, gentle love my father had for my mother . . . I could be with a woman and satisfy both her and myself, saturating our senses to the point of complete exhaustion, and yet after it was over, I would again be alone. And so would she . . . We were like strangers on a brief voyage, exchanging a polite pleasantry, giving each other a small comfort because soon the voyage would be over."⁷

If intimacy is threatened by a noisy, blatant, uncaring and impersonal clamor for self-gratification, can it be restored to its rightful role? If it can, it will be by a restoration of the family as the center where love is experienced, where persons are cared for and taught self-respect and respect for others. And, I am convinced, by a return to the God who made the two to be the one flesh.

¹ Gibson Winter, *Love and Conflict*, (Dolphin Books, Doubleday & Co., Inc., Garden City, N.Y., 1958) p. 73.

² George Steiner, *Language and Silence*, (Atheneum, N.Y., 1967) p. 76.

³ Peter A. Bertocci, *Sex Love and the Person* (Sheed and Ward: N.Y., 1967) p. 7.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

⁵ Rollo May, *Love and Will* (W. W. Norton & Co., Inc.; N.Y., 1969) p. 57.

* T. S. Eliot, *Collected Poems, 1909-1935* (Faber & Faber [paper edition] London, 1958) p. 70.

⁷ Harold Robbins, *The Adventurers*, (pocket edition, Simon & Shuster, Inc., N.Y., 1968) pp. 634, 635.

II. "Commitment: Conditional or Unconditional?"

L. D. Johnson

Mark 10:2-12

What about marriage—is it for as long as we both shall live, or as long as we enjoy being together, or until one or the other finds someone else more exciting? We Christians appeal to religious sanctions for marriage—"instituted by God who saw that it was not well that man should dwell alone." But we do not hold title to the institution, for most of the human race shares with us respect for marriage as the best means of establishing and developing happy and fulfilling relationships and of producing and nurturing children.

Further, despite the rising tide of divorce (about 400,000 per year in the United States currently) and despite the commonplace reality of miserable, hostile homes, and despite the spectacular and lurid fringe elements of society practicing various forms of communal marriage, or flaunting marriage altogether and bedding down wherever it may be done without the inconvenience of responsibility—despite all evidence to the contrary, the institution of marriage is probably here to stay.

The November 17, 1972, issue of *Life* magazine summarized 62,000 responses to an earlier questionnaire in *Life* concerning marriage. Eighty percent of those responding rated their marriages either "happy" or "very happy." The happiest group, interestingly enough, were those over fifty. The least satisfied, although not drastically so, were those between thirty and forty-nine. Curiously, the same people who reported that they were happy in marriage said that other marriages they knew about were either only "all right" or "unhappy." Only twelve percent thought other people were "very happy." One may conjecture about the meaning of that judgment concerning the state of other people's marriages that folks generally, or at least those who reply to magazine questionnaires, tend to think that the real problem is "other people." But all in all, the replies obtained by *Life* showed remarkable support of traditional marriage concepts. Perhaps before we conduct the funeral for marriage, we had better look around. "Marriage, like God, is not dead," one of *Life's* respondents wrote.

Nevertheless, the question of unconditional marriage is by no means closed, as every minister and counselor has an abundance of evidence to show. Families, as well as individual persons are subjected to pressures peculiar to an era of change proceeding at a dizzy pace. The anonymity of city life, whether in the high-rise or the suburb, the splintering of family solidarity as each member seeks amusement and social nourishment in some specialized group, rising affluence alongside a decline in devotion to family-centered activities—all these put a strain on the family. Three or four years ago the director of the controversial play,

"Oh! Calcutta," asked by *Time* magazine what he saw as the social significance of such plays as his, replied in part: "What we're seeing now is a kind of decay and destruction of the Judeo-Christian society with its ethics and values. . . . The civilization that we're moving into is one that cannot sustain two people in a bedroom all by themselves for forty years."¹

I do not propose to dress that fellow in the prophet's mantle, but I do suggest that we cannot afford to take for granted that the Christian ideal of unconditional marriage is unchallenged. Marriage is here to stay. Its form, its conditions, its stability cannot be assumed. The simple truth is that many a home is a poor recommendation for marriage and a destructive environment for those in it, especially children. How can we prevent marriages from becoming crippled and how can we heal some which are already blighted?

The place for Christians to begin is at the teachings of our Lord. How did he see marriage? Well, it will come as no surprise to any of you that he understood it to be an unconditional relationship. "What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder." Such a pronouncement presumes that God has been involved in the covenant-making. God has had a hand in this coupling, not to be achieved by repeating holy words at an altar, but only by living together in holy obedience. What, then, about divorce? Did not Moses allow a man to put his wife away by legal means? Jesus was once asked. Yes, he replied, but such a concession was only in recognition of the hardness of your hearts, your sinfulness. "From the beginning it was not so." God did not so intend.

Jesus thus lifts the matter out of the realm of legalism and puts it where it ought to be, in the realm of intention, purpose. What does God intend for man and woman? The answer is plain: unconditional fidelity and support of the relationship. He wants two people who, committed to each other, have once and for all settled the question of identity and loyalty and who, having made such a covenant, are prepared to provide the security of a home in which both they and their offspring may discover stability, fulfillment, and love.

Divorce, then, in Jesus' view is not a desirable option. There are no Christian "grounds" for divorce. Divorce is concession to human selfishness and lovelessness. It is the evidence that we have not fulfilled the intention of God. It is, in plain words, infidelity to a sacred covenant. But people are guilty of infidelity to God and to their marriages who never consider divorce. Divorce may be less sinful than remaining in a twisted, hatefilled, unsupporting or apathetic marriage.

The point is that neither option—divorce or remaining in a crippling marriage—exhausts the possibilities. We can make better marriages, and we can help ailing ones, if we will. I would like to suggest some of the ways in which this is done by people who take their marriages seriously.

The basic condition of the marriage covenant is commitment. One can almost say that the first and last condition of marriage is commitment. Only by the alchemy of commitment can the stresses and strains, the griefs and the disappointments, the misunderstandings and the differences of purpose of two people living together in life's most demanding relationship

be converted into the fine gold of an enduring companionship. "Be sure you know what you're doing," we admonish. "Look before you leap. Find the right person before you marry." We say all those things, and they are well-meant, even wise—though in most instances useless. But the truth is, of course, that no one can be certain that a marriage will be a good one, for marriages, contrary to American romanticism, are not made in heaven. Good marriages are made right here on earth by men and women who have covenanted with one another to create a home where their two lives, and the lives of any children they may have, may grow and be fulfilled.

Last week a young woman who trusts and confides in me came to talk about moving in with the man she hopes some day to marry. They are not ready yet, she said, to take on the commitment of marriage primarily because there are some problems they haven't worked out. One is sexual. The sex experiences they have shared have left her frustrated and upset. As a consequence, she feels "edgy" around him, even resentful at times, and finds herself "picking" on him and cutting him down. So they decided that the way to find out if they could make a go of marriage was for her to move into his apartment and let them have a try at it without benefit of clergy, and without legal entanglements inconvenient to get out of. What did I think about it?

"Do you really love each other and would you like for your marriage to be a good one?" I asked her. "Certainly," she said. "We've been going together since high school. I sure have wasted a lot of time if I'm not serious by now." "Then you don't want to do what you are proposing, for that is the surest way I know to foul-up a relationship, especially one that may have some sexual problems to work out." What they were proposing was to abandon the emotional, spiritual, familial, and even legal supports and encouragements that marriage brings. What they were doing was to leave the back door noticeably open. I tried to say that every marriage has problems to be coped with, adjustments to be made. Anytime you say, "Well, I'll try this only so long as things go well," you have already made success less likely.

A second condition for a good marriage is the willingness of the marriage partners to create their own workable union. Marriage is a process, an achievement, a system. It may be a poor system, or one that hasn't kept pace with the family's changing needs, or one in which one or both of the partners are disloyal. But it is a system, a "transaction." Enduring human relationships depend upon the interplay of behavior which signals to each spouse that whatever is happening in the home has the nature of giving and receiving. To live in reasonable harmony, marriage partners negotiate about responsibilities, behavior, rewards. We have a folksy saying that, "You can't expect to get your own way all the time." The couple that admits to no clashes is either one of those rare duos which Lederer and Jackson in *Mirages of Marriage* facetiously call "The Heavenly Twins,"²² or else somebody is getting squelched and destroyed as a person. Then, of course, there is the likely possibility that somebody is lying about their marriage.

Good marriages are those where continuing negotiation and adjustment of responsibility and reward are

the routine agenda. A young bride put it picturesquely for Dr. Jackson in *Mirages*. She said marriage was like taking off in an airplane for Florida and having the plane land in Switzerland, expecting sunshine and swimming and getting cold and snow.²³ It wasn't that it was bad, but that it was unexpected. The couple not flexible enough to adapt to life's constant change is in for a hard time.

My third ingredient for a good marriage may be stated simply and briefly, but I hope will not be dismissed lightly. People stay reasonably happy with each other only if they truly like each other. Sex is great, and happy is that marriage where the partners have a deep, free and unselfish sexual relationship. But there is an awful lot of time to be spent out of bed. And those who find that sort of situation stress-producing and unpleasant are to be pitied. "Be sure to marry a friend," I tell young people.

But what if you are already married to someone who is not a friend, someone you sleep with but have no genuine relationship with? What do you do then? Well, you ask yourself, "How do I make friends with this person I'm married to?" That sounds terribly oversimplified, but it has more sense to it than a great many marriage manuals on how to be as desirable as Sophia Loren or Steve McQueen.

How do I make friends? After all, I must have thought that this person I'm married to had some admirable traits when I married him. How can we return to find what we have lost? What common ground can we meet on? What interests can we share if we will take the time and make the effort? Are we willing to risk, or are we so locked into pride, self-pity and hostility that we don't want to give any of it up? "Giving up something to get something," where have we heard that before?

Reuel Howe, in *The Creative Years*, a book that really reaches me, begins with a man named Dick Foster who is riding the commuter train home. As the train stops at station after station, Foster watches other men get off to be greeted by their wives and/or children. He notes that many, like himself, are greeted perfunctorily and without evidence of caring. But he sees one couple meet each other with joy and gladness that radiate from their embrace. And Foster is touched by the sight of their embrace and saddened, too, as he reflects upon his own marriage. He wonders what those people have that he and his wife don't. "I wish Julie and I could find it, whatever it is," he muses. "I think we still love each other, but I'm afraid we don't get the idea across to each other. We don't have any time for each other any more. Living stands between us, and we can't seem to get around it to find each other."²⁴

How many of us have permitted "living to stand between us"! And now there is such distance that it is hard to overcome. Some couples are scarcely within shouting range of each other affectively. Things have kept coming between them—old hurts and unfulfilled dreams, absent-minded neglect and unresolved resentments—but most of all just the erosion of time and circumstance, until it has appeared impossible to close the gap of mutual isolation. But we can find ways of bridging the chasms of a marriage of strangers. By taking the risk of being "present" to one another, actually looking at one another, listening to one an-

other, and by our behavior—if words are hard to come by—expressing our need for one another and our longing for companionship.

There are doubtless many other aspects of the unconditional marriage that need adding, but there is one other which I believe to be crucial. A good marriage is one in which people welcome the polarity in marriage of intimacy and solitude. The Clinebells, in *The Intimate Marriage*, make a good deal of this point, and perhaps Dr. Clinebell will mention it when he speaks. But no matter, it can stand repetition. I believe in the importance of friendship between husband and wife, as I have just tried to say, but I am wary of the kind of "togetherness" which is often little more than a compulsive clinging by one to the other or by each to the other. Husbands and wives need to be persons in their own right if they are to have any personhood to share with their mate or with their children. I do not like the popular song which claims that "people who need people are the luckiest people in the world." That bothers me, because it suggests a kind of dependency, a kind of suction-pump action that needs to draw other people to itself lest it not be able to function alone. I think people do need people, all right, but the person who gets married out of a deep sense of dependency may not have very much to bring to the union. To say "I can't live without you" is not necessarily a compliment either to yourself or to the victim of your possessive need. If you lack the ego strength to be a person in your own right, I doubt that you are going to be much help to your spouse. I often tell young people that you are not fit to live with anybody if you aren't fit to live alone.

The mystery of married love is a wonder to behold and something indescribable to experience. There is a quality about it that defies explanation. It cannot be programmed or scheduled. No manual could teach Jacob to love Rachel so much that those seven years he served Laban for her "seemed to him but a few days." But neither is a loving and fulfilling marriage relationship a "happening." It is the product of the conscious efforts of two people who know who and where they are in life and who have committed themselves to the regular daily, high-priority task of building a lasting relationship of friendship and trust, of common dreams and disappointments, of mutually borne griefs and mutually shared joys, and of openness to one another which does not smother or deny personhood.

¹ *Time* magazine, July 11, 1969, p. 65.

² William J. Lederer & Don D. Jackson, *The Mirages of Marriage*, (W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., N.Y., 1968). See Chapter 15.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁴ Reuel L. Howe, *The Creative Years*, (The Seabury Press, Greenwich, Conn., 1959) p. 8.

III. "The Blessed and the Unblessed"

L. D. Johnson

Genesis 27:30-38

In a certain family it was the custom to share a

brief passage from the Bible at breakfast. One day the head of the house was reading from Paul's letter to the Ephesians and came across an unexpected goody at the beginning of the sixth chapter: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." Pausing to glance up over his bifocals at his 16-year-old son across the table, he said: "Son, that's a good text for today. Let me read it again." And he did. Then he went on unaware that he had booby-trapped himself. When he came to the fourth verse of that chapter he found himself reading: "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger." Quick as a flash the son interrupted: "Hey, Dad, that's a good text for today. Read that again!"

I don't want to talk about the generation gap. The subject is wearisome and largely meaningless, the endless recurrence of a fact of life. Instead, let us look at the divinely-given ability and responsibility of the parent to bestow wholeness upon his child. *You, a parent, have the power to bless your child, or you may withhold blessing and leave him unblessed, which is in effect to curse him.*

The Bible is full of examples of the unique power of the parent to bless or curse his child. Take, for example, that poignant moment when blind, aging Isaac realizes that his wife Rebecca has conspired to secure the father's irrevocable blessing for her favorite, the mama's boy, Jacob, the younger son. Not much pity is spent on outraged Esau seething in his bitter disappointment. The future lay with Jacob. Why worry about Esau? But do spare a thought for him. Try to identify with his feelings. True, he had despoiled his birthright. That was a bad mistake, but do not begrudge him his grief over being deprived of his father's blessing.

The father's blessing carried great significance, determining the character and destiny of the recipient. Blessing was as salutary as cursing was destructive. Once spoken, like an arrow sped, the power of blessing or cursing could not be recalled.

Little wonder that Esau cried out "with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, 'Bless me, even me also, O my father!'" The first-born's blessing was gone forever. Jacob, with his mother's scheming, had it. But must Esau be wholly bereft? "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?" he asked. "Have you but one blessing?" Does the father bless only one of his children, and not all? Has he not enough to go around?

"Bless even me," cries the unblessed child, the alienated and unloved child. Don't just look for him in a poor, rundown house. Chances are he may reside in a \$100,000 residence with a car for each member of the family and a second house at the lake. But no matter where he lives, something within the unblessed child cries out to his parent, "Have you no blessing for me?" No one can do without blessing. Somebody must bestow upon us the affirmation, the "You're OK," without which we can never say "I'm OK." To withhold blessing is to pronounce a curse. And to live under a curse is a heavy burden.

A time came in Jacob's life when he needed blessing himself. And the person he had to get it from was the very person whose blessing he had stolen, his brother Esau. A lot of years had gone by since that awful day when Esau would have killed Jacob if he

could have found him. Now rich in goods and family, Jacob has to come back home, scene of his wrongdoing, to make peace with a memory in order to regain the sense of the blessing. Isaac is dead. Now it is Esau, the wronged brother, who must lift the curse off Jacob and give the blessing.

In such a troubled spirit Jacob comes to Jabbok and wrestles all night with that mysterious stranger whom Genesis calls simply "a man." Who is this man? Who but the personification of a wrong long ago perpetrated and now to be faced? Is Jacob face to face with a past he once supposed would never bother him? Can he be blessed unless Esau release him? All night Jacob wrestles with "the man," and will not let him go, not even when wounded in the thigh and left thereafter with a limp, painful reminder of the cost of that encounter. Tenaciously he clings, demanding to be blessed. How can he ever go home again without the sense of blessing? "I will not let you go," he cried desperately, "unless you bless me."

And when he got the blessing, Jacob was all right. He called the place "Peniel," face of God, for he said, "I have seen God face to face." And when he met Esau that day, Jacob searched his brother's eyes and discovered forgiveness and acceptance, not what he deserved—vengeance—and he said to Esau: "To see your face is like seeing the face of God." The reality of God breaks through in such a transaction between the forgiver and the forgiven, the accepting and the accepted, the blessing and the blessed.

The "power to bless" it is called by Myron Madden, whose stimulating lectures on this subject and book by that title have enriched my thought. All who have influence and weight with others have the power to bless and to withhold blessing—to cause to grow or wither, to help or hinder, heal or hurt. Madden holds that "blessing" and "cursing" are a vivid reality in the lives of all people, must especially in parent-child relationships. He believes that the man who can "speak the deep word of forgiveness and acceptance is a healer of the highest order because he removes the deepest malady, the inner feeling of curse and condemnation."

No one has greater power to bless than the parent. And no one can devastate the child's life as the parent by withholding blessing. How can we bless our children? You may have your ways and they may not fully coincide with mine, but let me count some ways.

For one thing, *we bless when we communicate love.* We do this in a variety of manners—the general climate in the home (friendly or hostile, warm or cold, relaxed or tense), the presence of understood though inarticulate assurance of a secure and permanent family relationship, the supportive attention of the parent to the child's basic needs for adequate food, clothing, health care and education, the things said and left unsaid, the behavior of parents when "the chips are down," the times of crisis. All of these communicate love, but there is another way which should not be overlooked. Love in a family needs demonstration in word and deed. Of course, it is possible to talk about love and not love, and some people do seem to be afflicted with an obnoxious need to slobber on everybody who is even a slight acquaintance. But the American family is not endangered by too much demonstrative affection. On the contrary, most of us

adults are so uptight about our bodies that parents and their children sometimes act embarrassed even about shaking hands.

People who touch and embrace their children are saying in a very important language that physical feelings are wholesome and acceptable. People who don't feel comfortable showing affection are apt to drive such feelings in their children underground. After all, if your child gets the message from you that affection is a no-no he can only feel negatively and morbidly curious about it. Parents who are comfortable with affection between themselves and with their children go a long way toward enabling them to deal with their own feelings and to develop wholesome relationships outside the home. A little girl who has her father's blessing in the form of affection is not apt to leave the home with a love-starved ego needing to be reassured that she is OK.

A second way to bless your child is *to meet him "face to face."* Time is a commodity in short supply and great demand for today's adult. Our schedule is so tightly organized that some of us get behind if we miss a section of a revolving door. That we all have the same amount of time is a truism. The trick, indeed, is in the way we organize our time and in the priorities we set. That is one good habit, among many, about which I preach better than I practice. Nonetheless, *a sure way of blessing a child is for the significant adults in his life to give him time.*

In his youth, Brooks Adams, son of Charles Francis Adams, former ambassador to Great Britain, made this entry in his diary: "Went fishing with my father—the most glorious day of my life." So great was the influence of that one day's personal relationship with his father that for thirty years afterwards he made repeated references in his diary to his memory of the occasion. The other side of the story is sad. The father, curiously enough, had also written in his diary about that day of fishing, but his comment had been: "Went fishing with my son. A day wasted."

More important than the volume of time is the quality of attentive looking, listening and speaking invested by the parent in the occasion. I remember hearing a woman tell of her relationship with her busy father. She said that there were a half dozen children, but when he came home he spent some time with each one of them alone, usually only a few minutes. But during those minutes every faculty he possessed—looking, listening, thinking, responding—was brought to bear upon that child. It was a rich and enduring experience. The quality of the relationship may be the source of great blessing.

Emily, in *Our Town*, allowed to come back from the dead to Groves Corners to re-live her twelfth birthday, cries out to her mother what must be the unspoken plea of many a child. "Oh, Mama, just look at me one minute as though you really saw me." To look at another, not *by* him or *through* him or *around* him, is a gift very hard for some of us to bestow, most especially upon the people in our own household.

A third way to bless your child is *to support him with expectations from you*, expectations that reflect his stage of physical, emotion and spiritual maturity. Put plainly, I'm talking about *rules and discipline.* Everybody needs to know what his contract is, what

is expected of him. Children have the right to expect certain things from their parents. Deprived of these expectations, there is trouble in the camp. And one of the things children and adolescents need, expect, and even want is to know where the fences are located. Nothing is more demoralizing than to live in a nebulous environment. Any spouse knows that a surefire way to frustrate your mate is just to leave everything hanging. Never reach a decision or say "yes" or "no."

But somehow or other the crazy notion has gotten around that saying "yes" and "no" to one's child is an act of brutality to his tender little ego. Just the opposite is the truth. Haim Ginott often makes his point by citing a delightful incident, but he is dead serious when he writes: "When a child is allowed behavior that he knows should not be tolerated, his anxiety mounts. An eight-year-old boy who had been allowed to hang on the back of a moving bus accused his mother of not loving him: 'If you really cared about me, you wouldn't have let me take that chance of getting killed.'"¹

Not only is such abdication of responsibility demoralizing to character growth because it gives the child nothing to go by or struggle with, but it is a terrible way to prepare him to live in a world where expectations and performance are among the essentials. I talk to a great many students who are nearly paralyzed by their inability to cope with any kind of orderliness or disciplined effort. They have been short-changed by parents either too naive or too selfish to realize what great damage a permissive, ruleless upbringing has done. I am confident that children who are permitted to grow up overprivileged, underloved, and never denied, are excellent candidates to be crippled adults unable to cope with choosing a career and paying the price to make a go of it. Further, they are apt to "get even" with their parents for ignoring them as children by adopting a dependent life-style which makes them a chronic burden upon society.

"I'm glad my mother doesn't let me do everything I want to do," a teen-age girl once said in my presence. What a beautiful way of putting the adolescent dilemma! He both wants and doesn't want. He kicks against the fence and sometimes he jumps over it, or kicks it down! And of course there come times when the location of the fence needs to be renegotiated. And none of that is easy. It is stressful and nerve-racking. But that is the way to healthy values of love and respect between members of the generations. The parent strong enough to stand his ground, keep his voice and temper under reasonable control, be firm but not inflexible, friendly but neither manipulative nor manipulated, and be prepared to have both hate and love heaped upon him—even simultaneously—will bless his child.

There are many ways to bless your children, but I must suggest one other. A parent blesses his children by the *congruence between what he professes to the world and what he practices at home*. At least the two ought to be within speaking distance of each other. There is enough truth in the accusation of parental hypocrisy to give us pause.

Nothing is gained by arguing that one generation is more hypocritical than the other. There is plenty to go around. The simple truth is that a parent who

is an authentic human being is a great blessing to his children. It is better for our children to see what we are really like, "warts and all," than to give them some phony image of a self that doesn't exist and which will some day be exposed and either pitied or despised.

In *Death of a Salesman* Arthur Miller makes that point painfully clear. Willy Loman never wanted his wife and two sons to see him as he was, for Willy could not admit to himself who he was. This world of make-believe, despite the mother's efforts to normalize the family situation, distorted the lives of both sons. At last, unable any longer to cope, Willy takes his own life. The family gathers at his grave and the kindest thing that his son, Biff, can say of his father is "He never knew who he was."²

It is tragic not to know who you are, but it may be more destructive to your children never to let them have a glimpse of the real "you." When they discover who you are, then you must bless them additionally by releasing them from the guilt of not being able to admire everything about you. Happy is that child who when he asks, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?" hears his parent say, "Yes, my child, I bless you."

¹ Myron C. Madden, *The Power to Bless*, (Abingdon, N.Y., 1970.) *preface*.

² Howe, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-23.

³ Thornton Wilder, *Our Town*, (Coward-McCann, Inc., N.Y., 1938) p. 123.

⁴ Haim G. Ginott, *Between Parent and Child*, (Macmillan & Co., N.Y., 1965) p. 98.

⁵ Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*, (Viking Press, N.Y., 1949) p. 138.

IV. "What to Do When the House Is on Fire"

L. D. Johnson

On election day when I was six our house burned down. My grandfather had been to vote and we were sitting at the dinner table, served by my grandmother from a wheel chair to which she had been confined for some weeks, when neighbors burst in to tell us that flames and smoke were billowing out the upstairs windows. Grandpa ran to the door which enclosed the stairway of the frame house he had built with his own hands, tore the door open and as quickly slammed it shut when he saw the fire eating its way down the stairs. They herded the three grandchildren they were rearing—my two brothers and me—out into the yard with my grandmother, who when somebody yelled "fire" ran out of the house and left her wheelchair to burn up. She never went back to it.

With the children and the woman safely out, the men began to move things out in the yard before the roof caved in. What a motley assortment of odds and ends they saved! An old iron wood-burning cookstove that must have weighed a half ton, a few beat-up chairs, a bureau, and a mattress. And that was about all. We didn't have many valuable goods in that Oklahoma farmhouse, but such as the family owned went up in flames along with the house.

People characteristically do strange things when the house is on fire. They panic and lose perspective. And it seems to be true of a culture in an era of crisis. When the house is on fire some people just stand off and shout, "The house is on fire!" We always have more than our quota of such announcers in the pulpit. Some come to lend a hand, but like my grandpa and his neighbors, what they save from the fire may not always represent the wisest choices.

I take it that one of the purposes of this conference is to reflect upon the conflagration that threatens the family-culture of America. A great deal has been said about it here and elsewhere, and there is much to be said. We talk about delinquency and divorce, VD and problem pregnancy, premarital and extra-marital sex, new marriage styles, the surfacing of the homosexual, and a great many other problems. But there is no way to carry everything out of the house—at least not this afternoon.

One thing which strikes me as elemental is the uselessness of hand-wringing. I belong to a study-group called the "The 39 Club," an incredible misnomer inasmuch as the average age of the members is close to twice 39. I'm the third youngest of the seventeen, so judge for yourself. When someone reads a paper on current events in this eating-and-reading association, I can always predict the tenor of the discussion which follows. Certain gentlemen will lapse into reverie about how it was in the good old days. This reference is always pre-FDR, and usually to the inspiring era of Warren Gamaliel Harding. Even if their reminiscences could be demythologized one would want to ask, "What has that to do with this particular historical moment?"

I think I am ready to say that at least one of the major crises of today among youth revolves about the issues of role and goal. An increasing number of young people I am seeing, both male and female, are floundering because they have no clear perception of who they are and where they want to go. If you are thirty or above you are a rare specimen if you have much personal acquaintance with the role-goal crisis.

I may sound now like my septuagenarian colleagues, but beyond the age of 16 or 15 I did not have much of a role-goal crisis. My major concern was how I looked in the hand-me-down clothes I inherited from relatives and whether or not I would be able to get an education so that I could fulfill my known calling to be a preacher. The goal problem was settled. And knowing what I was to do with my life gave me a meaning, a context, my own place. That settled the role problem.

Now, this seems so transparently obvious that I suspect we find it hard to be patient with young people who look at us with bewilderment and say, "I haven't the vaguest notion about the meaning of life or what I want to do." Further, we men—male chauvinists and over thirty at that—may find it hard to take that some of these lovely sweet young things, looking so soft and fragile, are actually pretty tough-minded women who threaten the daylights out of a lot of males their age. We are offended that they aren't panting to get married and have babies. They believe that they have intelligence, intuition and will to match any man in his own world, and they don't mind telling you so.

If you want to deal with a real crisis, this is one, the role-goal crisis, affecting both males and females. Toward women, men are struggling with the necessity to revise the traditionally male-dominant and aggressive role to one of greater equality. Sometimes this comes out as passivity, the male not knowing how to deal with this female who doesn't walk two steps behind him.

As far as goal is concerned, we are seeing a different kind of college student from the angry con-fronter of the middle sixties. This student doesn't challenge. He withdraws. When he realizes one day in his last year or last term in college that he is about to lose his shelter from the cruel hard world he may suddenly decide that he doesn't want to finish college. He gets the "I don't know what I want to do" disease and pulls out. Since we all have to find a scapegoat, his is that the college is not relevant. What he really wants is to escape from having to make a decision . . . about role and goal.

Women often face the same dilemma. By far the majority of them have not joined women's lib. Most of them still think in traditional terms of marriage, home, family and possibly a full-time career. For most a diamond is a far greater prize than a fellowship to grad school. Nevertheless, the times they are a changing! Women are less dependent upon male approval. I salute them for their independence. But they do threaten men. They don't like to be called aggressive, but that is the way many are coming across to men, even at good old Magnolia U.

Let me give an example. A junior man I'm seeing is having a hard time. He hasn't the slightest idea about what he wants to do with his life. I ask him if he could project himself into some situation twenty years hence where would it be. He answers that he can't see himself being anywhere twenty years from now. I suspect that he is depressed and wonder what else is going on. Not having a goal is enough to make you feel pretty low, but he seems to be working on some other agenda, too.

He is. There is this girl he likes a lot. Here he has to stop because he is weeping. He cares for her deeply but she doesn't want to be tied down to him. Well, is that so bad? Maybe it wouldn't be except for something that happened recently. She went to the beach and spent the weekend with another guy. He's sure they slept together but can't get up the nerve to ask her. She herself told him about the weekend, then left him dangling about what happened. She said she liked both of them and didn't want to choose either one.

I watch and listen to this handsome guy and I think, "How many times have I heard this story, punctuated by the sobbing, but what is different is that it is coming from a man, not a woman." Women are supposed to be the ones who cling, who get the shaft from uncaring men who like to play around and not settle on one girl.

One snowflake doesn't warrant announcement of a blizzard, but this kind of experience, together with some other things I see happening, takes place enough to make one think that we have a real problem concerning role and goal. The problem is double-barrelled. It has to do with work and it has to do with selfhood. I believe that our current cultural condition is creating

confusion for both men and women. Men are troubled about careers, and their problems are compounded by the emergence of a new kind of woman. Women are troubled, and sometimes overreact, because they are experiencing a mixture of reward and frustration in their struggle with the role-goal question in a new context.

What is to be done to make smoother the transition to an equalitarian society? Well, as trite as it sounds, somebody needs to keep his head on straight. A lot of wild and silly things are being said and written about women's liberation, black revolution, gay liberation, and the decline of the Anglo-Saxon male. Remember the story that came out of England during the first uncertain days of the atom bomb. A card was issued by the government giving instructions on what to do in case an atom bomb fell in their neighborhood. The first instruction was: "Remain calm."

We Americans are notorious for over-reacting. Maybe it is because we have a short national history; perhaps we are such romantic idealists. For whatever reason, we hear of a problem and rush out to shoot a mouse with an eight-inch cannon. Somewhere I read a homely comment made by Khrushchev to newsmen in New York to the effect that the human race is like a drunk who, after he falls off one side of his horse, gets up and falls off the other side. We do a lot of falling off first one side and then the other. There is a problem. Women, with or without the women's lib movement, will never again confine themselves to the role of baby-factory, nursery attendant and housekeeper. It is a new day, and I celebrate it.

Further, we must recognize the crisis for what it is, a crisis in meaning. In a time of upheaval, values get tossed into the air and people have a hard time sorting them out. The late William Temple once said that our world is like a shop window into which some mischievous person has crawled at night and changed all the price tags, putting the cheap prices on the expensive articles and the expensive prices on the cheap ones. One could almost go further with the analogy and say that the price tags have all been removed and we have no notion of the worth of any item.

A student says, "I'm dropping out." "OK," you answer, "but tell me why." He may ask in return, "Why not?" At another time you could have said to him, "Because you'll never get a responsible place in society without a college degree." Today he asks you, "Who needs a responsible place?" I don't know all the answers, and I have plenty of failures to document that statement. But I am not confused about the question. Somewhere along the way there has been a slippage in values.

A third thing we as Christians can do is to recognize that role and goal are interrelated. The way a person perceives his place in society has a good deal to do with his satisfaction with himself as a person. I am aware of current disapproval of any functional definition of a person, any tendency to suggest that he gets his worth from the work he does. Bill Russell, the former star center and coach of the Boston Celtics (I just identified his role by his goal), recently told the students at our college, "I'm not a basketball player. I'm a man who plays basketball." That's beautiful, and I understand. But I also know that if it hadn't

been for basketball and his being seven feet tall Bill Russell wouldn't be pulling down handsome fees for appearances on college campuses. That is a simple fact of life.

What we can do to help young people is to communicate by example as well as by precept that you can't separate the meaning of your life from the place you plug in with your work. A lot of people are sitting around staring at their navels and asking themselves. "Who am I?" who have paralyzed themselves with this kind of narcissistic self-induced hypnosis until if somebody doesn't give them a shove they are going to go on squatting on the premises and collecting their welfare checks while contributing nothing toward the solution of the world's problems.

The fourth thing which family, church and school can do to help us adjust to our kind of world is to come to realize that equalitarian concepts are not only consistent with the Gospel of Jesus Christ but are demanded by that Gospel if it is faithfully preached and practiced. We still have a long way to go in the church and community before we have faced up to the racial inequalities of our society, but no less do we need to come to grips with our attitude toward the rights of women. It is not a calamity that women are no longer content to be only missionaries, school teachers or housewives. Those are valid aspects of our society, but they do not exhaust the possibilities of roles where women may function capably. The tradition is changing. Like the myth of black incompetence, the myth about "man's work and woman's work" is fortunately disappearing.

Let home, church and school bend an effort to understand what is happening and help men to feel comfortable with it. We need to stop snickering about women in business or professional life. Let us bury the myth of male superiority, or the notion that the man who is not totally the breadwinner for his family is a failure, or that the man who helps his wife with the rearing of the children is a henpecked weakling. There isn't too much verifiable evidence has been accumulated yet concerning the effects upon the family of the equalitarian philosophy. What evidence there is indicates that it may have a salutary effect, making the family more interdependent. The equalitarian marriage may prove to be the way to a happier, more team-conscious family life.

One aspect of the issue of woman's role as wife or career woman has bothered me for a long time, that is our society's way of penalizing the unmarried male or female. We are such a marriage-oriented culture that we seem unable to regard the unmarried as better than unfortunate victims of a dread disease or else the discards at the matrimonial rummage sale.

Most people are going to be married—some more than once (which is what Samuel Johnson once wryly called, "The triumph of hope over experience"). And I certainly believe that it is the opportunity and privilege of the home, church and school to encourage young people to build their lives together as equals in marriage. But some people are not going to marry, and they deserve better from the rest of us who are married than to be treated as pathetic abnormal misfits or love-starved rejects.

The crisis of today's youth is fundamentally a crisis of meaning. Who am I and what am I going to do?

are the questions that bother him. If he is male, he may feel the additional pressure of his female counterpart who, far from being a shy little flower, has been proved to be tougher, longer-lived, sexually more potent, and quite able to compete with him at almost anything he does—except perhaps professional football. The sooner we in the church realize that this is the world we have on our hands, the sooner we may be prepared to address ourselves to the crises of role and goal.

V. "Hebrew-Christian Geriatrics"

L. D. Johnson

Leviticus 19:32; Proverbs 20:29

This sermon about the church's and family's concern for people in the last stages of their lives began kicking around in my head recently when I heard a black minister friend preaching to his congregation about grandmothers. That stirred up a lot of memory in me for I was mothered by a grandmother who, with my grandfather, took three little orphaned boys, to make a home for them when she was about sixty years old, he some older.

Our Judeo-Christian heritage is rich in the spirit of love and respect for the aged. Looking for a text is complicated by the difficulty of selection. I cite two that speak to me. One is from Leviticus: "You shall rise in the presence of grey hairs, give honour to the aged, and fear your God. I am the Lord" (19:32 NEB). That is specific enough. The other is an observation in the Proverbs: "The glory of young men is their strength, but the dignity of old men is their grey hairs" (20:29 NEB). I could have read the somber lines of Ecclesiastes 12, about the decay of this old house with its teeth falling out, its limbs trembling, eyes dimmed and ears dulled, its desire gone and its fears heightened as it waits for the end. But that doesn't sound greatly edifying. Of course, when we refer to the aged we have in mind people at least twenty years older than ourselves, so no one here need take this personally.

Our attitude toward the aging, reflected in our behavior as opposed to our sentimental talk, suggests that we recommend the Bible more ardently than obey it. Probably no society among civilized people demonstrates less concern for the aged than ours. We are youth worshippers. We cater to the young, pamper and overprotect them, indulge them, envy them, and make fools of ourselves trying to imitate them. Our highest value is youth, our lowest age.

Yet the absurdity of such a turned-upside-down value system ought to be obvious. One out of six of us in the western world is over sixty, and the proportion is rising.

When we let ourselves think about it we all know that we are going to have to deal with the problem, at one end or the other—probably at both ends. What is to happen to the aged parent? That is not a question of "if" but "when." What do you do before you and your family have to make the decision about your

own care? Is the answer a home for retired people, a nursing home, an apartment alone, or moving in with your children? Even if money is no problem, which it is for ever-larger numbers of retired people because of fixed incomes in an inflationary economy, there is no ready-made answer which is good for the aged and good for their children and grandchildren. The loneliness and sense of being deserted which clearly people feel must be a heavy burden on the heart of God.

Most of us feel guilty and perhaps a little afraid. If we live long enough we are going to get there ourselves, some of us sooner than we enjoy thinking about. What makes us think it will be different for us? Will we be among that select group, the happily retired, living a full, rich life, the kind of old couple pictured on the front cover of the retirement home brochure? I propose to ask why this is such a problem, how people like ourselves can hopefully lessen the problem by preparing ourselves for it, and what the church can do to help.

Somebody has said that the two most traumatic stages of life are adolescence and old age. One might expect that of youth, since it has not had much experience in adjustment, but the older person, having lived a long time, ought to know how. One of the reasons he doesn't is that our culture is so work-oriented that when productivity stops it is the end of life for many. In talking earlier about the crisis of role and goal I said that the two are inseparable, and I believe it. But it is also true that if a person has no sense of his own personhood apart from his job he is in trouble when he is separated from it.

Mothers go through this crisis when the last child leaves the nest. What more has she to live for? She may go into a depression, or she may decide to go to work or take on new life by taking on additional responsibility in church or community affairs. By retirement age, she may have adjusted to another life-style which the husband, never having had anything but his career, knows little about. One day he goes to work, gets his gold watch and scroll of appreciation for forty-five years of faithful devotion to the company and comes home to nothing. What is he good for? Is he now like an old, worn-out car sitting off somewhere in a field slowly rusting into a pile of junk?

Aging is traumatic because with retirement comes excess time. Wives refer to it as having "twice as much husband and half as much income." The jest shields a sharp barb. Even without retirement, people in this country are having a very hard time trying to manage their leisure hours. We all protest that we are so busy that we aren't able to do what we want to do. That is a highly dubious claim. The fact is that time on our hands makes most of us very uneasy.

When enforced leisure is thrust upon us we soon run out of things to do. This is a big problem in America, what with an ever-shortening work week.

Aging and retirement are a problem because the human psyche withers unless it has meaning to its existence. Mere games to occupy the time won't help, whether you are playing shuffle board and sitting on the green benches in St. Petersburg or playing golf and being waited on in Palm Beach. People have to feel that life has some purpose in order to feel good about it. Tournier's book, *Learn to Grow Old*,

which I strongly recommend, has numerous illuminating illustrations of the need for meaning to one's life. He tells of an old retired doctor he met at a conference who commented to him, "I see all these people around me looking for something to do to pass the time. I myself am a lucky man." He went on to explain that ever since childhood he had been asking himself philosophical questions—the nature of man, the meaning of life. During the practice of medicine he had not had an opportunity to read philosophy. Now he was "catching up" and having a wonderful time.³

There is a fourth reason why aging and retirement are hard adjustments in our culture and that is because we have built a society that gives priority to things, rather than to persons. Ours is an economy of planned obsolescence. What is it good for? is a primary issue with us. In a technological civilization which evolves rapidly, human beings are the most dispensable cog in the machinery of production. The young learn the latest tools of the trade, the older people have not kept up and are ignorant of the latest technology. What is more useless than a piece of worn-out equipment? In Tournier's words, many elderly people feel "like the remnant at the end of a roll of cloth, sold off cheaply after the best of the material has gone at a good price."⁴

Granted that there are problems, what can each of us—candidates for aging—do to make the transition from this very active to a less active stage of life? One important thing we all need to do is to begin now to get ready. People who wait until six months before retirement to think about it usually are miserable old people. The kind of old person you are going to be is being decided now in the kind of person you are becoming. I believe that old age is only a kind of accentuation of whatever characteristics you have before you get to it. Bitter old people don't suddenly become bitter, any more than sweet old people suddenly develop into lovable characters. Both kinds took a lot of years getting there.

A second thing you can do to ease the trauma is to make up your mind that you are not going to permit the range of your interests to get narrowed down and drawn into a tight little circle around yourself and your ailments. You can't go and do, but you don't have to be dull. It is amazing how we forget that other people soon get tired of hearing about the good old days or being given an organ recital. We can make up our minds never to stop learning. Tournier tells of an old lady who learned after retirement to drive a car. I'm not sure I would want either to ride with her or meet her on the road, but you will have to admit that she was at least trying to escape vegetation.

A third thing being done by a great many older people is to use their rich accumulation of skills in an advisory capacity. In such capacities they can slow down the pace of demands upon them but at the same time make good use of valuable life. A friend of mine since retirement from an engineering firm five or six years ago has had a virtually endless succession of important assignments in his community as a consultant, advisor and manager of various projects. This man's retirement has not been a dreary winding down

into uselessness, but a busy, rewarding and happy "second stage" of his career.

All of us have known pastors who in retirement were able to serve churches as interim and to do things for those churches which could not have been done by pastors. I have known a number of such men. No use to waste your pity on them. They don't need it. I think of our own great Dr. Ted Adams, now working on a "second career" at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, and having the time of his life. What a blessing that the unusual gifts and consecration of such a man and his wife are not being allowed to rust away in uselessness.

Another thing we can do is to use our gifts of accumulated experience in the conscious effort to complement the strengths and learning of younger people. *I strongly deplore the idiocy of youth-worship in our Southern Baptist Convention. We need to pin the tail on this donkey and say what it is. I know scores and scores of ministers my age—in their fifties—who are made to feel that they are has-beens, washed-up, hanging on only by the Christian graciousness of their people.* Such men are hurting. They know deep in their hearts that the wisdom which comes only from living, loving, suffering and praying with their people ought to make them more valuable in the ministry than ever. They fear for their job security and envy their younger brethren whom they see going by them on the way to more prestigious pulpits and denominational posts. *Now, this is an affliction of our culture, but unfortunately, the church which is supposed to change the culture, is at the head of the youth-cult parade.*

Let me tell you a true story. A doctor friend of mine is the son of a doctor and the brother of one. Once my friend's father and brother went to see an old man sick at home. The father, an old family doctor, told the woman that her husband should be hospitalized immediately. After the two left, the younger doctor (a heart specialist) remonstrated with his father that he shouldn't have to put the man in the hospital because the family couldn't afford it. That night the man died, and the widow was very grateful because her doctor had done what he could, not just letting her husband die without trying to save him.

The young doctor asked his father, "How did you know that old man was sick enough to die?" The old doctor answered, "Son, you knew a whole lot more about his heart than I did, but I knew more about the man." It's time we quit apologizing for having some age and experience. It's time we quit bowing and scraping and backing off the stage.

Another thing we can do is to concentrate on the things that are important. The energies of the aged are not as great as those of the young. Some of us have a hard time being convinced, but it is true. But that can be a blessing, not a curse. We can tune out some of the extraneous things, and tune in the important ones. Numerous self-portraits were done by Rembrandt during his long career. If you were to line these up in chronological order you would see an interesting phenomenon. The early portraits are elaborately detailed, every bit of the lace and embroidery and the background filled in carefully. As time went by he filled in fewer and fewer details, until in the later pictures the background was simply brushed in

with plain browns and tans. But more and more he concentrated on one thing—the central thing in the picture—the face. As the background faded, the face became more and more the center of attention. That is what we can do with our lives. “This one thing I do,” wrote Paul.

What can the church do to help? The church is ourselves, and the elderly are ourselves, either presently or soon to be. We can pay more attention to the issue, neither making the aged feel that they are the wards of a magnanimous society nor making them feel like outcasts. We can create occasions for the feeding of the spirits of the aged, not just “holding church services,” but providing situations in which old people may be with younger people. They need each other. What ever gave us the notion that the elderly either want to be or should be shunted off into a quiet corner? We can do more to help elderly people remain independent and capable of handling their own decisions with dignity. How can you help but admire the elderly person who hangs in there and maintains his own residence, even though it is very hard to do, refusing to give up and vegetate? Why can't the church spend some of its zeal attending to such fine old people, seeing to it that they have transportation to the store, or church, or doctor, or checking periodically to see that they are not ill? Why not use the great untapped reservoir of talent residing in the elderly of most any church? There is a veritable diamond mine lying right in our own yards.

Most of all, let the church speak the comforting word of God's grace to the aged that they may come to the end assured that life's meaning is not gone and will not be over when the day is done and the night falls.

¹ Milton L. Barron, *The Aging American*, VII, (Thos. Y. Crowell Co., N.Y., 1961).

² Paul Tournier, *Learn to Grow Old*, (Harper & Row, N.Y., 1972) pp. 5,6.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

“The Family's Future in Secular City”

Harvey G. Cox

Mr. Chairman, first of all, I would like to thank everyone who is responsible in any way for inviting me to this *small, intimate* seminar. For some reason, the word “seminar” where I come from has a slightly different connotation than this! I hope everyone can hear me and if you people in the back are having problems that you will put your hand up and I will try to speak louder.

This is a special treat for me to be at a meeting sponsored by a part of the Southern Baptist Convention. I am a Baptist. I have remained a Baptist (although some people have their doubts about that) during most of my theological career. I have been invited to speak by a lot of different churches and denominations, but I think this is the first time I have been with the Southern Baptist Convention. So this is kind of a landmark in my ecumenical pilgrimage!

I regret to say that Pope Paul VI beat the Southern Baptists out by two and one-half years (since I met him a good two years ago). I think it is significant

that this seminar happens around the particular issue of family life. I don't think we can be very narrow or denominational about our concern with reference to family life and what family life has stood for, our doubts and hesitations about it, and where we hope and fear it may be going.

When I first got this assignment, I had a little meeting of our family council to talk about this and it became quite evident in my own family that two of the images which have thrust themselves upon our consciousness most forcibly in recent weeks about family life have been provided by television. One of them is that now notorious widely publicized series called “The American Family.” Many of you here may have seen episodes of “The American Family.” Many of you may have heard of the famous Loud family of Santa Barbara, California, who are living their lives out on the tube.

Also, many of you have either heard about or seen a television program called “The Waltons.” It so happens that on Thursday night in our area (Cambridge, Massachusetts—where I am proud to say the churches also outnumber the golf courses) from 8 to 9 p.m. “The Waltons” is televised, and from 9 to 10 p.m., “The American Family” comes on. So you can get a massive dose of what's worrying us about the family in two hours of television watching. I want to allude to that very briefly (although not very profoundly) at the beginning because I think it does say something to us. “The American Family” is a series based on three hundred hours of video taping of an upper middle-class affluent family from Santa Barbara, California, called the Louds—Pat and Bill Loud and their family. Unfortunately during the course of the filming of their typical American life, Pat and Bill laid plans for getting a divorce. Now, we know about the divorce plans from the outset of this series so we watch it with a certain kind of poignancy. We watch every little signal, every little altercation between husband and wife, every little lack of communication among the children as a kind of portent or a sign or symptom that something terrible is going to happen.

In the *Commonweal* magazine, which is a Roman Catholic publication, a week or two ago, a writer commented in this way about the Loud family: “This family is thoroughly American. Pat and Bill have traveled from the security of America a few years ago—the extended family, the comfortable religion, the green backyard—to some strange territory where nothing is the same. All of their relatives are in other cities. Religion has been dropped and the fire is literally licking around the swimming pool. (Those of you who have seen this know that it really is licking around the swimming pool—the brush fire in California is creeping up on this symbol of their affluent entertainment.) For Bill—the husband—money making is a desperate pursuit which is taken for granted or mocked by his children. For Pat—the wife—marriage itself has failed to transform her into a mature and fulfilled person. The children drift bemused by the absurdity of work, the absurdity of study, and the absurdity of adult life in general. Most significantly, none of these griefs is ever expressed directly. All fears, resentments, joys are buried instead in a genial patter or ignored in an intensive preoccupation with guitars, fruit juice, Mexican food, and automobiles.”

We watch "The American Family," or we hear about it or we read about it, I think, with a certain amount of terror because no matter how secure we all feel, or do not feel, in our own families, we all know that somehow it hasn't lived up to all of our expectations. And just as we watch the Louds for possible signs or symptoms of disintegration, we can't help watching ourselves in the same way. We see ourselves in all of them and unless we can recognize honestly among ourselves at this seminar that it is not just those people out there but we ourselves who feel the fragility and the vulnerability of family life, then this seminar will be a massive exercise in self-deception. *We have done* those things we ought not to have done. *We have not done* those things we ought to have done. There is often no help. So we watch with a certain amount of terror.

"The Waltons," a family program, is based on an old novel called *The Homecoming*. This family is poor. This family is rural, living in the depression era. They have no stereo, no hi-fi, no swimming pool, no guitars, no freezer. They have one dilapidated car. They are scraping at the edge of poverty. It's a large family of brothers and sisters in which the grandmother and grandfather and other assorted relatives seem to live under the same roof. They all share the chores on the farm and the mother leads them in the study of the Bible. All of them go to church. And somehow as we watch "The Waltons" we feel warm and secure, but a nagging suspicion intrudes that life really isn't like that. And to some extent we have begun to romanticize a certain era in family life which may not have been all that good when it existed. Some of us remember the depression period; others of us have heard about it from parents or grandparents. In "The Waltons," we have it conveyed to us in an ingenious manner over the mass media.

So here are the two families between whom we have to live out our existence. On the one side, an idealized depression family where religion and close ties and kinship still meant something. On the other side, an affluent family where the flames are licking around the swimming pool. We are caught between nostalgia and terror and it is *our* family not *their* family that is caught.

Now, what I want to say during these times that I have with you is that I do not believe the family is a passing institution. I do not believe it is fated for extinction in mobile, technological society, or that it will disappear in the face of secularization and all the rest. I do not believe that for a moment! I also believe that we are wrong to concentrate all of our hopes for the family on one particular form of family life or to shackle a particular dated expression of family life. I'll come back to that in a moment. The reason why I do not believe the family is a passing institution is for some of the same reasons referred to by Dr. Johnson a moment ago. Equally as interesting as the high divorce rates in American society are the high re-marriage rates. Sometimes we should give more attention to the re-marriage rates than to the divorce rates. People still keep looking for something they didn't find the first time or the second time or the third time. They're still looking for it.

Those children, as Dr. Johnson said, who run away and join communes, end up living in groups where they

call each other "brother" and "sister," where they help with the dishes, share their money, and live communally—where they begin to try to work out what many of us have been taught are the values of the family. In fact, Rosa Beth Canter, who is one of our best contemporary sociologists of family structure in communal movements, has written an article which will appear in a few weeks called "The Domestication of the Counter-Culture." She asks the question that many people are asking, "Where have all the flower children gone?" Her answer is: "They're baking bread and building furniture. They're weaving rugs and making pottery." All the people who are rebelling against family life and forming a counter-culture a few years ago are now heavily engaged in those activities which were celebrated during the sixties by *Better Homes and Gardens* and *The Ladies Home Journal*.

The reason why I don't believe family life is a passing phenomenon is that through statistics which we sometimes read we find in unexpected and different ways people are still searching for the values which we associate with family life. They are still looking for the same values but they are not finding them. So our critique ought to be directed in a different direction.

These are my theses, of which there are four. I'll simply say them at the beginning of my two lectures here in case I get so wound up or so circuitous that I forget myself the point I am making by the end:

Number 1: Family life is indeed in trouble and we are right to be concerned about it.

Number 2: Christians support the family not as an end in itself but as a sign of the kingdom of God, as a means of grace—not as an end in itself. I want to emphasize that strongly because I believe emphasizing family life and the home as an end in itself is a form of idolatry. It is a disobedience to the clear mandate of the gospel and it does no service whatever to family life. Indeed, it does a disservice!

Number 3: The family's difficulties in modern American society do not stem from the sources usually indicated. Rather, I believe they stem from two major sources: First, what I call the structural isolation of the nuclear family. The nuclear family is the mother and father with their own children. The structural isolation of the nuclear family has been produced by mobility, competition, accumulation, and the market mentality.

Secondly, the difficulties of the family have been caused by what I call "excessive expectation." The excessive expectation is laid on the family by the media and, alas, frequently by the church. These two sources of difficulty of the family go together in that we take a fragment of family life—the modern nuclear family (which is a fragment of what family life used to be)—and we expect it to yield more emotional satisfaction and more spiritual nutrients than the old extended family used to yield. It is like taking a smaller fuse and trying to drive a larger electric current through it. You can blow a fuse in two ways. You can drive more current through it than it can stand, or you can put a smaller fuse in than can hold the current. I think that's a particularly apt illustration of family life. We've done both. We've reduced the size of the fuse and we've driven more current through it. No wonder it blows out as frequently as it does!

Sometimes I think the great miracle is that the divorce rate doesn't equal the marriage rate, rather than approach it.

This is Number 4. We cannot and should not try to rejuvenate family life by mere moral exhortation or by directing our attention largely to the family itself. That's perhaps the most important one—directing our attention to the family itself. Rather, we can begin to help rejuvenate, sustain, and support family life by directing our attention to the two sources from which the difficulties stem, mainly the isolation of the nuclear family and the excessive expectations which we have placed upon it. To look simply at the family and to direct all of our attention toward it is a classical instance of blaming the victims for the crime, or treating the symptoms instead of the disease.

What I would like to do in the time remaining and in my next lecture is to examine how we got our false notions; to find the mistaken notions of what a Christian family is, where they come from, and where they are rooted. Then, to suggest something of a strategy, a rather concrete strategy, indeed, for the moving out of this is my aim.

What we are often asked to celebrate and to nurture in the emphasis on the family is in fact a caricature of the family which I would prefer to call the "residual family" or the "functional family." Think of all the posters you have seen in your churches and on the covers of church magazines depicting the Christian family. What we see there more than any other time is a contemporary nuclear family—a mother and a father with their own children. There are two or three children if it is a Protestant magazine. There are five or six children if it is a Catholic magazine. The old days when the Catholic family had to line up a minimum of eleven children seems to be passing. In any case what is pictured is neither the extended family of three generations back—not the Waltons, consisting of grandparents, uncles and cousins, living in close proximity—not that family, nor is it the post-nuclear families now emerging of groups and individuals and couples who live together, sharing home life, income, child-bearing, and so on, on a wider basis. It is interesting that even at this conference on family life our symbol of the family poses the industrial, post-extended family. I will argue here to say that it is not really what family has to mean. There may not be a very successful form of family life after all. I think it is time that we stop identifying "the Christian family" with "the industrial society, technological isolated family." These are two different things.

Like any other institution, the nuclear family is not sacred in the form it now has. This form is certainly not eternal, as any historian can tell you. It is one of the ways in which having children and relations between men and women have been organized on a religious basis. If we turn to the Bible for some understanding of or basis for family life, we find very little about the nuclear family. I guess we shouldn't be surprised about that! Nor are the stories about husband and wife, parent and child relationships in the Old Testament particularly exemplary (as you've noticed when you've tried to teach Sunday School). Abraham is not above selling his own wife to Pharaoh's harem. Isaac and Jacob are polygamists. The less said about King David, the better. Solomon was hardly a paragon

of monogamous intimacy. In fact, what is translated from the Hebrew in the Old Testament as "family" could better be translated as "household," which includes wives (note well the plural), concubines, slaves, the offspring of all the preceding, relatives, and various dinner guests who just stayed around. This is not the kind of family which is generally pictured on the cover of the monthly church magazines.

Now, if we think that all these are deviations from what must have certainly been a more stringent norm for family life in the Old Testament, I'm afraid we're in for some surprises there, too! Just look at the two versions of the Ten Commandments. And there are two versions, as you no doubt remember. In the oldest version in Exodus, one is forbidden the coveting of a neighbor's house, or wife, or manservant, or maid-servant, or ox, or ass, or anything else, in that order. Notice that house comes before wife and wife just beats out manservant and maidservant and ox. By the time of the Deuteronomic version of the decalogue, which was several centuries later, wives have made it up to the top of the list of chattels, followed by houses and fields and servants. But the Old Testament is certainly no source of inspiration or model either for family life—certainly not nuclear family life—or for women's liberation.

Now, with trembling hands, we turn to the New Testament and find that it sounds anti-familial. Despite the conjectural Sunday School paintings that I saw as a boy of the lad Jesus helping his father amid the planes and saws, we actually know nothing, or very little, about the family life of Mary and Joseph, except that from Joseph's point of view it began under rather suspicious circumstances.

Jesus himself never married. Furthermore, every time he actually says anything about his family, it sounds curt or negative. Just try to put together a family life sermon sometime using the sayings of Jesus about family life. His parents, for example, in the single incident the Bible does record about his boyhood, did not understand why he stayed behind in Jerusalem to converse with the elders. When they came to retrieve him, Jesus spoke to them testily with a severity that few modern parents would accept from a preteen-ager. St. Mark even reports that Jesus' family thought he was crazy. Well, they might have thought that. For a society which did have a certain sacral significance, Jesus was audacious enough to say that only those who would leave behind father and mother and son and daughter could follow him. When someone asked him about his own brothers and sisters, he brushed the question aside with the insistence that his brothers and sisters were those who did the will of God. He assigned no special place to kissing kin.

But I don't think the New Testament should be read as anti-familial. Jesus' statements about the family, though they sound negative, were not intended to be abolitionist. Rather, Jesus wanted people to see (and here's the point) that a new form of human community was appearing in history with him—that this new community went far beyond the ties of blood, race, nationality, and kinship. With Jesus family bonds were not abolished; they were relativized. Water became thicker than blood. People could become members of one another in communities that were not defined by organic ties. In fact, the one time the word

"family" appears in the New Testament in a positive sense in the epistle to the Ephesians (3:15), written fifty years after Jesus' death. In that passage, "family" does not refer to a nuclear family, or even to an extended family, but that's the passage in which we hear about him "from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named." It's the family of mankind.

So let me put it very bluntly. I think it is tasteless and insensitive and theologically wrong for churches to use the notion of the Christian family as the sanctification of the modern nuclear family. Churches include married couples with children, indeed, but they also include nonmarried, formerly married, twice married, not yet married, and those with no intention of getting married. Churches include people living together, people living apart, and people living alone. They increasingly include people living as couples, but also in collectives, cooperatives, communes, and clusters. Churches encompass people whose children are gone (and therefore don't qualify in an image like this), people whose children are yet to come, or may not come at all, as well as those whose progeny is all too present. Churches include bachelors, divorcees, and those women for whom our male-dominated culture has no positive equivalent of the word "bachelor." I feel we need to find that equivalent word because the words "spinster" or "old maid" just won't do, as will not that ancient church phrase "unclaimed treasure." In other words, the church includes and should include an enormous heterogeneous variety and styles of family life which are increasing. Therefore, to sanctify one particular form of family life as "the" model of Christian family life I think is wrong and cruel to those who cannot or do not choose to share it.

Now, let me sort of preview my coming lecture. If our present cultural vision of "the Christian family" (I call it a "cultural vision" because I don't believe it is a "theological vision") is not rooted in the Bible, where does it come from? I want to contend that it comes from the early nineteenth century period of American cultural and religious history in which the antiurban fantasies of those harassed and threatened by the growth of cities and the complexity of society were worked out in fantasies about the family and what the family should be. The home in the early to the middle part of the nineteenth century begins to be idealized as that idealic, semi-rural harmonious retreat from the disorder, threat, and chaos of the city, so that quite consciously the family is opposed to the city. This definition makes the family that place where one retreats into perfection and warmth and harmony, away from all of the evils and threats out there. The present image of the so-called Christian family does not come from the Bible but from that early nineteenth century period. Here I refer to the work of Kirk Jeffrey and Richard Sennett, our two best historians of family life and visions of the family, who have made this case rather eloquently. I will come back to them in my next lecture.

So, I think we have absolutely no duty to defend our present cultural image of the family as Christians. In fact, we have a duty to be conscious of and perhaps critical of that image which springs from the tension produced by urbanization—between the small town and the city, between the city and the

wilderness, between the rural and the urban. The controlling images of family which still influence our minds arose in an era of fearful anti-urbanism—a flight from and an attack on the city—a period in which theologically we witnessed the abandonment of corporate religious vision and social prophecy and in turn an effort to privatize the definitions of salvation. I think this means that the historic retreat of the churches over the last century from any kind of confrontation of the larger corporate structures of the society with a demand in the promise of the gospel is one of the reasons why we now face a crisis in family life.

The church has retreated on one side and concentrated all of its attention on the other. We are now faced with the genuine crisis in family life which cannot be addressed simply at the level of the family without imputing more guilt and laying more expectations and more feelings of failure on families as such. So I want to plead with all of you during your conversations here to consider the sources from which our present family crises come. I think the church is responsible in part for both—all of our churches. We have allowed the larger social forces to market and profit in economy so to manipulate us into lives of the pursuit of profit and accumulation that these larger structures have gone largely without witness from our churches. At the same time, we have compensated by placing so much expectation on the family that we have overloaded the fuse with more current.

In my presentation of "The Christian Family in Reality and Ideology" this evening, I want to talk about what has happened and instead of just being a diagnostician.

"Cultivating Values in Family Life"

Wayne Oates

The family is the primary institution for the cultivation of values. The growth of public education and education in church and synagogues has tended to redistribute this responsibility of the family. Consequently parents tend to measure the "okayness" or "not-okayness" of their children in terms of grades at school and attendance at church and synagogue. For, as Robert Frost says, we have believed that education would of itself take fire and light the whole world up. But as Porgy sang, "Taint Necessarily So." The family cannot ditch the responsibility of cultivating values. Nor can parents assume that they are the *only* cultivators of values.

As a family we have two major options in cultivating values: First, we can serve as a sifter, to sift out external influence and maintain control. Second, we can serve as assayer who collaborates with the younger person about the worth of values he or she has dug up in the community. I would opt for the second model. It brings both parent and son or daughter under scrutiny; it demands an increase of wisdom, stature, and growth on everybody's part. However, it

calls for the capacity of a parent to learn from as well as to teach his or her son or daughter. This is a two-directional relationship. One of the major problems in cultivating values in the home is that adults can only learn from other adults and youth can only learn from other youth. Much of this is caused by the absence of grandparents from the value cultivation scene. Rapidly, grandparents are becoming a new form of segregated people. Yet, if adults and young people can learn from each other, then value cultivation has already begun in a "valuing" of each other as mutual sources of data, vitality, and wisdom.

As this "valuing-of-each-other" process begins, several areas of practical discussion in the family emerge. Yet none of this is possible if the assumption is that one person—father, mother, son, or daughter—knows all, tells all, decides all.

Generational Communication. The major difficulties in generational communication, it seems to me, are two fold: First, our culture keeps the home in an uproar as to *what* an adult is. As a driver of a car, a person may have this adult privilege at 16. But he cannot get a job that will pay for a car at the age of 16. Even as a 16-year-old driver, his parents' insurance is practically doubled. The state law treats him as an adult. The Insurance laws and companies treat him as a child. As a person who can procreate a child, a boy or girl is capable of doing so at 12-13. But the ability in our culture to feed, clothe, and protect a child from weather does not appear to many until six to ten years later. A person in many states cannot marry until they are 18 unless they have parental consent. Want ads for jobs will often say: "Do not apply if under 25." Ernest Groves spoke of the lengthened infancy of our sons and daughters. Today we must also speak of "jagged-edged adulthood." This confusion itself can be described, learned, and laughed at in a family. To do so helps communication.

Second, this jagged-edged adulthood fuels a large amount of fantasy in both parent and adolescent son or daughter. The parents' expectations of a son or daughter may be fantasies of their own adolescence that never saw the joy of realization. The adolescent moves back and forth between adulthood and childhood while his own fantasies take up the slack. The wisdom of the parent is knowing *when* the adolescent is talking *fantasy-talk* and *when* he or she is talking *reality-talk*. The clue to communication is to share fantasies together (adults have them, too!) and to face reality together.

Teaching and Learning the Art of Decision-Making. As children are very small, they need considerable protection and to have decisions made for them. It is a cruel thing to give a four-year-old a dollar and turn him loose in a store to buy "anything he wants." He does not know what a dollar will and will not buy (since Phase III, neither does his parent!). As the child is small, rules tend to stabilize his anxiety. Legislation works, ordinarily, when stated justly, clearly, and without anxiety on the part of a parent. However, as the child enters early and middle adolescence wider ranges of choice should be given to them. Earlier "rules" or "laws" should point toward and tutor them to grace, which is characterized by freedom, trust, the privilege of making increasingly larger decisions, and

the responsibility of living with whatever mistakes they make. As a young person moves into senior high, reality demands a shift from the use of rules as discipline to the use of communication and the laws of decision-making as a basis for cultivating values in an atmosphere of adulthood rather than child-parent. The real issue is: "Will the parent permit the child into the adult world, expect it of him, and lay a 'bridge over the troubled waters' between childhood and adulthood?" If a parent can say "yes!" the crises of later adolescence becomes collaboration in the arts of decision-making. There are some useful laws of decision-making I would like to suggest:

(1) *The law of available data.* A decision to get a summer job, buy a motorcycle, go to Florida on spring break, to work a year without going to school at all, to enter the military, to resist the draft, to "go steady," to get married—all these are made in the darkness of the unknown if careful gathering of information—data-collection—does not take precedence over action. The value being instilled here is a respect for facts, reality, things as they are.

(2) *The law of previous commitments.* New commitments are not wisely or easily made at the expense of covenants already in force and uncompleted. When a parent is confronted by an expectation on the part of an adolescent, it is a good thing to ask: "What sort of deals or commitments have you already made to your friends?" Loyalty, or fidelity, says Erikson, is the primary ethical value of adolescence. Caring is the primary virtue of the middle years. The *care* of a parent is expressed in terms of his concern for those to whom the adolescent is trying to be faithful or whom he is being tempted to "let down." On the other hand, he may be asking for parental support in a decision already made *not* to do something a friend has tried to talk him into. A clear decision at this point may be simply to affirm a wise move the young person has already thought out for himself.

(3) *The law of available time, energy, and money.* Usually decisions are made on the basis of the "least point of supply." An automobile manufacturer with 6000 piston sets can make only 6000 cars even if he has 1,000,000 of everything else it takes to build a car. The available amount of human decision materials usually are in terms of time, energy, and money. The risk involved in travel today are cases in point. One at youth-time of life may have all the time and energy in the world. At the same moment, he may have little or no money. Parents who are either too stingy or too liberal with money can represent or misrepresent the real values of life to sons and daughters. Middle-aged persons may have a surplus if not abundance of money but their energy and time is at a point of "lowest supply."

The value of being taught and learned here is that of balancing adventure against safety and vice-versa. Essentially the life of faith is a sort of leap of trust in the face of one's limitations as clearly seen. Thus the decision may result in a "calculated risk" on the part of the young person that the older person would not dare take. Yet, when the decision is enacted, a final law of decision making is at hand.

(4) *The Law of Air-Traffic-Control and Debriefing.* When a decision is effected and the young or older

person is on his own, the law of "staying in touch" to maintain one's clear sense of direction is necessary. Unexpected things happen. Many of them can be at least partially modified if people will write, call, or send word about their situation. Then upon return to the home base, the adventure and events of one's experience can be assimilated and utilized for maturation's sake if we take time to debrief each other. This is a major strategy for reducing stress in unhappy experiences and heightening joy and celebration in more pleasant ones.

On Hurting Each Other. The major hurts that come within the family seem to be at the points already mentioned: when parents insist that their sons and daughters remain children; when persons treated like children act the part and refuse to "let the parents in" on their decision-making processes; when no one cares enough to take the time to stay in touch or to debrief; or when members of the family are so work-oriented and enslaved they have no time for value cultivation in the family arena. "Bad" behavior is a symptom of these missing elements and often the aim of bad behavior is to hurt other people and blame any untoward results of our behavior on them. Underneath this is the larger problem of preoccupation with other values outside the home: social class climbing, appeasement for the approval of others, and the sheer compulsion to work to the exclusion of diversion, play, guided fantasy-formation, and participating in the free gifts of nature, friendship, and serendipitous revelations of the God of grace and the God of glory.

I have depicted this preoccupation in my little book, *The Confessions of a Workaholic*. The kind of disciplines called for in this message—generational communication and the art of decision making—call for time and attention. Values will no more be cultivated by "fiat" or "command" than the tulips of my backyard will grow by yelling at them in March and saying: "Grow!" It is something they *should* do, and *in time* will do, given time, warmth, care, and maybe even a little conversation. Values in a growing person call for the same thing. I saw this vividly on the psychiatric ward where I teach. By mistake, I picked up the appointment book of a psychiatrist with whom I work. On the front page I read: "Be sure to take time today to watch the flowers growing." It takes that to grow values in the family. They take some watching.

My elder son called me a few months ago to tell me about a little Oriental girl in a TV show. She told an American visitor that she and her brothers and sisters worked hard to set their father free from unnecessary duties. They did this so he would have time to walk in the "garden of his mind." This she said was necessary for him to be a wise father, i.e., "that he walk in the garden of his mind." Then from his meditations he could come to them a wiser father and their lives would be better because he had "walked in the garden of his mind." Then my son said: "Isn't that cool, Dad?" I said, "Yes!"

"The Christian Family in Reality and Ideology"

Harvey G. Cox

I want to begin by repeating the four theses that

I am trying to make in these two lectures in case anyone missed them.

My first thesis was that the family really is in trouble. It is not about to die or disappear but it is experiencing difficulty and we are rightly concerned about it. This is not a fiction. I think Christians have a commitment to the family, to its health and stability. The second point was that we as Christians should support the family not as an end in itself but as a sign of the Kingdom of God and as a means of His grace, and further that to make the family itself an end which we support is to idolatize it, to sacralize it, and to subject it to danger and disfigurement to which it should not be subjected. My third point was that the family's difficulties today stem largely from two sources about both of which I think the church should be concerned. The first is the structural isolation of the nuclear family brought about largely by the forces of industrialization, urbanization, technology, and all the rest—the isolation of the single nuclear family. The second is the excessive expectation which our culture has begun to place on the family, beginning, I contend in the early part of the nineteenth century. As you recall, I used the figure this morning of the fuse, saying there are two ways you can blow a fuse; one is to increase the amount of current you try to run through it and one is to diminish the size of the fuse. And we have done both. We have diminished the size of the family so that it is really kind of a fractional or residual family; and at the same time we have increased the amount of expectation that we place on it, either of which is guaranteed to blow the fuse, both of which blow it faster. My conclusion, or my fourth point, was that the reappropriation, the rejuvenation of family life cannot be, therefore, the result of an exhortation or a tension directed toward the family itself. I want to repeat that. I think our concern about the family is right, but directing that concern toward the family is too much like blaming the victim for the crime or treating the symptoms instead of the disease.

Where, then, did we get this idea that the family should be in some ways a retreat from the larger social questions to which the gospel calls us as faithful witnesses? Whence came the idea of the family as a small society in which perfection might become possible, bringing harmony and lack of disruption, even if all those things took place in the outside world? I would say that this whole idea of the family, which I think is a misleading one, began to emerge during those decades in the early part of the nineteenth century when cities were growing faster than they ever had before or ever have since. This was the point at which the evil city became a kind of symbol of all the things that we should be fearful of and opposed to. The city was the place where the bar and the prostitute and the evil immigrants and, I must report alas, the Roman Catholic churches all seemed to be located, if one reads the Protestant literature of that period. In order to escape all of that, there was one place one could go. Listen to this excerpt from an article called "Whisper to a Bride" from about 1840:

Home, sweet word and musical,
Keystone of the heart at whose melody
As by the Harp of Orpheus

All the trees in its garden are moved.
Holy word, refuge from sadness and despair,
Symbol of that eternal rest
For which we look when the journey of life is
ended.

Or from 1830, in a lady's magazine, an article by a rather prominent clergyman of the period: "We go forth into the world," he writes, "amidst the senses of dizziness and pleasure. We join the frenzied crowd, for our heart is sensible to a desolation of feeling. We behold every principle of justice and honor and even the dictates of common honesty disregarded. The delicacy of our moral senses wounded, we see the general good sacrificed; and we turn from such scenes with painful sensation, almost believing that virtue has deserted the abode of men. Then again we look to the sanctuary of home. There sympathy, honor, and virtue are assembled. There the eye may kindle with intelligence and receive an answering glance. There disinterested love is ready to sacrifice everything at the altar of affection."

Now, I submit to you it doesn't do any good at all in building up, strengthening, and nurturing the home or the family to put this kind of unrealistic and romantic expectation on it. No wonder people become dissatisfied with family life if they move into it with even the twentieth century afterglow of this kind of PR. In fact, in the book from which I have been quoting, which is Kirk Jeffrey's study of the rise of our notions of the family in the early nineteenth century, he says: "The necessary conclusion to a despairing theory of the impact of the urban experience was the recommendation that this experience be avoided entirely." What Protestant Christians have by and large done about the threat of the city from the early nineteenth century until our period is precisely that—avoid it where possible, flee from it where one can, disparage it where one cannot. The only way to do so, he says, naturally was to remain in the country. But there was a second possibility, an outpost of the country, as it were, within the city walls. This was, of course, the family. For those who could not return to rural America or who found the opportunities of city life too attractive to allow them to heed these warnings, the second best choice was to establish a little sphere of peace and order to which they could retreat.

My thesis here is that we have erected an ideology of the family which is not a Christian understanding of the family at all but a dated and romantic nineteenth century overblown idyllic picture of the family which we have opposed to the city. So, I was asked to speak about the future of the family in the secular city. I can only begin by confessing that all of us have been to some extent responsible for perpetuating this kind of dichotomy, for expecting the family to become that place to which we could retreat from all the problems, challenges, threats, disruptions, and bewilderments of an urban civilization. I think this has had two dire consequences. One is that the larger structural problems of our society, as symbolized by the city, have been left without the kind of Christian witness they should have had; and the other is that we have put such an enormous overexpectation on the family that now seven hundred of us meet in Charlotte to wonder why the family is in crisis.

That concludes my first point of this evening, and I am sure there will be questions about this but I don't want to take much longer to talk about it. My point is simply this—let us not confuse a Christian understanding of the family with what our culture has delivered to us as really an early nineteenth century idealization.

I said this morning that I did not believe the Bible provides a single model for family life. I would stick by this. I would say, however, that our basic inspiration for what we can reasonably hope for and what we can hope to accomplish in a conversation about family life can be derived from the Bible. I think it lies in the inclusive vision of the Bible which sees God's ultimate purpose as the liberation and maturation of all human beings, and indeed of all creation, to their full potential in a kind of cosmic feast of love and joy. That means something for family life. It also means that any movement toward liberation and maturation of people, individuals and groups, can be celebrated and affirmed as the stirring of the Spirit of God, the whole creation groaning in travail as it moves toward its fulfillment.

This invariably leads us to say something about the currently important topic of women's liberation. I am very glad that someone who belongs to that particular oppressed group will be speaking here because I think it is a little out of sorts for a man to speak about the subject; but I want to say that there will be something here with reference to the family and the women's liberation movement in its relationship to the family. I think we as Christians should recognize that in some sense the Bible is responsible for the women's liberation movement. Christianity did make a crucial contribution to the theological basis for the full equality of men and women in the sight of God. This is very important to those who now criticize Christianity for its male chauvinism of which it is indeed guilty institutionally, but one has only to look at other religious options like Islam or Hinduism or Judaism to be aware of the contribution that our faith has in fact made. Women's liberation is the not-so-new idea whose irrepressible moment for expression and fulfillment has come. I think the moment has come because the contradiction between ideal and practice has become so undeniable that it couldn't go much longer.

Now, what this has to do with the family is that just as our nineteenth century notion of the family as the place of retreat from the problems of the world, a place where harmony and perfection are possible even if they are not in the world—just as that is an idea about which we have to be critical, I think the whole notion of the woman as the full-time wife and mother is one that must now come under considerable re-evaluation. It is a very recent idea, a very recent idea. In most societies and in most times and in most of history, women have not been full-time wives and mothers. They have had a variety of other responsibilities in the home and outside the home. Where did this notion come from? What are its credentials? I am not sure, but I think it may be the result of the reduced labor supply which is needed by our current high technology and the consequent need to cut down on the size of the labor force.

Women now supply what the economists call the

reserve labor supply; that is, they can be whipped on and off the labor market as we happen to need them. Meanwhile they are kept in a kind of reserve in what we call housework but don't pay anybody for and don't classify as real work in any of the economic statistics that our country compiles. We all remember how women could be pulled off the ironing board and placed on the assembly line, transformed into rows of riveters when the national interests asked for it, and they just slipped back again into the role of housewife without ever showing up on the unemployment statistics. Now, it seems to me that women are getting a little tired of this (rightly so), are complaining about it, and probably will not allow it to go on much longer. I would hate to see a women's liberation movement which would simply settle for being bought off within the larger economic values of the society in which we live, of accelerated acquisitiveness, of instant obsolescence, and of resource squandering.

This raises the whole question about the nuclear family, about which I have had other questions earlier, also supplying the kind of vital link through which the notion of women as second-class citizens is transmitted to generation after generation. Without going into this much more deeply, I just want to state my conviction that I do not believe we can have achieved the full Christian ideal of the equality of men and women so long as we insist on the nuclear family as the form of Christian family life. You may want to ask me to substantiate that later. I'll try to do it but that is a matter of conviction. What should, then, replace the nuclear family?

I don't think that for most of us it is going to be the commune. That may be the answer for some people. I think for most of us, however, some kind of structure will be needed which preserves the values we have found in monogamous marriage and even in nuclear families, with some of the liberation that can only come from a different domiciliary style. Margaret Meade has shrewdly suggested that for many of us the next step will be what she calls "the cluster family." The cluster is a group of families who live close enough together spatially to allow for unplanned and spontaneous meeting, who begin sharing such elementary things as food buying, child care, cooking, equipment ownership, and so on. One single family, for example, really does not need the full possession of a power saw, a lawn mower, a slide projector, or any of the other number of things that we think we need as nuclear families. The participants then edge slowly toward the enlargement of the areas in which they share at a pace that allows everything to move without panic from one style of life to another. I think that a setting like this would go a long way to free men to share domestic tasks ordinarily assigned to women and to free women to assume a more active role in penetrating and altering the outside society.

[Dr. Valentine invited Dr. Cox to make a summary statement since this would be his last time to speak.]

I had better take a swallow of water on that!

First of all, I want to say what everybody else says conventionally but which I really want you to know I mean very deeply, that I am grateful to be here among

Southern Baptists. This is a very important event in my life and I am grateful that you invited me and I hope you invite me back. That is the first thing and I really mean it. (Applause.) There have been an awful lot of caricatures abroad about Southern Baptists and other kinds of Baptists which I think we can now begin to set aside when we meet each other and hear each other and see how much we all have to do. We can't afford that kind of thing much longer.

I also want to say that I think the issue of family life is a desperately important one. When I've talked about the family being between nostalgia and terror, I wasn't exaggerating. Some of the reasons why the family—my family—has moved toward some risk and adventure is that I have felt, as I think you have, the kind of terror and nostalgia about family which I alluded to earlier. I think it is not an accident that the Commission has organized the seminar around this topic. We really ought to be concerned about that.

But I have pled with you and I repeat it again: let us not blame members of families, mothers and fathers and children, for the difficulties which have been foisted on them by pressures and movements outside of their control, by industrialization and mobility, by the kind of economy we live in; let us not increase the sense of guilt and inadequacy on the part of thousands, in fact millions of people, who are struggling hard to have a successful marriage and a worthwhile family life by making it seem as though it is all their fault that things are not working out perfectly. They need much more compassion than they need judgment at this point, I believe. I have said that there are reasons why families are in difficulty. They have to do with this fragmentation that has torn us apart.

I grew up in a family in which there were cousins and aunts all around, grandmothers and grandfathers right there in the same town. I think I was the last generation when most people grew up like that. In the South that probably has lasted a little longer but it isn't going to last much longer. And these are not pressures that evil people have created. This is something that has come out of a much larger society, so that my children are not growing up in that kind of family with aunts and uncles and grandmothers and grandfathers around. They are not. They are deprived of something. They are in this kind of reduced nuclear family and I do think we have placed on the family an excessive expectation, such a romantic and sentimental expectation, that this only leads to guilt and a sense of failure and inadequacy which it needn't.

So, I am pleading with you really here—and if there is one thing which my trip down to Charlotte has done, maybe it will be to activate you and your churches to begin to bring together groups of people like the one that came together in our church to talk with one another more candidly and honestly about where their marriages are, where their families are, what would help them—to find ways of sharing one another's burdens, not just verbally but much more concretely. I think it can be done; it has to be done. I think our task as ministers and church leaders is to help people nurture and support family life rather than constantly to give advice and criticism and analysis of what's wrong. I think we really need now to move more toward the action than the analysis.

"Divorce: Religious and/or Secular"

Wayne Oates

My discussion of the problems of divorce in the Christian community must deal first with the fact that the Christian community is set within the context of a larger secular society in which pluralism and not unity of values about marriage is the order of the day. We as Christians are only recently opening the hermetically sealed door that has contained our conviction that only *one* cultural pattern for marriage is possible, right, and Christian. In this stance, we have taken several patterns of action about the meaning of Christian commitment in marriage. None of these actions is easy and each of them has gotten us into trouble. Let me enumerate a few of these patterns.

First, we have exerted a Christian imperialism that seeks to impose our interpretation of marriage through the law upon the whole populace regardless of their personal choice of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. In Europe, this took the form of the state church. Kierkegaard remarked wryly about this when he said that when everyone is Christian no one is Christian. He satirically noted that in Denmark one had to be a Christian in order to run a house of prostitution! The houses of prostitution were state-controlled and operated. In order to be a state's employee one had to be a member of the State Church. In order to run a house of prostitution, therefore, a person had to be a Christian.

The struggle for a Holy Empire of Christendom continued with state-church establishments in the colonial era of this country. It has taken a new form in the way in which various denominations have since about 1850 exercised a principle of *cuius eius regium* in our particular region. Southern Baptists have lived under the illusion that our particular forms of behavior about the sabbath, alcohol, marriage, divorce, the role of women, and remarriage are the only viable forms. These forms must dominate the culture regardless of the personal discipleship of the persons involved. These several variations of Christian imperialism have ignored pluralistic or alternative life-styles in a secular society.

I have said all this to say that the *discussion* of divorce has been impossible at many levels of our life as Southern Baptists because there was nothing to discuss. In *our* minds the issues of divorce have been nondebatable. Yet, several prevailing headwinds of attitudes in our culture have opened the issue for discussion and it has taken intrepid spirits like our Christian Life Commission to open up the problems of divorce for discussion. What are the prevailing cultural headwinds concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage. What is a possible set of ethical guidelines for Christians?

Let me preface my discussion of the prevailing headwinds and the Christian guidelines by stating a central hypothesis: I am never as concerned about a given type of behavior as I am about its meaning and context. Divorce is no exception. Consequently, I hypothesize that all experiences are potentially teaching and learning situations. Their value in creating an atmosphere of learning and growth far outweighs

the nature of the behavior itself—whether it be a marriage that stays together for 65 years or one that breaks up at the end of three, seventeen, twenty-two or forty-five.

The prevailing headwinds of our culture that shape our thinking for better or worse about divorce are as follow:

First, *the prevalent attitude toward commitment about anything, of which marriage is one example.* A World War II pre-atomic era mentality was a "for-the-duration mentality." The post-atomic era and the Vietnam mentality is a "for-a-given-length-of-time" mentality, oriented heavily toward the year in which one is living. Lifelong commitments to a given vocational role are less and less the pattern. As Alfred N. Whitehead said, "The time for the fixed person for the fixed role, who was such a comfort in former eras, is past. Such a person can be a positive menace today." This affects marriage at the heart of the vow "until death do us part," and ministers now are being asked to leave this out of the wedding ceremony, to replace it with such phrases as "as long as we are able to communicate with each other," "as long as we are able to care deeply for each other," etc. Divorce in a milieu like this is not the earth shaking reality it was to a pre-atomic era. It is much more casual.

Second, *the prevalent attitude toward fixed roles for men and women has changed to one of fluid, changing roles.* Women's rights groups have emphasized how low pay, fixed job assignments, and mythological assumptions about what men and women can and cannot do have made both men and women prisoners of their roles. Today, it is far more important to read the book, *The Sisterhood Is Powerful*, and O'Neill's *Open Marriage* than it is Van de Velde's *Ideal Marriage* when one is contemplating either marriage, divorce, or remarriage. More accurate and comprehensive biblical study will be needed to formulate a Christian response. This shift of attitudes from "roles" to "being human" is in the eye of marital storms ending in divorce.

Third, *another prevalent attitude is that of privatism.* Religious experience is so very intimate and personal that a counselor speaks in belabored and hushed tones about the very personal but quite simple religious experiences that changed his life direction. The decision to *marry*, the decision to divorce, the decision to "live together" without a *public* ceremony, are often made on the assumption that these are the couple's own private business. What they do is okay-behavior as long as they don't hurt each other. Yet, they are set within a larger family of parents and siblings and the *care* of these persons is tantamount to an invasion of privacy. Their feelings about an impending divorce are irrelevant. Getting hurt—in or out of the church—is a much more public, less private reality. The spirit of the child's hymn, "I would be true for there are those who trust me; I would be pure for there are those who care"—is touching sentimentality that bows before the wind of this kind of privatism like an early jonquil before a late snow.

Fourth, *a prevalent attitude in the fourth place is that of experimentation with one's peers as pre-*

marital preparation. In the absence of strong parent figures who were both present and trustworthy and in the increasing depersonalization of the role of the teacher in life, young persons' source of authority has shifted to their peer group. Sex, marriage, and divorce—in that order—are not *ends* in themselves but tools for experimentation on a trial-and-error basis with the processes of life and procreation. Thus living together before marriage becomes a sort of imagined "on-the-job" training or premarital preparation. The increase of the seeming success of second marriages would lead one to believe that—like it or not—divorce is fast becoming a way of terminating the marriage in which one "learned" what it is all about. Therefore, it is far more important for a counselor to ask what a divorced person learned about his or her own readiness for marriage than to ask who was to blame in the previous marriage that ended in divorce. Jesus said that hardness of heart and the asunderness created by other people were the basis of Moses' permissiveness about divorce. Therefore, the Judeo-Christian concern should focus on the hardheadedness and the alienating powers of the individuals and their community on the divorce.

Fifth, *a prevailing attitude is the illusion of invulnerability created by both pre- and post-conception efforts at birth control and the control of venereal disease.* The pill, the "morning after" D.E.S. prescription, and legalized abortion, along with antibiotics have been moved through the cycle that any technological innovation moves. At first they were the luxuries of the rich. Then they became the permitted, provided and understood gifts to those in dire calamity and necessity. Now they are a popular convenience. They are well on their way to becoming the norms for behavior assumed without thought. Yet the increase of the venereal disease rate and the process of mourning and grief in abortionees make one wonder if the seeming invulnerability is not well-nigh demonic in its deceptiveness. One formerly assumed that the decision to marry was the decision to have children. This is no longer so. Yet, the couple may not agree on *whether* to have children and this can and does issue in divorce.

One asks: What are some principles of navigation for a Christian in the face of these prevailing headwinds?

The first principle of value in thinking clearly about the issues of divorce and remarriage is that we cannot turn the Christian faith into a legal system and impose our legalities on the whole populace. The teachings of Jesus on the problem of divorce, in my opinion, were aimed at persons who had chosen to become wholehearted disciples of Christ. I believe that he understood and meant this. Also, early disciples of Christ resisted making his teachings a law and divorce unpardonable sin. They found exceptions and inserted them. The later interpolations of the Scripture which refer to fornication and also a woman taken in adultery are evidence that from the earliest extant New Testament documents, the interpersonal stresses and meanings behind the divorce were more important than the fact of divorce itself. The legal approach to the Christian faith has been beautifully designed in canonical law. Wherever canonical law—written or

unwritten—has always assumed that this is the law of the whole populace, this assumption leaves out both the necessity for personal discipleship of Jesus Christ as Lord and the possibility of forgiveness for mistakes, sins, and emotional disorders that lie behind divorce. They leave out what matters essentially in the Christian faith. What is left is a corpse. The life is gone.

The second principle of value in Christian confrontation of divorce is the importance of knownness. In short, behind many divorces is the marriage of strangers. The couple did not really know each other. Hidden agendas emerged after marriage which broke the relationship. Hence, the Episcopal Church's insistence upon the passing of one full year from the time of the legal decree of divorce before remarriage is a therapeutic use of law. The person being remarried has had enough time to deal with post-divorce grief. Ministers themselves should know the persons they are either marrying or remarrying. This event should not happen between strangers or among strangers.

The third principle for a deliberative approach to divorce and/or divorces is that of integrity, which is the positive opposite of duplicity, manipulation and a lack of openness. The tendency to lay all the blame on one's previous mate may be a lack of integrity. An "open" marriage calls for "open" people who live life with no hidden agendas and yet do not use "honesty" as a form of cruelty. They grow up together as they "speak the truth in love." A person facing remarriage as a Christian can learn this kind of integrity in a personal discipleship of Jesus Christ and a small group of other Christians dedicated to such discipleship themselves.

The fourth principle for relating redemptively and creatively to those facing divorce or remarriage is the principle of caring. Do we disdain the divorcee? Do we have time to do anything further than defend our own position by quoting the legal interpretation of Scripture? Do we really care what happens to these persons? Or, do we consider marriage and remarriage a private matter between them—"their business" and no real concern of our own? Does this couple have a demonstrable history of having really cared for each other in a self-giving and mutual concern?

The fifth principle is that responsibility is a two-way covenant. A two-way covenantal ethic is an acid test of responsibility. Many of the covenants persons make in "living together" without benefit of clergy are one-way covenants. Too often, the woman takes all the responsibility for the relationship. There is no clear reciprocity as to sharing the work, the cost of living, the care of a child, or even paying for a legal abortion. My clinical encounters of "fall-out" from such relationships causes me to feel keenly the ethical injustice done to women in one-day covenants with men. The man is routinely irresponsible when the fun is over and its results are to be paid for in both money and human character. On the other hand, the naiveté of women in settling easily for a one-way covenant shows a lack of judgment and a sort of grandiosity that she can remake an irresponsible fool into a responsible wise man. The Book of Proverbs needs to be rephrased and addressed to women and caution them in dealing with foolish men.

The principle of durability summarizes all the others

into one. The anxiety under marriage vows is "Will it last?" Persons who have been abandoned, left, deserted, and forsaken eagerly clutch with hope to such phrases as "till death do us part." We turn to the Christian faith with the hope of resurrection in which, although there is neither marriage nor giving in marriage, nevertheless a great cloud of witnesses are sustained in life in spite of death. Divorce is a breaking of a relationship. A high test of maturity is the capacity to form and maintain durable relationships. The couple forming a marriage or a remarriage do well to examine each other's capacity to form and maintain durable relationships. Has this person changed jobs rapidly and in the face of conflict with people? Has he or she been an emotional hit-and-run driver who "bumps into" people and leaves them? These are good questions to ask about any human relationship. John Bunyan said that some people would rather "have done with your company than to change their ways." The Apostle Paul spoke of faith, hope, and love "remaining." Yet these dynamic qualities do not permit a person or a couple to remain the *same*. They grow and renegotiate their covenant as they grow. The presupposition of a durable marriage is that both partners face the developmental tasks of maturity *with* each other as joint heirs of the grace of life, and not as subordinates to each other.

In my own personal values, the husband himself is primarily responsible to encourage and nurture this growth in a lasting relationship. He dwells with his wife considerably; he protects and provides for her tenderly in the childbearing and childrearing process; he treats her as an equal or joint heir in the grace of life. In doing so, he has full access to God in prayer. Anything less than this is a hindrance.

"Cultivating Intimacy in Marriage"

Howard J. Clinebell, Jr.

It's good to be here for a number of reasons. For one thing, I am aware that the particular group sponsoring this seminar, the Christian Life Commission, is one of the groups in the denominations of our country who have been, shall we say, "on the firing line, the growing edge, the frontier." It has taken a lot of flack and also demonstrated the kind of moral courage that we talk about a lot but often don't show in the church. And so, I am privileged to be involved in something that the Christian Life Commission has set up for us. I am also glad to have a chance to share with you who are leaders in your churches (and therefore in strategic positions) the things that I find most exciting, that work best for me in enriching family life. I am sorry that the co-author of *The Intimate Marriage* could not be here for a number of reasons. The public reason is that "Charlotte" has always wanted to come to Charlotte. And it also would have improved the sex ratio of our leadership resource people in this seminar to have two women on the panel.

Today, I would like to do a couple of things. First,

to take off from where my colleagues, the other resource people, have led up to in providing a clear sense of the crises in marriage and family life; they have given us important and perceptive insights about the context within which we minister. Building on these, I want to discuss some of the positive methods that we as clergymen or as lay ministers, (I am assuming "ministry" is a function of being a Christian and not ordination, so that all of us are ministers.) can do to implement a health-oriented model of ministry in the family.

The other morning when I was shaving and listening to the news I heard an advertisement from the local phone company in California where I live. A sweet, seductive, feminine voice came over the airwaves with these words: "With us you're more than a name, you're a number." That's where it's at with me. One of the problems which I face personally is professional loneliness. That is the problem of being surrounded by people, being involved in all kinds of people-centered activities, but not taking time to cultivate and nourish enough depth relationships. The problem of feeling more of a number than a name is at the heart of the massive loneliness which infects so many in our churches and society.

So, I would like to describe a set of models of ministry which are some ways to have a positive, growth-oriented approach to helping the church be a part of the answer to the epidemic of loneliness in our society. I'm speaking of the sociological realities to which Harvey Cox has pointed us, the context within which we do ministry, within which we do counseling and pastoral care—the reality that millions of people are uprooted. Therefore we need a strategy in the church for helping people put down roots in significant relationships fast so that they can grow as persons.

Developing genuinely intimate relationships is the way in which the deep hunger of the human heart can be satisfied and persons nurtured in the use of their God-given potentialities. By intimacy I mean a relationship of creative closeness—as opposed to sticky parasitical or symbiotic closeness—a relationship of *growing* and *caring* in which personal fulfillment can occur, where persons can flower. I am thinking here of the words of the young carpenter, who according to the author of the fourth gospel, stated his purpose in coming as being that people could have *life in all its fullness*. That was our Lord's purpose; it is also the purpose of the church. The church is a *human development center* where the creative human potential—personal resources in every person and in every marriage—and the unused assets in every relationship can be stimulated to flower. Life in all its fullness—the biblical concept of wholeness—is the goal of all the church's activities with families and marriages.

A study of the marriages of "successful" men done by a team of sociologists found that there are five identifiable types of marriages. These were not marriages about to go on the rocks; they were people who were planning to stay together. The sociologists found that there was first the *conflicts-habituated marriage*. These are the people who "would rather fight than switch." Then there was the *devitalized marriage*. Third, there was the *passive-congenial marriage*—congenial but lacking in real zest or vitality.

Fourth (and these categories got less populated as they went toward this end of the continuum), there was the so-called *vital marriage*. And lastly, there was a rather small group called the *total marriage*. Frankly, I haven't met many total marriages lately. Have you?

All this is to say that there is a qualitative distinction possible among so-called successful marriages. The main emphasis of the church, if it is to be a human development center where men and women, youth and children, can be inspired and stimulated is to discover life in all its fullness by improving their relationships, including marriage.

In the last five years I have noticed a real change in my own thinking. Most of my training in seminary and graduate school was in the *medical model* of how to do pastoral care. This is not the most viable or releasing model for the power of the parish clergyman. In contrast, the *growth model* is really a set of glasses for looking at people which lets us see them not so much in terms of what's *wrong* with them as what's *right* with them, not so much in terms of mistakes, goofs, and hangups they've had in the past, but in terms of the strengths and unused resources which they can use in the present and the kinds of constructive futures they can create if they discover they have the power to do so. The growth model for marriage makes a tremendous difference in counseling! It is the basis for a positive approach to pastoral care which forms in preventing marriage problems by helping couples deepen their relationship and enrich their communication.

A friend of mine, who is a minister in Iowa, tells about doing a Marriage Enrichment Weekend for couples. The purpose was to "make good marriage better." They went to a retreat center where they were sitting as couples on mattresses in front of a fireplace the first night of the workshop. First, he said, "Will you stop and think of all the things you don't like about your marriage and then tell your partner what these are." What he observed was that, each couple, as they talked began to move further and further apart. They debriefed that in terms of how they felt, which, as you can imagine, was generally discouraged and negative. Then he said, "Let's try something different! Will you tell each other what really turns you on in your mate, what you really like about your spouse and the good things about your relationship." You can finish the story. The nonverbal unconscious communication was dramatic—as the couples talked they spontaneously moved closer together. They said "yes" to their relationship by looking at it but through the growth perspective.

Incidentally, this was our Lord's way of looking at people. He could see potential in all sorts of unlikely people—e.g., in a weak, smelly fisherman named Simon he could see the potential for a rock-like character to be called Peter. Our Lord was able to look at people in terms of not what they were or had been but what they could *become*.

Marriage is the most likely place for people to use their fullest potential to "become," for there is one of the few places in our society where we have real opportunity to establish non-manipulative, growing relationships. Marriage is a place where mutual need satisfaction, the deepest satisfaction of the human

heart, is most likely to occur for most people.

Marriage is better than ever before in history. With all its problems, it is more fulfilling, more creative, more open and liberating. The revolution in changing male/female roles makes the potentialities of marriage richer and fuller. Because marriage has so many more possibilities and demands on it there is also more conflict in marriage. This is to be expected. The conflict can be creative—a stimulus for growth.

The response of the church to the seeing itself as a human growth and development center is to help people and to help marriages by becoming an *enlightening community* for people. Think of the tremendous implications of the fact that the church is the only social institution in most communities that has contact with the majority of people throughout the life cycle. If we take a positive growth model of ministry as normative, we'll concentrate ninety percent of our energies not on picking up the pieces, as important as that is, but rather on human growth and development. How do we help people discover and use their fullest potential so that these problems which would have otherwise developed down the road do not develop? How do we release the power of the church to become a caring community of mutual growth? A growth-oriented church can adopt many strategies including these five in the area of marriage which I would like to overview now:

(1) *The first is to put a major emphasis on pre-marriage growth groups:*¹ As a parish pastor I always felt frustrated by the 1 to 3 hurried sessions before the wedding. Have you as a pastor ever had the feeling, as you watched an emotionally-immature couple go into marriage, that they were walking off the edge of a cliff and you were powerless to stop them? We have a model now that will help change such situations. We have a chance of undoing some of the eighteen or so years of bad "programing" in how *not* to relate, which is what a lot of young couples have when they come for so-called premarital counseling. The model is the preparation for marriage growth group or retreat, or happening, or workshop. Call it whatever you want.

For example, a friend, who is a college campus pastor in Iowa, three or four times a year says in effect to his college groups: "Any of you who think you are thinking of marriage in the next year are invited to come to the parsonage between 9 and 12 p.m. to rap with my wife and myself about relationships and how couples can go about deepening their own communication and preparing for a good marriage." He has discovered that these are very productive groups; they usually meet for 4 or 5 sessions. He includes one recently married couple as catalysts.

The Department of Commerce says that there were nearly 800,000 divorces in 1972. What a tremendous opportunity to have divorce and remarriage groups in our churches to facilitate preparation for remarriage in this way. So the first model is to take preparation for marriage seriously by providing opportunities for young couples to learn in the context of group interaction and dealing with feelings, attitudes, and ideas—how one relates to keep a marriage going and growing.

(2) *The second model for marriage enrichment is*

a young married, or neomarraged, growth group. A minister of a congregation in California who has a large number of marriages per year has decided that he will use the premarriage interviews with couples to establish rapport and then set up a "contract" with them for growth counseling after the marriage ceremony. The image he uses in explaining this to the couple is very interesting. He says in effect, "You know when you buy a new car, you take it in for a 5,000 mile checkup and a 10,000 mile checkup, and so forth. That makes sense, doesn't it? How would you feel about coming in a month and then three months after the wedding just to talk about how things are going?" Almost all of the couples agree and almost all of them keep these dates. He usually makes three appointments during the first year. Many times the hidden problems which don't surface because of defensiveness in the premarriage situation come out quickly during the ongoing sessions. He does his growth counseling couple by couple, which is one good way. A more efficient way is also to make this available to couples on a basis of growth groups. Thus young couples discover that they can learn from each other and become a caring community to each other.

(3) *The third model is retreats for mid-marriage and preparation for retirement marriages.* The assumption undergirding all that I am saying is that couples who desire to improve their marriages can, providing they have coaching to learn better communication skills. Couples who have normal marriages, who aren't hurting big, can if they try strengthen their own communication, deepen their relationship, and learn how to nurture the love more effectively. This is the purpose of a growth group.

The mid-years' crisis, as we have been told repeatedly, is the crisis of *values* and the crisis of *relationships*. The church majors in both of these areas. It can help people find a philosophy of life which grows with them all through their marriage. The church can help people deepen their relationships in the mid-years, thus finding ways of meeting each other's heart hungers. Have those of you who are in the mid-years noticed how many of your contemporaries are getting divorces after twenty years or so of marriage? The couple who doesn't deepen their communication after the children begin leaving home are often in real trouble, particularly if they have made the mistake of having an overly children-centered marriage and consequently have been neglecting nurturing their intimacy for years. My wife does play therapy with trouble children. She says that a couple with a disturbed child often is one who has overconcentrated on *parenting* and underconcentrated on marriage, or the wife and husband role.

Mid-years marriage retreats can be an experience of remarkable growth. As Freud pointed out some people in their early forties find this to be a period of real openness for change and growth. Many people who hit the crisis of age forty (approaching it from either direction) find the very pain of the crisis produces new openness for growth. Providing communication-building experiences helps them use their crises for growth.

(4) *The fourth model is to encourage couple's*

groups, couple's clubs and classes within churches to have regular growth boosters to keep the couples in those groups growing and the groups themselves growth stimulating. A few months ago Charlotte and I did a marriage growth weekend at a church camp in the California mountains with a couple club from a church near the Pacific Ocean. Once a year this group brings in a visiting fireman, or a couple of fire persons in this case, to be facilitators for growth booster experiences. Incidentally, with changing roles it is important in any kind of marriage growth event to have co-educational leadership, if at all possible. This group is a couple's club that isn't your ordinary couple's club where a lot of superficial relating goes on. It has become an ongoing, sustaining, support and growth group for those couples because they had a periodical growth booster. The analogy here is from the space field, the booster rocket. It takes a good deal of energy for most couples to get their marriages into a growth orbit. But once they get there a modest additional expenditure of energy will keep it there.

A lot of the dead groups in our churches really aren't growth productive but could be if they contract together to have semi-annual growth retreats when they would concentrate on relationships, on depth communication, on translating the Gospel into the *language* and skills of marriage.

A couples fellowship in the church where my wife and I attended decided that instead of meeting once a month on Fridays for supper and sociability only, they would meet once a week for six weeks as a marriage enrichment group. They decided to study our book on marriage in a leaderless group, to deepen their relationships. They invited Charlotte and me to visit the fifth of the six sessions they had agreed on, and we were amazed at the level of communication on which they were relating.

(5) *The fifth strategy is to set up a variety of consciousness-raising experiences for both men and women:* The issue in so-called women's liberation is really human liberation which makes it the most basic of all the social movements of our day. It's the most important of the many liberation movements of our century because it will influence the most intimate relationships of people generally. If we recognize this and see that what its about is really "the release of the captives" and the captives *aren't just women*, then we will realize that this is really the Christian's and the church's task! Now, it is obvious that many people don't like "women's liberation" as a label and, therefore, if we are going to get them involved in human liberation we will have to figure out creative ways to do it. This means, for example, providing a variety of identity strengthening and self-esteem enhancing group experiences for women, in many types of church groups. It also means getting women whose consciousness has been raised into our ongoing marriage enrichment groups and retreats so that their awareness of the issues will be caught by others.

In what sense is the movement also men's liberation? How are men freed in more male-female relations? What are the gains for men in women's liberation? There are a number that I have experienced, along with the pain and sense of loss, in our struggles away from a satellite marriage to one which is more mu-

tually fulfilling and equal, with neither of us having an identity derived from the other person's identity. (As my wife said, first I was someone's daughter, then I was somebody's wife, and now I am discovering who I am as a person.) The sense of the losses for me is very real and I would be less than candid if I tried to disguise this. For example I really have a sense of loss of my male role privileges in having to share in a lot of the dirty work. We have rewritten our marriage contract regarding the division of the dirty work and I do all the dishes, for example. (That's why I take so many trips.) I have found that a lot of things about housework don't really turn me on. The greater sense of loss is of the automatic supports to my self-esteem and my male ego, of having someone as a satellite identity. But there are a number of obvious gains for me. For one thing it has meant freedom from a sense of exploiting another human being about whom I care very much. I was doing it with her consent, of course. In fact, both of us were programmed to believe that for one person to do his thing at the expense of the other's fulfillment was the "right" way to relate between a man and a woman. It feels good to realize that we are no longer exploiting each other in the ways we were before. To see Charlotte using so much more of herself in her new vocation and identity is deeply satisfying to me. Another obvious gain for me and for our marriage from having a more liberated relation is the increase and the enjoyment of the sexual side of our marriage. As long as couples have a Parent-Child game (in transactional analysis terms) going into a marriage, then sex isn't going to have its fullest vitality, zest, and ecstasy. Sex is liberating in a marriage to the extent that people in it are liberated, emotionally and spiritually, since human sex is a way of communication in a relationship.

The deepest forms of intimacy—emotional, spiritual, and sexual—flower in a relationship between equals where neither is exploiting the other.

Another thing that is a real gain from this is greater closeness to our children. Only in recent years have I been able to embrace our adult sons when they return after being away for a while. I feel good about this—this is a very important way of communicating how I feel about them.

The other day I saw a male seminary student pushing a baby carriage across Foothill Boulevard near our school and I felt a kind of tug at my insides. I felt nostalgia but also a sense of loss and guilt. I recognize that when I was that age and stage in our marriage, I was most involved with "more important things" like trying to succeed, earn a living, going to graduate school, etc., etc., etc. The deeper forms of closeness young fathers are now having with their children, I deprived myself of. I was programmed to believe that the father had certain responsibilities, but the real responsibility of childrearing was "woman's work." To realize as many now do that fathers can be just as close to their children, and *should be* for both their sakes and the children's wholeness, is a great gain for human liberation.

Helping couples use the crisis of women's liberation and men's liberation as an opportunity for growth is a major challenge for marriage counseling today. Many

couples find their marriages coming apart at the seams (as the woman changes and the man doesn't) because the husband's male self-esteem has been dependent upon the satellite identity of his wife. The changing roles has raised all kind of problems in marriages and frequently they do not survive. And we've only begun to feel the impact of changing roles. If couples can move beyond the painful transition stage in their marriages to a mutually fulfilling, affirming relationship, then it is a whole new day for their marriages. Marriages can now become a more humanizing, intimate and mutually enhancing relationship than ever before in history.

These five models are some of the things we can do in the church to increase positive intimacy. I could mention others, as could you.

What can one do in these approaches to help couples deepen their creative intimacy? We could help them learn skills for enriching our own marriages. We can in these five types of groups help persons learn the *care and feeding of growing marriages* by doing the following things (These skills can also be applied by ourselves to enhance our relationships):

First, we can help persons learn to increase communication skills. Two parents in a lay training weekend reported that as a spin-off of learning to do what Tillich called "loving listening," they were able to listen to their adolescent daughters from whom they had felt estranged for some time. Communication skills can be learned. We can practice these in growth groups. Communication, of course, takes time. In our marriage, intimacy-building communication requires time alone together without the children.

Charlotte and I have decided we need a specific time to be alone together. We try to set aside Friday nights to be our time. We call it our "reconnecting night" and if one of us has to be away on Friday, then we have our "Friday" in the middle of the week, so we won't miss it. What do we do on our Friday? First, we try to get away from all the reminders which keep our parent-side turned on—the work side, the duty side, the keep-at-it side. We often go out to dinner and linger for some quiet conversation in the atmosphere of a nice restaurant. We try to work through any peevishness accumulated during the week so that we are able to relate to each other intimately.

A second skill of marriage building we call the skill of "the intentional marriage." This is applying the growth perspective by helping couples design their own futures and the futures of their marriages. The couple begins by sitting facing one another and completing the sentence, "I appreciate in you _____." We start with strengths. The husband says to his wife, "I appreciate in you _____," and he takes as much time as he needs to express himself. The wife does the same. After they finish this, how do you suppose they feel? Like they have been to a feast! The growth perspective starts with what's right with a marriage.

Then we ask the couple to complete the sentence, "I need from you _____." In this experience they recognize and identify the unmet needs in the marriage. The assumption is that love in marriages grows only as people learn to better meet their mutual needs.

Then, on the basis of the needs identified in this step, we ask them to finish the sentence, "I would like to change in our relationship _____." They decided on a specific item or two on which to work to meet more of their needs, using more of their strengths.

Another third teachable skill is learning to fight fair—releasing their anger harmlessly rather than sitting on it and resolving rather than avoiding issues between them. One young couple we know has set up a mid-week "fight night," you might call it. The purpose is to clear the channel between themselves and their marriage of all the accumulated debris, frustration, anger, hurt feelings, etc.—so that the precious times of relating intimately won't get fouled up. If we don't clear the air in some such way as couples, we spin our wheels trying to relate intimately on a deep level. So, help couples learn to work out the anger that stands as a cold wall to freeze love feelings. We discovered that once the wall is down, loving feelings will flow spontaneously in most marriages in a new discovery of one another.

A fourth teachable skill is to help people learn how to let their "child-side" play regularly. I like my friend Wayne Oates' word "workaholic" here. Those of us who have too much of the two briefcase syndrome, carrying them around like security blankets, can resonate to Wayne's very apt word here. We need to know how and when and where to turn off our parent-side—the side that says, "Don't enjoy." "Keep your nose to the grindstone." Many of us who are approaching middle-age (particularly those of us in the ministry) have a bad case of work addiction. It is vital strategy for us to break up the work addiction cycle for our health's sake of our marriages. We find that taking regular mini-vacations helps us. It's a worthwhile investment for example, to rent a motel by the beach, away from the telephone, away from jobs, to spend some time lying in the sun, or to go to a cabin in the mountains where we can really get away—wander in nature, find a quiet spot under the pine trees, sit in the sun together, talk and enjoy each other. Turn on your "child-side" regularly, let your "child-side" play. This is so important for the health of your marriage as well as your own mental and spiritual health.

A fifth skill that can be learned is to cultivate the art of pleasuring. I am convinced that many of the techniques from Masters and Johnson sex therapy can be applied to "normal" marriage in which the edge gets a little dull on the romantic side. It's something like a bottle of soda that has been left in the ice box with the lid off. The basic insights and approaches of sex therapy apply to those of us who don't have king-size hangups, to help us do what young lovers do spontaneously—make pleasuring an art. (Non-demand pleasuring is the heart of sex therapy.) There is a romance for each of the ages and stages of marriage. We must savor the *process* of marriage, realizing that it is different at every stage. The findings of Masters and Johnson are very reassuring to some of us—that sexual enjoyment has no terminal point physiologically. In other words if couples keep playing at it, they can go on enjoying sex into the eighth decade of their lives. The reason a lot of couples don't continue to

enjoy sex is in most cases not physiological but interpersonal conflict and unfaced hostility. Sex is one of God's best gifts. Let's praise him by enjoying it fully.

How to create a loving community—a marriage support group—is another skill we need to teach couples. In our marriage growth groups and retreats we try to build this skill of creating communities. We ask groups: "What do you want by way of follow-up? We've had a mountain peak experience here of relating and communicating. We have experienced the good news in the language of marriage here. What would you like us to do now as a group to become a support system to each other's growth?" Then, the group strategized about continuity.

Finally, I would like to suggest that we teach couples how to enhance the number and quality of the "peak experiences," their experiences of meaning and of God. Here I speak of moments of transcendence when you are aware somehow that it isn't just the two of you. Buber says marriage is created out of the "thou" in the relation which is more than the two persons. The "thou" of the relationship is that out of which the creativity comes. Spiritual intimacy is the cement which holds all the rest together. Peak experiences are of many kinds, for different couples. This is the vertical dimension of marriage and family life. Sometimes it comes in an experience of shared beauty—for example, sitting watching the sunset together. Sometimes it comes in a moment of worship or in music or in depth fellowship. In helping provide transcendence, the Christian tradition and heritage have unique resources and a unique wellspring of understanding of the depth dimension of marriage—to bring to the whole process of becoming more self-actualizing marriages.

A few weeks ago I met a young woman who had lost her husband from cancer a few months before. In a letter she had written to her friends describing her experience, she said: "Don't assume the future. Don't assume all kinds of healing time for the bruised places in your relationship. Don't be afraid to touch and share deeply and openly all the tragic and joyful dimensions of life." It's sharing on that level which allows people to deepen the intimacy in marriage and to find that unique, precious relationship that helps bring life in all its fullness.

¹ Since I have discussed the methods of setting up and leading growth groups elsewhere, I won't discuss these essential matters of technique here. (See Clinebell, *The People Dynamic, Changing Self and Society Through Growth Groups*, Harper & Row, 1972. Chapters 1-3, "How to Set Up and Lead a Growth Group"; Chapter 4, "Marriage Growth Groups"; Chapter 9, "Growth Groups in Churches"; Chapter 6, "Parent-Youth Growth Groups." This book also reports on the grief growth group approach which was demonstrated at the conference.)

(Note: In response to a number of questions about the growth orientation in pastoral care and counseling, a resource which applies this approach to marriage and family life is a series of audio cassettes designed as refresher courses in counseling: *Growth Counseling: New Tools for Clergy and Laity*. The cassettes deal with marriage enrichment groups and retreats, using conflict for growth, enhancing sexual pleasure in marriage, changing roles, and the development of family growth networks. Abingdon Press, August, 1973.)

"Abortion on Request—Implications of the Supreme Court Decision"

David R. Mace

Sally Brown was decidedly nervous when she arrived at the clinic. She didn't quite know what was going to happen. Her appointment was for nine o'clock, and that was only ten minutes away. She reminded herself that she had made her decision, and there was no turning back now. Then she took a deep breath and walked right in.

She found herself in a large waiting room with four or five other women, sitting around in comfortable chairs. Sally went up to the reception desk and gave her name. "Please take a seat," said the receptionist. "We'll call you when we're ready."

About half an hour later her first name was called. She was taken to a room where she filled out a personal form, and a nurse asked her some questions about her medical history. When this was finished, she went to the cashier's office and paid the clinic fee.

After some lab tests, she joined a group counseling session. The counselor explained to the group of women that they would have their abortions done by the D and E method because they all had early pregnancies. The method was explained in detail, and they were encouraged to ask questions. The counselor answered the questions courteously and invited the women to talk about how they felt. One girl seemed quite upset and the counselor asked her to stay behind so she could talk with her alone.

Sally was now shown a cubicle where she undressed and put on a hospital gown. When she was ready, she was taken to the operating room, where she met the physician. The nurse then placed her on the table in the usual position for a pelvic examination. The doctor gave her a local anesthetic, her cervix was dilated, and a plastic tube, half an inch in diameter, was inserted in her uterus. When everything was ready, the suction pump connected to the tube was switched on for a few minutes. Sally felt a little discomfort, but no pain. The physician checked to see that the contents of the uterus had been emptied into the waiting jar, then covered it up. A few minutes later, Sally was helped to get down from the table, and taken to the recovery room.

She stayed there for an hour and a half. During this time a nurse monitored her pulse, her breathing, her blood pressure, her temperature and her heart beat. She was asked to report if she felt any severe cramps; and a watch was kept for any signs of heavy bleeding.

The nurse asked Sally how she felt. She confessed she had been a little dizzy at first; but maybe this was because she had not been allowed to eat any food that day. She said she was all right now. The nurse said she could get up and walk about a little. She was given some light refreshments.

By this time she was feeling herself again. She noticed that it was 2:30 in the afternoon. The nurse gave her a final check, and took her back to the cubicle where she had left her clothes. She dressed, and half an hour later she was on her way home again. It was all over.

What I have described is a typical abortion, carried out in the first three months of pregnancy, without complications. Soon now, this will be happening all over the United States, to about four thousand women every day.

For each of these women, a personal problem will be solved. And in each case, the mutilated remains of a beginning human life will be left behind in a jar.

How are we to react to this? What does it all mean? How should we interpret it—theologically, socially, ethically?

First, let's see how it all came about.

We are living in the wake of the sexual revolution. After long centuries of negative repression, we have discovered the goodness of sex. As a result, we are enjoying sex as never before. And we are having problem pregnancies as never before.

In a sense, the sexual revolution has itself been the result of a problem pregnancy. It was born just a little prematurely. Two generations of young people have now been assured that they could enjoy sexual freedom, because the perfect contraceptive was just around the corner. At the same time, married people have been told about the perils of the population explosion, and told to enjoy their sex lives but to limit their families. Contraceptives, they were assured, could enable them to do this.

Unfortunately the perfect contraceptive is still around the corner, and even the imperfect ones we have are sometimes out of reach. Technology has achieved great marvels, but it has still failed to deliver on its promise in this area. The result is a steadily increasing frequency of problem pregnancies, producing a trail of human misery. Finally, in desperation, we have been compelled to provide legal abortion as a second line of defense to deal with the resulting crisis.

All this has come upon us with startling suddenness. Only a few years ago, abortion was something nice people didn't talk about. It was something dark and sinister. It was a criminal act, contrary to the law. Most doctors were strongly against it. As recently as 1967, the American Medical Association adopted a stated policy of opposition to induced abortion, except where the health or life of the mother was threatened, or under other extreme and exceptional conditions. The churches, until very recently, regarded abortion with horror.

Then, almost overnight, the entire climate changed. Never in the history of social ethics, I believe, has any culture made such a dramatic about-face on an ethical question of such vital importance. Pressure groups sprang up everywhere. Members of the women's liberation movement, divided into factions about almost everything else, found that the liberalizing of abortion was the one issue on which they could all agree. The youth culture, led by activist student groups, campaigned vigorously for free abortion. The population control movement saw it as a way to cut back sharply on the birthrate. Under these pressures, state laws began to be changed. By 1970 doctors were deeply divided, and soon they were changing their minds in droves. Clergymen joined in, and organized services to help women to get abortions. Churches

began to pass resolutions in support of liberalization of the law. As the mind-changing process gathered momentum, the Catholics tried desperately to organize the opposition; but the extreme position they took prevented moderates from joining them. By 1971, in a plebiscite taken in the State of Washington, a liberalization law was voted in by a small majority.

By this time the bandwagon was really rolling. Delighted by the rapidity of their success, the abortion campaigners stepped up their demands. Liberal laws were no longer enough. Abortion freely available on request became the declared objective. So now, in states that passed liberal laws, the ink was hardly dry before the campaign started all over again, this time for repeal of all abortion laws.

Meanwhile, appeals to the Supreme Court was piling up, and an early verdict was promised. The furor died down, except for some increased vigor in the Catholic campaign. The pro-abortion campaigners had played their ace, and they waited for the final verdict of the supreme legal authority.

That verdict, as we all know, has now been announced. The Supreme Court, with 7 justices in favor and 2 opposed, has struck down most of the abortion laws in the country, and opened the gate wide for abortion on request. The matter has been settled for a long time to come.

I have skimmed very light over the crowded events of the past five or six years, and left out a great deal. But I hope I have conveyed a sense of the breakneck pace at which we have moved. Many people have been bewildered and almost stunned by it all. In a few short years, entrenched traditional attitudes have been attacked, overwhelmed, and swept away. There can be no doubt about it, the supporters of liberal abortion have won a tremendous victory. The stunned and shocking statements of Catholic bishops testify eloquently to this fact.

Well, where are we now? The best way to answer that question is to take a look at the judgment of the Supreme Court. It's a very interesting document. You have all read reports of it; but I suspect few of you have had time to go through the entire original document. So let me try to summarize it for you.

The Court chose to base its ruling on two particular appeals. Both came from southern states—one from Texas, the other from Georgia. The main judgment was based on the Texas case, and I'll confine my comments to that one.

A pregnant single woman challenged the Texas abortion law, which wouldn't allow her an abortion because her life was not threatened by the pregnancy. She couldn't afford to travel to another state. She claimed that the Texas law abridged her right to privacy, and claimed that it should therefore be ruled unconstitutional.

Before coming to a decision, the Court made a careful survey of the history of abortion. I needn't weary you with details, although the report of the study is very interesting. In effect, this survey led to two broad general conclusions.

First, the Court decided there has been a tendency in our culture to interpret legal attitudes on abortion in the past too rigidly. For example, it now appears doubtful whether in English common law abortion

was ever really regarded as a serious crime. Since it was from English common law that the early American laws were derived, obviously the legislators over here had a bias and gave their laws a decidedly puritanical twist. So, if we now pass more liberal laws, we are not departing from our ancient tradition, but rather returning to it.

Second, the Court decided that changing conditions today have undermined the main reasons for which the original state laws were passed. A major state interest is the health of the woman. In the old days, abortion was very dangerous, and women had to be protected from that danger. Nowadays, the situation is reversed, because abortions up to 12 weeks actually involve less risk to the woman than she would face if she gave birth to the child. So the ground is cut away from the argument behind most abortion laws, that their purpose is to protect the woman's health and life.

For lawmakers, these are both powerful arguments. It is clear that they weighed heavily with the Supreme Court. In addition, the plea of the Texas woman that her privacy has been abridged was accepted, but the Court did *not* accept the position of the women's liberation movement that the right of personal privacy is absolute. The judges declared that this right is always qualified and conditional.

So far, I haven't mentioned the rights of the unborn. Some commentators think the Supreme Court ducked this issue. You have probably read the much-quoted statement—"We need not resolve the difficult question of where life begins. When those trained in the respective disciplines of medicine, philosophy, and theology are unable to arrive at any consensus, the judiciary, at this point in the development of man's knowledge, is not in a position to speculate as to the answer."

In fact, the justices don't really duck this question. They examine it, rather convincingly, from their own legal point of view; and, interestingly enough, they quote religious practice to support their position. Listen to this—"Life takes time to develop, and until it is actually present, it cannot be destroyed. Its interruption prior to formation would hardly be homicide, and society does not regard it as such. The rites of baptism are not performed, and death certificates (and funerals, we might add) are not required when a miscarriage occurs. . . . This would be the case if the fetus constituted human life." The Court's verdict on this question is summed up in the following statement—"The unborn have never been recognized in the law as persons in the whole sense."

What the Court has tried to do has been to strike a fair balance between the State's two major interests in abortion—the duty to protect the woman's legal rights, which are limited and conditional; and the duty to protect the rights of the fetus, which are also limited and conditional. The rights of the woman become absolute only when her health is seriously at stake. The rights of the fetus become absolute only when it is viable; that is, when it has the capability of meaningful life outside the mother's womb.

On the basis of these principles, the Court has divided pregnancy into three stages. In the first three months, the woman has an unquestioned right to abortion if she can find a doctor who will perform

the operation. After the third month, the State may regulate the right to abortion in accordance with medical estimates of the possible risks to the woman's health. However, in the third stage, when the unborn child becomes viable, and could live outside the womb, the State may deny the right of abortion entirely, unless medical judgment strongly advocates it.

There is no doubt that this decisive legal judgment is going to increase greatly the number of abortions in this country. One estimate is that they may climb to half the number of live births. In some other countries, the rates have actually gone far beyond that.

Let me conclude by summarizing some of the implications of the Supreme Court verdict—specially those implications that particularly concern us as Christians.

1. We must understand clearly that the subject is not closed to further discussion. Only a legal verdict has been passed. And the Court has been careful to point out that its verdict is based on what we like to call "the present state of our knowledge." The baffling question, "What is the value of unborn human life?" remains; and the search for an answer must go on; especially among the disciplines of medicine, philosophy, and theology which, as the Supreme Court reminds us, have so far failed to reach any consensus on the subject.

2. We must also understand that our right to adopt whatever attitude we wish toward abortion has not been interfered with. If you believe that abortion is murder, you can go on holding that opinion; you can shout it from the housetops to everyone who will listen; you can join with those like-minded people to propagate what you believe. What the new law does is not to take away your rights, but to give to those who differ deeply from you the right not only to proclaim, but also to practice, what *they* believe. What this really signifies is the recognition that our society is not only democratic, but also pluralistic, and we must be ready to put up with the inconveniences that this inevitably involves.

3. The Supreme Court decision confronts us with the fact that the abortion decision—the "agonizing decision" as I have called it in my book—must increasingly be faced by large numbers of individual women. What the State is saying is, "Look, we are simply unable to settle these complicated ethical questions for you. So you now have the freedom of choice. Henceforth you may legally decide for yourself whether you want an abortion or whether you don't."

It was because I anticipated the Supreme Court decision that I wrote my book on the subject. (*Abortion—The Agonizing Decision*, Abingdon Press, 1973) Amid all the raging controversy about whether abortion is right or wrong, good or bad, no one was giving much attention to the central figure in the drama—the woman faced with the decision.

Only a few extremists can settle the question by saying that abortion is always right or always wrong. What most of us believe is that it is sometimes right and sometimes wrong, depending on the circumstances. So it usually comes down to an individual decision. That is the woman's problem—to find out what is the right decision for her personally. Some women have no difficulty in making this decision. But for many

others it is so difficult that they can't do it without counseling help.

But who is to do the counseling? The campaign for abortion has insisted that the decision must be arrived at between the woman and her doctor; and this is what the Supreme Court requires. However, what is overlooked is that the overwhelming majority of abortions today are not sought on medical grounds at all, so that no medical decision is involved. The role of the doctor is really that of a technician. If the woman wants his help in reaching an ethical decision, which normally requires hours of discussion, the doctor justifiably replies that he has neither the time nor the training for such work.

It is urgently necessary, therefore, that counseling services be provided for these women. There are signs that some promising action is being taken in this direction. I have recently written a Foreword to an excellent handbook on problem pregnancy counseling that is soon to be published in North Carolina.

4. Though the number of abortions will now inevitably increase, we have a duty to keep it as low as we possibly can. There *are* many abortions that could be prevented. In my experience, the main reason why Christian girls seek abortions is out of fear of the religious wrath of their parents because they have become pregnant outside marriage. And the wrath of the parents is often caused by fear of the judgment of their fellow Christians. In all this I find little place for Christian compassion, and little understanding of the complicated world in which young people are living today. In one case in which I was involved, the girl was deplorably ignorant about sex; and it turned out that her father had joined with others to close down a promising sex education program in the local high school.

Many a girl would gladly accept her pregnancy and give her child for adoption if her parents were not so afraid of public disgrace. Abortion has so depleted the adoption market today that there are thousands of loving homes where babies that are being aborted would be welcome. Why should it be considered a disgrace for a married woman, who already has all the children she can raise, and finds herself unexpectedly pregnant, to bear the child and give it for adoption? In China it has always been considered an act of generosity for a mother with children to give one of them to a woman who has none.

Another example: everyone agrees that effective contraception is the only practicable answer to abortion. Yet the Catholics, who condemn abortion so strongly, also condemn contraception. Other Christians, who don't condemn contraception, want it withheld from young people who have sex outside marriage; which of course leads to more problem pregnancies, and more abortions. How do we resolve this dilemma?

Let me try to sum up. The right of legal abortion has become a part of the American way of life. We may not like this, but it has happened, and we must come to terms with it.

Nobody likes abortion; most doctors hate it, my medical students are often quite upset about it. Whatever theory we hold about unborn life, we know that the fetus has the potentiality to become a human being. Each of us was once a fetus. The greatest

and the noblest people who ever lived, as well as the greatest scoundrels, all spent nine months growing in the seclusion and protection of their mothers' wombs.

It offends us deeply to think of destroying an unborn child. At an international family planning conference in Budapest, someone said that abortion is inherently degrading, and everyone agreed. The most cautious estimates suggest that at the very least, 30 million unborn children are being destroyed in the world every year by induced abortion. And each of these 30 million involves a Sally Brown, finding herself compelled to act against her woman's deepest impulse to cherish and protect the child she has conceived.

We may have to tolerate abortion for a time, as a regrettable necessity. But surely we can and must find a better way. Surely our technology, which can split the atom and put men on the moon, will soon come up with an answer.

So we must, in a Christian gathering confronting this serious and baffling problem, affirm that this is not the way we want to live, and it is not the way we want our friends and neighbors to live, nor the way we want Americans, or any other people to live. We therefore declare our faith and our hope that a day will come, and may it come soon, when men and women will be able to express and enjoy their sexuality without demeaning themselves or exploiting others; and when there will be no more problem pregnancies, no more avoidable abortions, and no more unwanted children.

"Family Conflicts of the Modern Minister"

Wallace Denton

In considering the family conflicts of the modern minister let me begin by saying that I do not perceive of the minister as in any basic sense confronting different family problems than those of his neighbors who live on either side of him. The minister and his wife have to learn how to communicate, how to arrive at decisions, how to discipline their children, how to live within their income, how to work out their sex life, how to get along with relatives, how to cope with their anger at each other, and how to find time to do any one of the things I've just enumerated. As you immediately recognize, these are exactly the same problems that other couples in the community are confronting. While it is true that the *context* in which the minister works these out differs from the local policeman, high school teacher, auto mechanic, or physician, this does not alter the fact that he is grappling with the same basic problem of having to learn to live together as a family. While it is true that there are unique dimensions to the minister's family from other families, it is equally true that the family problems of, say, the policeman are uniquely different from the minister. What I am saying is that the minister and his family are much more like other families in the community than they are unlike them.

I suspect that much of the literature on the minister's family has done them a disservice by emphasizing their differentness, by making them self-conscious, by isolating and setting them apart from other families in the community. No wonder that so many ministers' wives complain of being lonely—they see themselves as being different, set apart.

The Minister's Family and Its Peer Group

One of the problems which I have noted over the years with the minister and his wife is that they often seem to have no peer group to whom they can relate. Another way of saying this is that it appears to me that many ministers and their wives have no group that they regularly interact with where they simply are Bill and Mary. Though most ministers seem to develop close relationships with some parishioners, even in these groups his role as "Reverend Jones" and her role as "the minister's wife" lurks close at hand and tends to obscure the other side of their lives as Bill and Mary.

The loneliness which is regularly reported by minister's families and which is so often dealt with in the literature I believe is directly related to this problem. The loneliness of the ministry was one of the more frequently enumerated problems reported by Fairchild and Wynn in *Families in the Church*. In my own research with ministers' wives, fully two thirds of them spontaneously brought up this subject. (See *The Role of the Minister's Wife*.) Yet, can it be that this man and woman who are loved and surrounded by a church full of people are lonely? They not only can be, but we have reason to believe many of them are. For you see, loneliness has its genesis not in the absence of people, but in the absence of meaningful and intimate relationships with people.

The lack of a peer group with whom he can let his hair down and give expression to the nonminister side of himself seems to me to be related to *fear*. As a leader, the minister and his wife are afraid to get too "chummy" with the parishioners whom they lead. This fear is reinforced in much of the literature which over and over warns of getting too involved, too close to parishioners lest you be accused of playing favorites or other leadership problems are engendered. Of course, these warnings are not without some foundation.

However, since most of the social contacts of the minister and his wife are with parishioners, it presents a real problem as to how they can meet their needs for intimacy. With whom can they share their inner concerns, their doubts, their gripes. Where does the minister meet his need to relate to another human being eye to eye?

While interviewing a minister recently as a part of preparing for this lecture, I asked him about his close friends. He responded by saying something other ministers have told me. He said he had no close, intimate friends except for his wife, nor was he close with his fellow Baptist pastors. (One wonders what the impact would be were he not able to be close and intimate with his wife.) He said he meets weekly with a group of Baptist pastors, but that he would not think of being real honest with them about some of his feelings or problems. The competitive

spirit, he said, among pastors is such that he knew some of them would be delighted to know that he has a problem or otherwise "get" something on him. I've been told of this denominational competitiveness before. I asked a Lutheran wife who mentioned it why she and her husband didn't develop friends with the Baptist and Methodist pastors. She then said that in their community there was a mad scramble for any new family that moved in regardless of their denominational affiliation so that competition existed between all pastors. I don't know whether this competition is as acute in your community, but at least some pastors seem to have difficulty developing close friendships with other pastors.

The personal impact of always having to be *the minister* with all groups can have subtle but negative effects. Related to this is an interesting study which Dr. Robert McAllister conducted at the Seton Psychiatric Institute in Baltimore with one hundred Catholic priests who were hospitalized with a psychiatric illness. Dr. McAllister concluded that a part of these men's problem was related to constantly living in what he called a "clergy only" atmosphere. As a result, these priests tended to repress their humanity, and to some degree lost their own sense of identity by experiencing themselves only as clergymen rather than as persons (*Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 132:80-88, 1961). Now I know that the Protestant minister lives in quite a different social milieu with his wife and children than a Catholic priest, but perhaps he too can become too submerged in a "church only" atmosphere with his parishioners and experience himself primarily in his professional role of minister and lose touch with himself as a person.

Another of the pastors with whom I recently talked said all his ministry he had been pastor of large, prominent churches. Now he was pastor of a small but dynamic and growing church where he said he is experiencing much more freedom to be himself. He said that without knowing it, he had lived for years with a "First Church" image, and that he was for the first time feeling really free to be a person. At the same time he said he was made anxious by this freedom. Now this discussion may not ring a bell with your own experience if you have no problem being a person. Nonetheless, it is a problem with some men and women. I do know that men in the hospital and military chaplaincy often report that they have a greater sense of freedom in the chaplaincy than the pastorate, which may be one of the greatest appeals of the chaplaincy.

What do ministers do about the difficulty in finding a peer group and the loneliness they feel in their role? Some continue in their loneliness. Some eagerly look forward to conferences as this where they can cast aside their ministerial role and be their other self, just Bill. Some, of course, develop close, intimate friends in the congregation. But I've always rather admired the pastor's wife who said to me once that the idea of no close friends in the church might be good for the church, but it was terrible on the mental health of the pastor's wife. Consequently, she said she had resolved to be friendly with anyone who is friendly with her.

The Minister's Wife and Her Search for Identity

To shift my focus slightly, one of the problems which I have noted with ministers' wives which was less pronounced (though present) when I conducted my first research on ministers' wives fifteen years ago, is the search for her own identity in a twentieth century, industrialized, urbanized, secularized society in which the old roles of men and women are rapidly changing and the model of an ideal minister's wife laid down in horse and buggy days no longer seems to fit their personality.

A friend of mine who teaches a class for the wives of seminary students said recently that she sees the need for an identity as being a basic problem of the women in her class. On the one hand they find themselves pulled between the traditional role of the minister's wife as spelled out in the literature, and on the other hand feeling that this is trying to put "Saul's armor on David" because it just doesn't fit. Still, they do not yet know what role does fit.

One of the questions I have many times asked a minister's wife is this, "If you were to offer some bit of advice to a young woman marrying a minister, what would it be?" By far the most common answer is, "Be yourself." Can the modern minister's wife be herself? Or are the expectations of the modern congregation such that she is expected to fall into a preconceived role model of the ideal minister's wife? If I understand what the women I have talked with are saying it is this: Yes, the minister's wife can be herself, if she wants to be herself. She can be quite traditional, they say, or she can live and work much as any other Christian woman in the church and community.

The single most crucial factor as to whether the minister's wife is able to develop her own identity and life-style is the minister's wife herself. If she is sensitive to even the slightest criticism, she will be an utterly frustrated woman who tries to please everyone and ends up pleasing no one—especially herself. On the other hand, if she knows who she is and what she expects out of herself, in terms of the role she is going to fill, then my impression and the testimony of most wives is that most congregations will take her for what she is and do this with aplomb. However, she does have to educate each congregation as to what they can expect from her.

My impression in talking with laymen about their expectations of their pastor's wife is that most parishioners do not have an elaborate set of prescribed expectations for her. They largely want her to be another Christian woman in the congregation. As one laywoman said to me, "In our church, we have no room for the 'role of the minister's wife,' we only have room for her as another woman in the church." "So," she continued, "if she wants to come into a group as *the minister's wife*, or expects us to relate to her as *the minister's wife*, she will be constantly upset. We accept her as a person." A pastor's wife who only knows how to relate to others as the traditional minister's wife rather than as another concerned woman in the church would have frustration in that church.

A problem with some ministers' wives, it seems to me, is that their own identity is derived almost entirely out of the shadow of her husband's identity. Thus,

she dons the garb of "the minister's wife" and she entertains in her home—as the minister's wife; she teaches Sunday school—as the minister's wife; she attends committee meetings—as the minister's wife. Always her identity is experienced with reference to his identity. Consequently, whether she realizes it or not, she is likely to communicate a feeling of doing what she does out of some heavy sense of duty—because she is the minister's wife. On the other hand, there are those ministers' wives who do the same things, but these teach Sunday school because they choose to as a Christian and member of that congregation—not because they are ministers' wives.

I believe why some ministers' wives complain so bitterly about their husbands being gone much of the time is that with him absent, she has so little sense of identity as a person herself without the shadow of his ministerial role falling over her. Interestingly, wives of ministers who work outside the home complain much less of family time as being a problem.

Marital Dry Rot in the Parsonage

A major problem confronted by the minister and his wife is what I call the marital "dry rot." (See my book, *Family Problems and What to Do About Them*, for a fuller treatment of this subject.) The major marital danger confronted by the minister is not divorce, since ministers have a lower than average divorce rate. Nor is it that his children are all going to the dogs. The major marital hazard which he confronts is the dry rot. (Of course, dry rot is the major hazard confronted by families in his congregation. But since we are talking of ministers here, I will deal with it as it applies to ministers.)

What is the dry rot? I grew up on a farm where we grew most of the food we ate. We grew lots of potatoes, both white and sweet. As a boy I noticed that the white potatoes would rot by getting soft, mushy, and smelling very badly. On the other hand, some of our sweet potatoes would often rot by simply dehydrating without any smell and wither away leaving a dried up shell behind. My father called this the dry rot. After I got into marriage counseling, I noticed that marriages rot much like those potatoes. Like the white potatoes, some end up in a big, dramatic stink which may or may not be accompanied by divorce. Other marriages, however, seem to quietly dehydrate. Without any fanfare, the vitality in the relationship is dissipated and the marriage left intact but sapped of the meaning, vitality, and intimacy that once characterized it. You see, the dry rot is a silent, erosive, corrosive process which subtly moves in on *all* marriages, and if not dealt with, gradually dries up the springs which nourish the relationship. The marriage then becomes unable to meet the deepest needs of the husband and wife. The dry rot causes the spark between the pastor and his wife to grow weaker and weaker. Each takes the other for granted, though one or both may hardly be aware of it. A kiss becomes a mere ritual, or perhaps even nonexistent. Sex becomes so routinized that even though it provides some satisfaction, it leaves one or both partners feeling vaguely unfulfilled.

I find ministers and their wives who are suffering from marital dry rot are often very busy people. She is busy with the children, doing church work, in-

involved in community activities. She feels rushed, rushed. On the other hand, he is working seven days a week, preparing sermons, keeping an eye on the church budget (not to mention his own), pumping enthusiasm into lifeless committees, mediating conflicts of feuding parishioners, and getting the building program going. He too feels rushed, rushed. The days go by with a blur. The months blend into years and the years are numbered by the churches of which he has been pastor. Now if you and I asked this couple whether they are unhappily married, they would say no, and they are not—but more importantly neither may they be *really* happy with the marriage. They are existing. It is a decent existence, but still an existence.

The sexual and emotional affairs that you and I know and hear about on the part of pastors, ministers of education, and ministers of music do not in most cases represent some basic perversity, some basic evil in their character. Rather, it usually represents the fact that this person has failed to keep the dry rot out of his own marriage thus leaving him emotionally starved and vulnerable to getting involved with someone else than the mate. This someone is usually a person in the congregation who is also starved and unfulfilled. The affair is not the problem but rather the symptom of a previously existing sick marriage.

I have a suspicion, that the minister and his wife may be able to avoid sensing the dry rot in their own relationship because they stay so busy. That is, when you feel a little emptiness at home, the solution is to get a little deeper immersed in work at church. After all, we have all grown up on the dictum that religion is the solution to all problems. But we confuse Christianity with church work. Church work, you know, is an excellent way of avoiding having to relate to one's mate. This is why some parishioners are at church anytime the doors are open. And it is so difficult to criticize those who are buried in church work, who must "be about their Father's business."

The pastor might do well to sponsor an annual marital checkup for couples in his church. "Marital Checkup Sunday," we'll call it. And as long as he is at it, he and his wife can also check themselves too. These are some questions they might ask:

1. Do I still make it a point of expressing appreciation regularly for everyday things—a clean house, a good meal, a good sermon, the door catch that was repaired?
2. Do I make it a point to regularly show affection in a way that the mate understands—a hug, a kiss, a gift, a kind word?
3. Am I critical of my mate and in little ways put him or her on the defensive?
4. Is my mental attitude positive and forward looking, or negative and looking back to past hurts, or looking to the "good old days"?
5. Do I genuinely listen to my mate? Am I interested in his or her feelings or thoughts?
6. Have I let my looks deteriorate?
7. Have I stayed alert mentally, or did I quit growing when I graduated from school?
8. Do we *make* time and money available to go out occasionally and do something enjoyable?

9. Do I work at keeping our sex life from becoming a dull routine?
10. Do I work at finding areas in which my mate and I can experience deep mutual sharing as well as giving them the right to individual areas of self-expression and identity?

There are other important questions which might be asked but these will suffice to begin working on the ministerial marital dry rot.

A discussion of the dry rot leads me to discuss another problem related to mate selection and the minister.

Faulty Mate Selection Process of the Minister

Some of the family problems encountered by the modern minister may lie in a faulty mate selection process. For instance, some young ministers seem to select a wife more on the basis of her potential skills as a minister's wife than for her more distinctly personal qualities. The young man in particular who views the minister's wife in more traditional terms as one who works intimately along side as a kind of associate pastor may look for a wife who can play the piano, sing, give devotionals, teach Sunday school, and work with children and teen-agers. After marriage he discovers that he has acquired a "hired hand" in the church and that her more distinctly personal qualities do not meet his own emotional needs as a husband.

In societies where the skills of a woman are necessary to survival, men look for those skills in a wife. "Can she bake a cherry pie, Billy Boy?" is a crucial question. Thus the Eskimo man looks for a woman with good teeth to chew the skins from which clothes are made. There is nothing wrong with a young minister looking for a girl who can play the piano, but most churches are filled nowadays with piano players, so he needs to look more for a meshing of personalities than matching her skills with church needs.

I would like to now mention an area related to mate selection that I present in a tentative fashion since it is based on what Wayne Oates calls a "horseback opinion."

Some years ago Paul Popenoe wrote in *Family Life*, which he publishes, that his research indicates that what he calls "religious marriages" have a higher than average incidence of sexual difficulties. (By "religious" he means where a major attraction between a couple is their religious faith.) Since this is a major attraction between some ministers and their wives during courtship, this raises some interesting questions about the sexual experience of ministers and their wives.

As a tentative observation, it seems to me that both the minister and his wife who experience sexual problems in their marriage relationship often have sexual hangups that appear to have been a part of the dynamics in mate selection. Sometimes it takes the form of either one being attracted to a person with either a low sex drive or one rigidly under control. I recall one pastor's wife telling me that the thing she liked about her husband during courtship was that, unlike other fellows she had dated, he did not "paw all over me." To her despair, she discovered that he didn't "paw all over" her after marriage either.

On the other hand, it seems to me that some ministers are attracted to women with a low interest in

sex. What might be the psychological dimensions of this situation? Could it be this: One of the motivations propelling a few men into the ministry is the conflict they have over their own sexuality. They see the ministry as a kind of sexless profession, or it is seen as a way of getting closer to God who in turn will help him to control this terribly compelling urge. I hypothesize that this man will tend to date girls who do not ooze too much sex appeal and thereby aggravate his own problem. If he does make too many advances with the girl he dates, she turns him down, which he finds comforting since he needs help anyway in controlling himself. However, once he is married and no longer needs controls, he may discover he has married a woman who wasn't "saving herself until marriage" but one who is sexually inhibited. Obviously, sexual problems play a role in the mate selection process of the man on the street as well as the minister. The question I am raising here is whether or not there is something about the ministry and religion that attracts some men and women who have more than their share of sexual problems. This is an area that one of you might pursue for a Ph.D. thesis some day.

The Vulnerability of Ministerial Marriages

One of the problems confronted by the minister is the vulnerability of his marriage. That is, divorce or separation has drastic vocational implications for him which no other profession confronts. At the present time ministers who get divorced are almost universally required to drop out of the ministry, and this is particularly true of the more conservative denominations.

Though Western society has for centuries held to the ideal of "till death do us part," it has always been realistic enough to provide a remedy through divorce for those cases where the marriage contract is judged broken either by adultery or some other reason as mental cruelty. Because of this the modern physician can divorce his wife and continue in medicine with hardly an eyebrow lifted; the mailman can divorce with no eyebrows lifted; psychiatrists can divorce and continue in psychiatry; marriage counselors can divorce their wives and marry a client and continue as marriage counselors. But the minister is afforded no such option. If he divorces for any reason, his ministry is usually over—even if his wife takes off with the chairman of the deacons and abandons the children.

What are the results of the minister's marital vulnerability? At least two. In the first place, some ministers and their wives feel trapped in a marriage that is filled with the kinds of conflict, anxiety, and personal destructiveness that would otherwise lead to divorce were he not a minister. Feeling trapped and being unable or unwilling to build a better relationship they resign themselves to a bad marriage. They become marital hypocrites trying to project the image of a successfully married couple. (However, if anyone is deceived it is usually only the minister and his wife since members of the congregation closest to them are usually aware of the conflicts in the relationship.)

A second result of the minister's marital vulnerability is that either he or the wife may use this vulnerability to blackmail the other into the desired behavior. Thus, one pastor threatened his wife who was considering filing for divorce, "Go ahead! If you do my ministry is over and there is nothing else I can do and support

you this way, so don't plan on much support." On the other hand, I have known of situations where the wife either overtly or covertly used the threat of "exposing him" as a way of gaining leverage in the relationship. Because of this vulnerability, each is literally in a position to exploit and blackmail the other.

The fact that divorce is not seen as a viable option to marital conflicts may have positive dimensions. It may save him and his wife from having to wrestle with whether or not to stay in the marriage as many other couples do. There being no other option, they settle down to working on building a more meaningful relationship.

Toward Helping Ministers Cope with Family Problems

Having discussed some of the family problems confronted by the modern minister, let me now attempt to make some positive suggestions as to what might be done to creatively deal with these.

1. First, I believe the minister and his wife must have the courage and initiative to establish their own identity and affirm their own selfhood in spite of whatever other pressures they might experience forcing them into a mold. As I indicated earlier, I believe most congregations are willing or can be educated to accept their pastor and his wife for what they are. (There are obvious limits to this.) For them to be themselves means that they establish their own identity and style of life. As a pastor it means you may enjoy and join civic clubs or avoid them; you may put more emphasis on preaching than pastoral work or vice versa; you may dress flashily or very conservatively; you may be the type that attends every committee meeting or you may attend as few as possible; you may consistently take a day off or you may work seven days a week; you may prefer to have your intimate friends in the church or choose to have them outside the church. This is a part of your style of life. It is involved in the advice to "Be yourself." But to be yourself implies that you know who you are and that you have courage to be that self. And it does take courage.

2. Secondly, I believe ministers need to make more use of the marriage enrichment movement for themselves. Too long we have waited for family problems to occur before we did anything about them. A marriage enrichment program is preventive treatment and designed for couples who consider themselves to be at least reasonably successfully married but who are willing to help that marriage be enriched. I believe any one of us here could along with our mate make profitable use of such a seminar once a year. Many marriage enrichment workshops or seminars are now being sponsored by churches for laymen. Thus far, not enough has been done with having marriage enrichment programs for ministers and their wives. My own experience in conducting such programs leads me to believe that this can be a most valuable experience for pastors as a method of helping them avoid the marital dry rot, and perhaps even the divorce court. This leads to my third point.

3. Thirdly, I believe we need to initiate discussions, conferences, and papers on the problem of the increasing numbers of ministers who are divorcing. I could envision this leading to an aggressive program of preventive measures such as the marriage seminars

just mentioned. Perhaps more could be done about counseling services for ministers.

I believe the time is here for us to reassess our traditional attitude that divorce *always* disqualifies a man as being fit for the ministry. We need to be more discriminating on the matter rather than making a broad generalization, I believe. There is a vast difference between an eighteen-year-old boy who divorces after six months of marriage and who later remarries, becomes a Christian and enters the ministry, and the minister who takes off with the church organist, leaving his wife and children. Yet, at the present time countless Baptist churches would not ordain the first man or have him as pastor if another church had ordained him.

I think we need to reassess whether the pastor ought *always* to leave the ministry in the face of divorce. In one instance, the divorce takes place amid a big scandal and news headlines. In another instance, in a rather quiet sort of way the minister and his wife after years of marriage find after their children have gone that they no longer have anything left in common between them and so they divorce rather than continue in an empty and loveless marriage. If this man has been a good pastor before the divorce, why should the divorce *necessarily* render him an incompetent pastor? To be sure, I think there are some cases where the minister ought *not* to stay in the ministry.

In brief, what I am saying is that I would like to see churches deal redemptively with ministers who divorce in the same way they deal with lay members who divorce. In my judgment, I doubt that most men in most situations are emotionally ready to immediately continue on as an active pastor at the time of divorce. But I could see him going through a period of counseling, reorientation, and reassessment of his own life and having worked through the emotional spiritual dimensions of his divorce, move back into the church where he was or perhaps move to a new church. A man who has successfully worked through the misfortune of a divorce could very well become a more sensitive pastor, attuned to the needs of his people better than he ever was before.

4. Finally, I would like to see Southern Baptists inaugurate a thoughtfully planned, well-staffed, and aggressive program of education and counseling specifically directed to the needs of ministers and their families. As you may know, the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention is studying what might be done on this point for ministers. Several state conventions have established counseling services for ministers. But we need more, much more, and these services need to be reasonably accessible both geographically and financially to ministers.

A part of this accessibility is the creation of a climate in which it is acceptable for a minister to seek family counseling. One of the main problems to overcome is the reluctance on the part of ministers to seek help. It is not easy for a man in a helping profession to seek counseling and say, "I, too, need help." Sometimes ministers seem to think that to seek counseling is a reflection on the caliber of his relationship with God. As a result, by the time he does seek help, he is too far gone for much to be done. I believe we have matured enough to create a climate in which it is just as acceptable for the minister to seek help as a layman.

"The State of the Second Sex: Emancipation or Explosion"

Sarah Frances Anders

A major problem is the difficulty people have in opening up to someone who is a part of the same power structure and, therefore, in a position to use divulged information against them. That is, if Rev. Jones is having trouble with his wife, he is going to think twice before he reveals this to the counselor at the State Baptist Building if he thinks this information might somehow get leaked out to the pulpit committee at the First Baptist Church of Prestigeville who is considering him as pastor. Consequently, perhaps these services should be geographically located away from the state headquarters to minimize ministers being sensitive over being seen walking into the counselor's office each week.

A center as this with a religious orientation, I believe, would have a wider acceptance by ministers than a secular agency downtown. First, he might feel that the counselor is better able to understand the religious dimensions of his problem. Secondly, he might be reluctant to hand his "dirty linen" out in a secular agency.

As I envision it, these centers would offer a wide variety of services to ministers in addition to marriage and family counseling. They would also offer in-service training to ministers in counseling. They would also offer help in dealing with men who are undergoing what is now commonly called a "mid-career crisis." This would give him a chance to gain a new perspective on himself and his ministry. And certainly, I would see them offering marriage enrichment seminars around over the state.

In Summary

I have talked at some length now about the family problems of the minister. For the most part, these problems are not really new at all. They are old problems sometimes expressing themselves in new forms. Nor are they for the most part problems unique to the minister and his wife. Even marriage counselors have to cope with the marital dry rot. We *all*, regardless of occupation, have to learn to live with our mate and raise our kids, and we *all* do it with a greater or lesser amount of struggle and conflict.

To talk of family problems of the minister is not to ignore the great strength that I see in the family of the minister. And I explored these in my book *The Role of the Minister's Wife*. For instance, the average minister's wife is much more acquainted with and involved in her husband's work than are other wives. This gives them a basis for sharing deeply with each other in a way no other professional wives have. Some of my colleagues at the university spend their lives in an area that they can hardly carry on a conversation about with their wives. Few wives know much about bionucleonics or molecular biology. The minister's wife's involvement in her husband's work is usually reported as being a deeply satisfying and rewarding experience. It helps to give her a sense of meaning and purpose and the chance for making a significant contribution to the Kingdom of God.

In spite of the focus on problems in this paper, my estimate of the situation is that most ministers and their wives have a rewarding and satisfying relationship. I would hope that something said here will help you to enrich your own satisfying relationship.

Social historians have a quaint way of telescoping the behavior of a decade into an oversimplified but pungent phrase. Because the first ten years of the twentieth century saw as many as one million immigrants coming to America some years, that was the Decade of the Alien; followed by the first global holocaust (hence the Terrible Teens); the Roaring Twenties; the Great Depression; the Fractured Forties, for a second global hell had hardly drawn to a close when the highest divorce rate before or since appeared to be about to deliver the death blow to the family; the Smouldering Fifties, which had a surface of apathy covering a mounting discontent and polarization; bursting into the Violent Sixties, with Viet Nam as much a symptom as a cause. It seems moot now whether the cryptic analysts will refer to the 1970's as the Decade of Environment or Emancipation.

Perhaps the Decade of Emancipation will triumph because even in our attempt to improve the ecological balance, we are seeking to free ourselves from the disastrous effects of abusing our habitat. The surge of liberation is all about us: it is inherent as much in the Jesus Revolution as in Brown, Red, and Black Power movements; as much in 75-year-old women adopting the pants suit enthusiastically as in the college youth demonstrating against Viet Nam and the academic administration. It is appropriate that in such a zietgeist Dr. Mary Calderone, Executive Director of SIECUS, should remark:

Just when men and women have the opportunity to mean more to each other than ever before, and when the world, the society, and that entity known as the family need them together, they are exploding apart.

Explosion is not necessarily liberation. And from where I sit, so close as to be too far, it is difficult to know if the sounds produced by changing women's roles are explosion or freedom. But, of one thing we are certain, roles are the building blocks of society and they always appear in reciprocal relationships. Consequently, whether women's roles are exploding or being expanded in a liberation process is hardly an academic or discrete question: it strikes at the root patterns of men, of youth, indeed at the whole fabric of society. Eventually, the even deeper implications of the question must be dealt with: if women have historically been the shock absorbers and buggers for change, holding their roles fairly constant in the face of transformation of the male behavioral prescriptions, economic upheavals, bombardments on the family and youth and church; what happens if history records these years as the rip-off of female roles rather than the renaissance of feminine fulfillment in emerging freedom?!

Not even the most ill-informed interpreter of the current women's movements (for they are plural, not singular) would dare to suggest that this is a temporal experiment, precipitant because of its latency during the anomie of the post-World War II years. It breathed in the fire of the women abolitionists over a

century ago, in the short-sighted but dramatic efforts of the suffragists. It was spoken through Henrik Ibsen's Nora in *A Doll's House*. Her husband has just accused her of ruining his reputation by contracting a bad debt over a forged signature. He withdraws his accusation that she is an unfit wife and mother when he later discovers that the debt was cancelled and his good name is not abused. She refuses his offer of forgiveness:

Nora: Isn't there one thing that strikes you as strange in our sitting here like this?

Helmer: What is that?

Nora: We have been married now eight years. Does it not occur to you that this is the first time we two, you and I, husband and wife, have had a serious conversation?

Helmer: But dearest Nora, would it have been any good to you?

Nora: That is just it; you have never understood me. I have been greatly wronged, Torvald, first by papa and then by you.

Helmer: Before all else, you are a wife and mother.

Nora: I don't believe that any longer. I believe that before all else I am a reasonable human being, just as you are—or at all events, that I must try and become one. I know quite well, Torvald, that most people would think you are right, and that views of that kind are to be found in books; but I am no longer content myself with what most people say, or with what is found in books. I must think over things for myself and get to understand them.

Perhaps there are some of us to whom Nora's words sound like a prayer of liberation, but to Torvald they came as a totally unexpected explosion. His roles and his world would never be the same because Nora had dared to say she was "going to think over things and get to understand them."

Germans who were contemporary with Ibsen would have accused Nora of upsetting the social order by attempting to reconsider her traditional roles: *kinder*, *kuche*, *kirche* (children, kitchen, church). But powerful cells of German and Northern European women have joined over 50,000 activist American women in saying that Nora was morally obligated to reconsider her roles. To stand pat in the midst of such change as described in Alvin Toffler's *Future Shock*, they felt, was a curse they could not live with. As a result of their efforts to reconsider, some very radically so, all of them have been rewarded with the stereotype of strident, unfeminine, lesbian, paranoid "libbers." In truth, they are more diverse in their behavior than the classic "normal" roles ever dared to be:

1. The earliest group were mainly disciples of Betty Frieden, author of *The Feminine Mystique*—disciples drawn from discontented but educated wives, business and professional women. Growing from one cell in 1966 to over thirty-five chapters now, it has stressed equal rights and opportunities in work and pay. Other organizations that stress elimination of discrimination, not supremacy or overthrow of conventional institutions are Women's Equity Action League, Human Rights for Women.

2. The radical libbers grew out of the female civil rights element in the SDS and rapidly became leftist advocates of female power and put down all the conventional institutions of home, church, and business.

They were antimasculine and antifeminine. Their names were as provocative as their slogans: SCUM, WAR, Redstockings, OWL, SALT. During this coming of age period, the Radical Lesbians probably gave an unwanted hue to the movement.

3. Criticism that the emancipation of women might become white middle class female chauvinism could certainly not be levelled at the Far Left Marxian woman's movement that is politically oriented, non-capitalistic and unisexual. It could have more appeal for the black and Indian and Mexican women who have known unique economic and political stigma.

These three broad classifications differ not only in degree of desire to change the traditional female roles, but, of course, more so in their tactics for precipitating the change. Most of the activists agree, however, that they must blast three widespread feminine myths: biological, social, and religious.

First, the biological myth. Germaine Greer, author of *The Female Eunuch*, says women came into the twentieth century shackled with the Freudian dictum, "anatomy is destiny." Not only are medical and behavioral scientists less convinced of this, but they are certain that it is often difficult to distinguish genetic and acquired behavioral differences.¹ Genotypical characteristics are easiest to identify, but even here sex-crossing is apparent. As medical psychologist John Money of Johns Hopkins said recently² that the book of Genesis stated it wrongly: "In the beginning God created Eve." Nature's first inclination is to create a female fetus . . . something has to be added to get a male.

The phenotypical traits—those having to do with hormonal functioning, hair and muscular development—are much more diverse and unpredictable. When Edward Clark published *Sex in Education* in Boston, 1874, little did he know he would innocently contribute to male chauvinism by stating that woman's system was a delicate one. The whole menstrual function, he declared, was so easily disturbed as to make her prey to a host of ills: amenorrhea, menorrhagia, dysmenorrhea, hysteria, and anemia—all of which produced insufficient performance. Medical knowledge today still has difficulty convincing many men that women can be stable and rational in high-level decision-making and business speculation. Note the less than dozen Congresswomen, zero cabinet and justice women, five Secret Service women, and the 1.5 percent police-women. In general, the female is a better made animal, but the males have more strength and endurance, which hardly matters in a technological society.

Scarcely were women in the twentieth century coming to grips with the Freudian biological albatross than, as Germaine Greer says, along came Dr. Spock with a dressed-up but equally confining, *kinder* role: woman was the molder of children, unique to be sure, but only this. Today 70 percent of American women marry before 24 years of age and the majority have all the children they are going to have by 28 or 29 years of age. How do you explain rearing a woman chiefly for the *kinder* role when it will not prepare her for at least 30 years of her life? There are at least 21,000,000 women who are single, divorced or widowed and probably are not primarily concerned with childbearing and childrearing. Betty Rollins, former senior editor of the deceased *Look* magazine,

has suggested that in the face of the population explosion, the most expensive myth we contend with is that non-mothers are cold, selfish and abnormal. Expensive because the world is too crowded for every woman to be trained to perform only that biological function; expensive because it costs about \$30,000 to rear a middle-class youngster to maturity.

The American woman has not shaken the biological determination of *kinder* even as she moved out into education. She has chiefly located herself in public and private kindergarten and elementary schools—as though she is genetically handicapped from molding anything but small children's minds. She constitutes only 20 percent of college and university faculties and administrations. She acts as if she believes the myth! The classic retort to this kind of thinking that was endorsed by Judaism and early church fathers such as St. Augustine, "No non-mother can really be human or fulfilled," is found in the two-hundred-year-old comment of Lady Ashley Montagu:

Women love the human race, men behave as if hostile to it. The function of women is to teach the children of all men to be human. There are more geniuses among women for being human—and humanity is the supreme form of intelligence.

Women must not desert the *kinder* role in finding freedom. More and more psychologists are agreeing with Erik Erikson that women appear to have an innate sensitivity to other human beings.³ Girls in recent studies seem to get more satisfaction from relationships than do boys.

Secondly, the social myth. Nature may favor women, but virtually every culture has favored the male. The American woman has moved even more slowly to modify her *kuche* role than she has to enlarge her *kinder* role. In some ways today's women seems more sociologically tied to the kitchen than even to child-bearing. The social myth seems harder to dispute when she wants to be accepted equally in the production and service spheres of her world. Though she makes up 40 percent of the labor force today, the salary gap when compared with the male is greater than in the depression years. If she has a B.A. degree, she will average almost \$5,000 less than a man with similar education. How much of this is due to her own apathy in education and economic competition during the 1950s and 1960s is hard to say, but she has proportionately fewer advanced and professional degrees than she did thirty years ago. Only 9 percent of today's law students are women; and when they graduate, only 12 percent earn \$20,000 per year as compared to half of the male lawyers!

The situation report is disappointing:

- of 1,000 judges in our U.S. courts, only 200 are women;
- of 260,000 doctors, women make up only 8 percent;
- among U.S. physical scientists, she is a mere 10 percent;
- representation in the top 100 art galleries of the nation is a bare 20 percent;
- only 6 of the 278 Nobel Prizes have been awarded to women and three of these went to Madame Curie and her daughter.

The hardest concept to conquer is that the more a woman deviates from the *kuche* role, the less *kinder* role she will play. Why this is hard to overcome is difficult to determine, since working mothers don't necessarily mean left-over care for children. As Philip Wylie probably overstated in his theory of Momism, the classic American problem for one hundred years has been too much mother, too little father.

Many of the radical libbers have felt it necessary to denounce marriage and the family in order to blast other social myths about feminine inequality. There are many ways to find fulfillment in broader roles, however. I am reminded of the words of Maureen Neuberger to a conference of working women soon after she went into the Senate: "My greatest single need, as a Senator, is for a good wife." If the American woman should decide her role is in the home, she should not sell herself short, for her estimated economic worth in typical labors is \$13,391.56.⁴

Erich Fromm's theory of escape from freedom has feasibility in the social struggle of women. Many have escaped from *kuche*, but they haven't found the freedom to feel at ease in man's world. Even the housewife freed from the nineteenth century type of kitchen drudgery and housework has developed problems—the housewife syndrome of boredom. They are turning in increasing numbers to drink: though they start to drink heavily at a later age than men, they deteriorate into alcoholism more quickly. They are also escaping into lesbianism, drugs, crime, and suicide. This is freedom *from* without freedom *to be*.

If, as the libbers suggest, the social picture will not change until women have a different self concept, it will take us at least another generation to merge the refutation of the biological myth with social performance. Until little girls are taught that they don't need to play the hooker role and trade on sex to get places in a man's world, that they are mentally and emotionally no weaker nor stronger than men, that they are not less feminine because they have achieved—only then will they know real satisfaction in any new role. I recall vividly the moment of truth when I knew that I had to give up family reunions for an extended Lenten season: it was when I counted 23 encounters with a variety of relatives, each of whom had asked two basic questions with varying degrees of tact and sympathy: "Are you *still* going to school?" (as if I were the first family retardate!) and "You didn't marry that *last* nice fellow you were dating?" (as if that somehow made me hostile to the family that had lovingly produced me!).

The crucial questions really aren't "What man's job can I be good enough to get?" nor "How far can I escape the *kinder* and *kuche* roles?" Rather the issue is "How much can my world help me understand myself and the needs of the world in order to prepare me for the most fulfilling and rewarding roles, both because or regardless of the fact I am a woman?"

Finally, the religious myth. Personally, I find it more disturbing to deal with the religious myth concerning women. While few civilized religions still maintain the spiritual inferiority of women, there is the strange paradox of most religious groups assuming that a woman is innately more responsive to religious stimuli, hence better suited to teach the young child religiously in the home setting and at the church or temple, yet not

equipped to handle the higher level doctrinal and ecclesiastical policy making. Until recently the *kirche* role has been little more than the *kinder-kuche* roles placed on holy ground: beside teaching small children, arranging altar flowers, singing in the choir, planning temple meals, there was little she was permitted to do. The Judeo-Christian practice has reinforced the sex distinction as if it were God-inspired and ordained. If order of creation is important, some libbers suggest that man is as inferior to animals as Eve is to him! If it were radical for Jesus to have intimate friends who were women, to stay in their homes, to treat them as social and spiritual equals, to befriend an adultress, it was not that he was radical from God, but against his culture. Paul, who at times appeared so chauvinistic, was the same man who said, "In Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female."

The sects indigenous to America have tended to give prominent roles to women, either as founders, prophets, or leaders: Mary Baker Eddy, Aimee Semple McPherson, the Pentecostals. Most of the 6,000 Christian Science practitioners are women and 40 percent of the Foursquare Gospel's 2,690 ministers are women. More traditional faiths have been slower in liberating women in the home church, though they have been strangely free to send out a predominance of women missionaries to plant seed on foreign soil. There are 7,000 women ministers in the United States, but most serve in positions concerned with children, music, or in rundown parishes with meager salaries. The Presbyterians began ordaining women in 1956 and have about 103 today. The Lutherans, who began to ordain women in 1970, have 116 candidates in their seminaries. Methodists gave full clerical rights to women seventeen years ago, but today have fewer than 1 percent women ministers. The Episcopalians have women deacons, but no priests. Reform Judaism has recently ordained its first female rabbi, but has had women cantors for some time. Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Southern Baptists may be the last to capitulate!

I cannot really believe that men of my own faith are so insecure that they fear their own positions of leadership if women are elected or ordained to significant leadership places. Yet two churches, at least in my college town, have never gotten the question on the conference floor, though the question has been raised.

Thinking women in the church deny the need for a "theology of women," for that presupposes an innate uniqueness which is scripturally invalid. It would put sexuality above personhood; and being made in the image of God refers to personhood and not sex chromosomes. Perhaps the issues that demand a church stand today appear to require a feminine theology: birth control and abortion: but these are couple or family issues, not feminine alone.

Church women are among the best educated and most informed. For a long time they prevailed in the missionary spirit of the church and many pastors have resented or relished the power vested in the women's church groups, even desired to put strings on the fantastic amount of "egg money" they were able to raise for missions.

The liberation of woman to fulfill a greater role in society need not seriously remove her from the home nor the child; but it will surely outdate more books than the civil rights movement did. If women are

liberated, rather than exploded, we all win. The Utopias of Plato and Sir Thomas More were established on the equality of men and women to rule, work, and make a family. If suggesting that the 1970s may be the Decade of Emancipation sounds too idealistic, then I must agree with Oscar Wilde: A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at.

¹ See Behavior concerning Christopher Ounsted, *Time*, 3/20/72.

² See Science, *Time*, 3/20/72.

³ See Behavior, *Time*, 3/20/72, p. 43.

⁴ See Business, *Time*, 3/20/72.

"Response to Sarah Frances Anders' Address on Women's Liberation"

Wallace Denton

I know it generates excitement in the audience when the discussant of a paper stands up and begins by saying that he finds the paper just presented to be the most outrageous document that he has heard in twenty years.

The paper Dr. Anders has presented is an outrageous document! It is outrageous that a subject such as this has to be dealt with in an enlightened, advanced, twentieth century culture as ours. Or is it? The fact nonetheless exists that many of the basic rights which we as men take for granted are denied vast numbers of women—such as equal pay for equal work.

The history of social movements is that they move from extreme to extreme before moderating. The social movement Dr. Anders has been concerned with is a reaction to the masculine domination that has characterized the Western world for centuries. In this movement there are some extremists who in their extremism turn some people off so that they often react to the *extremism* rather than the *truth* that is in the message. Dr. Anders' paper is a sane, rational appeal, dealing with an issue that must be heard—and is being heard.

I am pleased that she has said something about women in the church because it is not being heard soon enough there. The pastoral ministry is the most sexually segregated of all the professions. The most prestigious positions in a Baptist church—pastor and deacons—are almost universally cornered off by men. I believe the sexual segregation in the adult Sunday School class both reflects something of our attitude about men and women and is a part of the cause of the continued segregation. And all of this is two thousand years after it was penned in Holy Writ that there is neither "male or female for we are all one in Christ."

A year ago I proposed in a deacons' meeting that the church of which I am a member consider women deacons. It was not received with enthusiasm. One man asked how a woman could be the husband of one wife. I reminded him that to be without a wife didn't keep us from ordaining men to the ministry. Furthermore, I noted, the word used to describe

Phoebe in the New Testament is "diakonos." The idea of women deacons was tabled! But a seed had been planted.

At a recent deacons' retreat where we deacons were able to achieve a deeper level of emotional honesty than we usually achieve, there was serious discussion and support for women deacons. Now we are discussing it informally in the church. I predict we will have women deacons in our church in one to three years.

One of the main appeals in the church for women's groups is that being denied access to the more significant leadership positions, they find that in the refuge of a women's group they can achieve something significant. Consequently, they cling diligently to the women's organization where they can run their own show without men interfering.

I believe that as significant positions open up in the church in the ministry (pastoral, music, religious education), in the deacons', and charring committees, that women's groups in the church will atrophy and the work they are doing (and doing well) will be taken over by the whole church, where it ought to be anyway.

Many women in the women's movement say that women's liberation is in fact concerned with human liberation. I do know that in many respects I see men needing liberating more than women. But perhaps this represents my male chauvinistic viewpoint.

I see the modern man as being burdened with the weight of unrealistic expectations of what it means to be a man. He must support his family and some men talk of the weight of this sense of responsibility. He must be brave when frightened; he must be strong though feeling weak; he must not weep though feeling crushed inside. Even sexually he feels he must carry the major responsibility for its success or failure. Failing in these and other areas, he feels he is no longer a man and either gives up or else sets out to prove he still is and gets himself in trouble.

A few months ago a graduate student came into my office and announced that he was falling apart and was going to drop half of his courses. I inquired what was happening in his life and found that in the last six months his wife had divorced him, a divorce he did not want.

His closest friends had graduated and he felt alone.

He had bought a new car thus draining his savings and he felt very anxious over no savings.

He had lost two jobs with the resultant financial loss.

His mother had become ill and was pleading for him to come home.

He was trying to finish his thesis and had no job offers either.

Several times he said, "If I was a man I could cope with this." There it was again, the burden of being a man. It would doubtless be OK for a woman to crack up or break into tears over this, but not a man.

Perhaps when men see that as women are liberated we men, too, can be liberated from unrealistic burdens of being men, then we will all be free indeed to be fully human. And we are indebted to you, Dr. Anders, for heightening the level of our consciousness about this matter that involves us all.

"Methods for Strengthening Parent-Child Communication—Positive Prevention of Relationship Problems"

Howard J. Clinebell, Jr.

A teen-age girl, a high school senior, a straight "A" student, who is very active in her church youth program, wrote to her pastor that since she had been in their growth group, she no longer felt a need for drugs. She said of the new quality of life she had discovered: "I've found myself happier since I found this type of warmth and love. I can really get high on nature, books, music, and most of all people. It's beautiful."

My thesis in these remarks is that positive alternatives to the negative symptoms of unhappiness, lack of values, and problems in living, are the only way to go. In the church we have superb opportunities to help persons of all ages "turn on" to life through relationships—with others and with the Spirit.

The place to start in strengthening parent-child relations is to strengthen marriages. Everything that enriches a marriage enriches parent-child relationships. The family is a social organism and any thing that helps the husband/wife relationship will enhance parent-child relationships. The conjoint family therapy perspective represented a major turning point in the whole psychotherapeutic and counseling enterprise in terms of its understanding of what we are doing. In helping a disturbed child or youth, if you create a climate in which everyone is free to grow and use his or her full potential, not only will the disturbed child or teen-ager improve but all family members will find more health in their relationships.

One gestalt therapist distinguishes nourishing groups from toxic groups. Some families are nourishing families; others are toxic families. Our goal in the church family program is to help families do what all families really want to do—discover how to deepen relationships so they can become nourishing gardens where personalities will flower and bloom. So, all that we can do to help the architect of the family—parents—to have a more satisfying marriage will help them create a growth stimulating climate in the family organism. Perhaps I should digress here to talk further about marriage enrichment groups. Some of you mentioned since my first talk that you have had trouble recruiting people for such groups. Let me give you a few suggestions about how various churches have been able to get these going.

First of all, make it clear that the marriage enrichment group is not a therapy group or encounter group. The way we describe the group is to say: "The purpose of this marriage enrichment group (or retreat) is not to help deeply hurting marriages but to make good marriages better. (Deeply hurting marriages need counseling by a skilled marriage counselor. Contact your pastor if you need such assistance.)"

Secondly, try to allay the fear that keeps people from joining marriage enrichment groups—the fear that they'll have to dig up old skeletons, or as the saying goes "Wash their dirty linens in public." These fears are hard to allay, unless you deal with them directly and many who could benefit from the experience

simply won't join the group. Deal with the fears directly in the publicity for the group by saying things like, "In this group you'll have an opportunity to discover for yourself the kind of marriage you would like to move toward, using more of the strengths of your marriage. By discovering the unused potential and using the hopes which you have for your relationship, you can become more skilled in building the unique kind of marriage that you both want. The purpose of the retreat is to help you design your own future, using more of your strengths." If you approach people in this way, it helps lower anxiety.

Make a point of stating the rationale for the growth group in theological terms as well as any other terms which you choose. Point out that a growth group is a laboratory for increasing skills in the art of loving—of giving and receiving love. Point out that since the two great commandments of our Lord are to love ourselves and to love God that the ability to do this is what the Christian church is about—to enhance the ability to love in all of its members. Since the growth group is a methodology for doing it, it becomes a way of implementing the purpose of the church.

In statements about church-related growth groups, we emphasize the two unique dimensions of such groups in the Christian context: One is that they have a vertical dimension; that is, to be explicitly concerned with maturing of one's faith and value system and the whole matter of maturing in our relationship with God. These theological issues are right at the center of why a lot of marriages aren't growing. So, vertical dimensions of growth should be an explicit concern of Christian growth groups.

The other unique aspect is that the church-oriented growth group is a training for action group. It is a way of training for loving discipleship. It is not a form of collective narcissism where people sit around and grow. It is a growth-action group in which people are challenged to *use* their growth for others and thus to grow more themselves.

A second suggestion for strengthening parent-child relations is to do depth parent education. A church in Oregon has organized its program around Christian growth groups—including depth Bible study, parent effectiveness training, marriage effectiveness training, teacher effectiveness training, etc. The emphasis is on training rather than therapy. The choice of the word is important. When you say "therapy" to a person, what does it connote? He or she is sick? In contrast, "training" assumes one can, with certain skills, improve his or another's condition. The training of parents to do filial therapy with their own children has been found in research to be more effective in helping disturbed children than conventional forms of child "therapy." Depth education is training the heart and the attitudes—helping persons where they live as human beings. The focus of depth parent education should be on strengthening the sense of confidence and competence in parents. Much of the parent education (including some which I did when I was in the pastorate) is really a waste of time. It may even have negative consequences. Intellectual understanding of children and their needs isn't enough. Unless a person integrates this with his or her total being, he or she won't be able to use it. Head level theories can be

very valuable if one has integrated them with his or her feelings and attitudes.

In one church we stumbled on depth parent education when, as young parents ourselves, we started a support and growth group for parents of young children. Why not have a church made up of support groups for all kinds of people—parents of handicapped children, single people, people going through the bereavement of divorce, the people in all of Eric Erikson's eight life stages, including those facing all the pressures of being a parent in the confusing world of today. Being a parent often is painful. But to use the current crises of parenthood as opportunity for growth through the church's group program is an important opportunity we face. For parents of infants, the small parent-support-growth group could be a "basic trust group." The life need of the infant is to establish in relation to the parents deep inner feelings of trust—which feelings are the child's most important lessons in theology—that life, the universe, and people are trustworthy. This deep learning is the most important lesson about the nature of the universe one can ever learn. And we can't give what we haven't got. Young parents who feel deep trust in themselves and their relationship to God are able to transmit this, whatever their head-level ideas about childbearing. This is an example of the theological function of depth parent education.

A third method for strengthening parent-child communication is the whole family growth interview. I was impressed by Wallace Denton's model of the Marriage Checkup Sunday. What I have been doing is something parallel which I call the "healthy family growth interview." I worked with a family of Dad, Mom, and five children. We all sat down together (as in conjoint family therapy). They were not a troubled or deeply-disturbed family. The purpose was to check out their communication system and for them to work on their family goals and the use of family strengths. I went around, first to the children and then to the adults, asking, "If you had a magic wand and could change something in this family to make things better, what would you do?" Each person expressed his "druthers" about the family. They talked about family problems, conflicts, and strengths. A beautiful thing happened! They communicated about their dreams and hopes and then made concrete plans for fulfilling some of those dreams. The healthy family growth interview is something like the well-baby clinic. It focuses on prevention and on increasing positive health.

In a church setting, growth-oriented family camps, the marriage checkup Sundays, and family sessions are among the ways of implementing the growth perspective. These approaches all stress the idea of people helping people.

The fourth and related method for strengthening family communication is the family network system. The family network approach, as developed by the First Baptist Church of Rochester, New York, is useful both for doing Christian education in the family context and also strengthening communication across generation lines. This church has set up several family clusters in the parish. The clusters design their own curricula. Twice a month they study together. So Christian education is occurring in the family unit, which seems to me to be the natural place to do it. Research done on these family networks in this church

and in five other churches in the Rochester area by two doctoral students at Boston University suggests that significant changes occur in these learning clusters. This approach allows families and single persons to become spiritual clans for each other—spiritual extended families.

In networks people discover that they can be constructive forces in the lives of other families by becoming a caring community in which *agape* is experienced. There is strength and growth and communication that occurs in those families that won't happen if they focus only on growing within their own family units. We need to become the body of Christ for each other. To work this into extended family structures, to use the family's strength in a network of mutual caring can help a family broaden its own growth potentials.

A fifth method of strengthening parent-youth relationships is the transgenerational communication workshops. This can be useful in helping parents and young people rebuild bridges to each other. Let me describe one model of many that has been used successfully. The workshop included church young people and their parents. They began the process by caucusing—the young people and the parents in separate caucuses. Each group listed all the things they liked about the other—parents about young people and vice versa. Then, they reported back to a plenary session all of the things they had listed. This was a surprising experience for both sides—discovering all these things the other side liked. (This is an illustration of the growth perspective.)

The two groups caucused separately again and asked, "What would you like to change in your teenagers or your parents?" Each group listed all the things they would like to change in the other; those lists were read at a second plenary meeting.

The third phase was to caucus in transgenerational groups with teen-agers and parents together, but not with the parents' own teen-agers. The point is that its often easier to communicate with someone else's teen-ager than with your own! The aims of this session were to understand the other's viewpoint and to try to develop methods of bridging some of the differences and resolving conflicting viewpoints. The final phase of this workshop was for two or three families to work together on what the implications were for their families and what plans could be developed to use the new insights in their families.

Discovering the values on both sides of the generation chasm can be an important result of transgenerational communication. The counter-culture is basically a search for new meanings. The over-35-"square" culture says, "Work and produce"; the youth culture responds, "Enjoy life." The adult culture says, "Achieve"; youth responds, "Experience." The adult culture says, "Be aggressive. Make something of yourself. Get ahead"; youth culture emphasizes passive virtues like "Make love, not war." The adult culture says, "Play it safe"; the youth culture responds, "There's value in risking." The adult culture says, "Sacrifice in the present so you can build for your future"; youth culture responds, "Live now! There may be no future." The adult culture says, "Religion is rational, it's basically ethics"; the adolescent culture responds, "Religion is the mystical experience."

The generation gap is a valuing gap. These sets of values on both sides of the value chasm are important for a fully human existence. Both are important to Christians. Therefore, if we lose touch with one or the other, we are in trouble as a society. In the church we have the opportunity to be in touch with both sides of the generation value chasm. Our task is to preserve the strengths in both the old mentality and in the new mentality.

It's a mistake somehow to absolutize the values on either side of the generation gap. As Christians we are called to be bridge people, to bridge chasms of all kinds—between men and women, black and white, and young and old. We should realize that the "new mentality of youth" represents a search—for new relationships with one's self and new relationships with other people (non-exploited relationships). It represents a search for humanizing relationships with authority and with institutions, and a search for an intimate relationship with nature and the universe and with God. The biggest problem at any age is meaning. The transgenerational growth group, whether it is for young people or adults, is a place where people can learn to appreciate each other's values and can be freed by love to love.

For us as church leaders, the most important growth group is our own—the one where our needs are satisfied and our own values examined and made more viable and relevant to human needs. We as Christians are bridge people. We are to help people discover deep respect for others who differ, which will allow bridges to be built. We are to become enliveners to others. If the family is to recreate its own future, we must have such enliveners in our communities.

When I was reflecting on a model for humanizing a community through the use of growth groups, I was reading a book called *The Family in Search of a Future*. In this book Virginia Satir has an article in which she asks in effect, "What would happen if in every neighborhood and community there were within walking distance a family growth center where people at every life stage and every kind of life crisis could walk in and find a communication's facilitator to help them cope more creatively with whatever they are facing?" She predicted, in answering her own question, that we could close up many of our hospitals and prisons. I think she is right!

The logical question is, "How do we get such a network of growth centers?" The exciting thing to recognize is that the basis for this network already exists in three institutions: the churches, schools, and social agencies. It exists when people like you, who are in charge of decision-making in our institutions, catch a vision of the church, the school, or the community agency as human development centers. We already have many of the people with the enlightened concern to create these growth centers which are so desperately needed to enhance the quality of life in all our communities.

What is needed to release the unused capacities of our institutions to become more effective human fulfillment centers is a vision of how to do this, using the growth group methodology and the opportunity for leaders in our institutions to increase their skills as growth facilitators. Where there is no vision, a people and their institutions perish spiritually. Where there

is a vision and the technology to implement that vision, a people can find life in all its fullness through their institutions. The future is open! Using the new insights and methods now available, let us help to create a family of humanity which will let God's purposes for all our individual families be fulfilled.

"The Christian Family and Sexuality: Perspectives in Black and White"

Part One

William Lawson

Things are improving a great deal. I don't know that I have ever heard any more profound discussion of the potential for those who are in the golden years and for those of us who are moving toward them than we've just listened to. I haven't been in these sessions with you, so I'm not sure whether you have so warmly applauded every speaker, but I suspect that Dr. Johnson has at least deserved if he has not received a better ovation than would normally be given by an audience like this. That was a lot to say.

We are growing up. We are beginning to accept turtle neck sweaters and as I look around I see some sideburns that I don't think I would have seen five years ago, and when Southern Baptists can get a "sexpert," we've arrived! No, in all seriousness, it seems to me that we do have a tremendous array of talent within our convention and within our churches, and we have a great deal to say, not just to each other, but to the world-at-large, to whom, of course, we ought to be committed. I have a friend who considers himself something of a lover and you might very well hear him in some of his rhetoric. In such things as this he will say, "Darling, if I had a thousand feet, I would use them all to walk to you; if I had a thousand hands, I would use them all to caress you; and had I a thousand lips, I'd use them all to kiss you." But naturally she would say to him, "Aw, shut up Henry. You ain't using what you got." We have a great deal.

We do come to talk about something which is controversial, but about something which I think is central, something that is so vital, that we cannot really ignore it. The whole question of the family as a keystone in civilized society is a question that must be dealt with and in our society, which has so long been bifurcated into black and white, it certainly has to be looked at as one expression of the major problem which has divided our nation for so long. There does have to be, there must be some understanding of these two sub-communities chained together, living so closely, knowing each other, and yet not knowing each other. There must be some discussion of that which both holds us together and spreads us apart. I'll be talking for a few minutes about one of the major phenomena of the twentieth century and that is the search for an identity for a self-definition of a people who started out with a rich family background. For there probably has not been anything in history like what has happened to

the black people. Drawn from a continent where the tribal way of life was as common as the grasses that grow, they were brought to a continent as slaves where the family structure was systematically destroyed and where it was illegal for marriages to take place and where babies and fathers were commonly separated at the auction block. And because the communal background was wiped out so completely in the process of de-Africanization, they for a long time lost any semblance of family. And now in the last two generations there has been some attempt to rediscover that which we spent two centuries losing—trying to discover what it means to be legally able to marry, which is fairly recent as a matter of fact in history; trying to discover what it means to be part of a whole family where the father is married to the mother and where they are all residents under the same house; and having thrown at us many of the stereotypes that are common about black people as they attempt to rediscover what has been lost.

It is a painful process but a very necessary one, painful at least in part because we never lost the sense of tribalism. The only thing that we lost was the sense of legal familyhood. It is painful because this was done to us in a land which was built on Christian principles and frequently, whether wittingly or unwittingly, by Christian slaveholders. And now it becomes a necessary obligation of the Christian church to make every attempt to help us in that quest to rediscover the lost familyhood.

There is a problem. The problem is that since we are only ten percent, or just a little more, of the population, our most normal stance is that of ministry. We copy most often, and having copied, we are finding ourselves trying to copy a family model which doesn't fit. We've had some things said about us that are true in one sense and not true in still another sense. We've been told that we were matriarchal, we've been told that we were immoral, we've been used as data for statistics on birth illegitimacy. There are many things that are said about us which contain enough kernels of truth so that we are embarrassed by them, but which at the same time indicate some misunderstanding of who we are. We don't know, either. We are in the process of that redefinition, that rediscovery of our own family identity ourselves.

But at least partly one has to understand the African commonwealth from which we came to understand who we are or should be even now. We came from a continent which has a great deal of cultural diversity, with many ethnic groups and tribes and languages, but which has surprising uniformity metaphysically. Africa has many things that are culturally pluralistic but there are some areas in which one can almost expect to read the same recipe from one African nation to another and one is describing that African nation.

One of those is the idea of the family as the basic political and economic unit. That's true almost everywhere on the continent. Whatever the language, whatever the nature of the people, whatever the industry or the artisanship that makes up the primary preoccupation of the people, that fact remains, that the family, not just the family but the extended family, are the primary political and economic unit. When you read about or hear about conflicts on the continent, quite frequently deeply ingrained within whatever

power politics you may read or hear about is conflict between families or tribes. That was what we had when we were brought to this country, that was what had to be taken away from us, because with that as the primary political and economic unit we were always capable of some kind of insurrection if those units were to remain intact and the process of de-Africanization, therefore, took such forms as never allowing two slaves to be chained together who spoke the same language or wore the same tribal markings or who seemed to have come from the same communities. In still another fashion it was the taking away of the drum, for while there were many cultural differences, the drum seemed to be somehow common all over the continent.

I think that it also needs to be understood that the family in Africa was not just an economic/political unit. It was also the basis for almost all of the passage of culture, culture which transmitted through the family. Here we transmit culture through institutions external to the family: education through the schools, religion through the institutional church. Many of our cultural values come from external institutions. In Africa whatever cultural transmissions there were, they were basically filially transmitted. That in one sense created a kind of problem when most of the slaves who were imported were males. As a matter of fact, it was not until about 1840 that the number of black females matched the number of black males that had been imported to this country and since the male is not normally a culture carrier but the female almost always is, then much of the culture that might have been kept alive even with the tribal separations was not kept alive, and the de-Africanization process was unconsciously helped along simply by not having brought along the female.

I think that a third thing that has to be said is that in Africa there was not the same chain that we have between dating, courtship, and marriage. In our own country those are a part of a single plan of unity. The person whom you marry is somebody whom you courted and the person whom you courted is certainly somebody whom you dated, and they more or less constitute a sort of crescendo from the time you first begin to be aware of somebody of the opposite sex until the time that you establish life commitments. In Africa that's not the same story at all. In almost every one of the African cultures there is some sense in which at least there has been a history before the coming of Christianity or organized Islam, there has been a history of a break between the courtship and the marriage pattern. The dating and courtship business was all part of puberty and in most of those old African traditional cultures the practice was that when a boy became a certain age or a girl became a certain age, they were then isolated from the rest of the tribe, taken off into little colonies with the elders, and there they were to be introduced into manhood or womanhood. It was at that point that they were introduced into everything that a man wants or everything that a woman wants and it wasn't just that they were supposed to be taught the lore of the tribe or even the skills of the tribe. They were also supposed to be taught that a good man was a love-maker and a good woman was a mater, and part of what was done while they were separated one from the other was frequently to have the cabins where they were being prepared for

puberty close enough together with their chaperones so that at night the chaperone could feign deep sleep and the boys and girls could sneak over to each other and they could begin to have those first important experiments. That's not just Africa. That was part of much of the East. Almost every place where there has been some kind of puberty rite this has been a part of that puberty rite. Our textbooks don't always tell the story. It's difficult for Victorian scholars to tell everything that goes on, but this has been a part of the basis.

Marriage, on the other hand, was a largely legal and economic thing. This was not something that involved two people in love. It was something that involved two families forming alliances and frequently the mates were chosen by parents without the youngsters knowing anything about the mates. And almost all the necessary marital arrangements were made as families rather than as a matter of mutual individuals declaring their love each for the other. Sometimes they got married because this represented important political alliances; other times it simply represented somebody doing better economically; but almost always the marriage was a legal matter. It was a legal matter that did have strong economic implications, with the young man capable of having two, three, or four wives if he were able to take care of that many. But his life of courtship and his life of marriage represented almost two separate lives, and that was a part of the background.

What that did in fact was to give the impression, and I think that it is the right impression, that sex is not thought of as something that is nasty or dirty, but that sex is thought of as something natural. It is something as normal as eating, or drinking, or sleeping—almost anything that we do. It was simply something physical.

On the other hand, procreation, the bearing of children, was something sacred, extremely sacred. And because it was something sacred, there was no such thing as an illegitimate child. Always childbirth meant marriage of one sort or another. Whether it was marriage in the legal sense that we think of or simply marriage with a certain kind of tribal sanction, always reproduction involved that very important sacred aspect of the extension of the family.

All right. Now, from that kind of pattern where reproduction of the kind was important to the kind of pattern where all of a sudden the slave was simply a sort of animal whose primary purpose it was to do the work of an employer and if the employer were too poor to import other slaves to be hired out as a stud or to be let out as a hen and mated like cattle or where there were no laws that would give them the right to be married, nor were their marriages blessed by the church. If you can imagine going from a fairly strongly, a fairly well-organized marriage system like those tribal marriage systems to the complete chaos that represented the slave era, then you can begin to see part of what happened to black people.

When slavery was over and the end of slavery was largely a military measure, something that President Lincoln had to do because he was in the process of losing a war, then all of a sudden the slaves were simply dropped. There was no longer a process of slave importation, there was no longer the process of de-Africanization, but there was nobody who then be-

gan to try to acculturate the black. He was left isolated. And in the Jim Crow of the years between the Civil War and World War I as the ghettos began to develop and as racial segregation as an institution came into being, something like the tribes came back into being probably because of the strong African metaphysic which had never completely been wiped out, which was there in the vacuum where the white master had not brought in a church or a school. That strong African metaphysic seems to have re-created after a fashion a tribal ghetto. This is about where we are right now.

In the last fifty years, I say, legal marriages have become common and so that there are many states that don't even have common law marriage any more and most blacks will tend to get married now. There is a certain kind of social sanction to legal marriage that blacks respect just like anybody else.

But what does all of this mean? It means basically that we have a hard time dealing with who we are. We have attempted to establish the primary family system, mama, daddy, and children, the European family system, which, as L. D. has implied, casts off the elders and glorifies the youth. We have tried to pick that up and that has not worked very well for us. So in some sense, we are caught between the white Puritanism that we have tried to mimic and the African tribalism which we have not yet recaptured. We are somewhere in that area. Seems to me that at the moment the black people in their struggle for their own redefinition have something that can be offered to the entire nation. There is a certain kind of contribution that can be made by black tribalism to the Judeo-Christian people or to the people who have so perverted the Judeo-Christian heritage that they have cast off the mothers and the fathers. And that is that the family is, in a real sense, an interpersonal network which includes far more than just mama, daddy, and children.

When Daniel Patrick Monahan described the black family as a matriarchal family, this was because he was defining family as primary family, mama, daddy, and children. And if the father were absent, then he took it for granted that the black family was therefore matriarchal. There are many absent fathers in black families. But when one begins to look at black male youth as over against white male youth, one discovers that the prancing, prissy, effeminate boy is far less tolerated among blacks than he is among whites. And one may also discover that the black male tends to be not only masculine, but sometimes swaggeringly masculine, sometimes almost exaggeratedly masculine. That would not make sense if we were simply matriarchal.

But we are just beginning to understand why that kind of paradox exists. It is the black father figure; it is the tribal chieftain, as it were, who is still in the tribe even when there is not in each cottage a daddy. That's an important thing for us to know about. That at least explains why the black preacher can be a sort of benevolent tyrant and people accept him and they know what that means. It explains why in the black school for many years the principal has been a sort of benevolent despot and people have accepted him that way. It explains why we would gravitate toward politicians like Adam Clayton Powell or Julian Bond and we have no problem with them. It would explain why

we can raise up as images men like Malcolm X and Reverend Jesse Jackson. There is some sense in which the father figure, the charismatic, very powerful father figure is still among us and still lives in the tribe. When that father figure is torn down from among us, taken out from our midst, something very traumatic happens to black boys. If there is not a daddy in each home, that may not be so much of a problem. If the father figure is systematically demasculated, that's bad.

What I'm suggesting is that if it were possible for the present American to have something of a wholesome view of sex, which the ancient African had, chances are we would have fewer perversions, fewer repressions. If there were some opportunity that the present-day Christian could see the fulness of the idea of the sacredness of bearing a child, chances are there would not be so many fathers who are physically present but who are emotionally absent, and the boys would have less reason to be so emotionally tied to their mothers while their daddies were busily out, obsessed with making the money for the family. The chances are that in the black community if we are ever able to rediscover who we are and what our families are, we may be able to say to the entire nation, "There needs to be some kind of healthy communality." We never knew what a babysitter was, for any child that didn't have his mother present had somebody to fairly quickly take her place. The kind of love that has passed within the ghetto from one family to another is rapidly disappearing as we move into an urban age. But it is nonetheless something that is an important echo and my hope is that we as a black people can start to bring it back.

I have said relatively little about black-white relationships because that is not the thrust of what I am saying right now. Harry and I will talk some about that a little bit later on. But what I am saying is that the black tribal background is something which has not yet been redefined, but something which we are eagerly trying to rediscover and if at all possible to take the best of that black tribal background and bring it back to life among us. The worst we don't mind discarding with the centuries, but the better needs very much to help us now. Thank you.

"The Christian Family and Sexuality: Perspectives in Black and White"

Part Two

Harry N. Hollis, Jr.

I

The Need to Communicate Good News About Sex

When Harvey Cox's *Secular City* was first published, I stayed up all night to read it. It was so thought provoking that I could not put it down. When I came to the chapter on "Sex and Secularization," I thought that my eyes, weary from prolonged reading, were playing tricks on me. I read Cox's contention that the

church has good news about sex to proclaim to society, and I looked at the page again to make sure the words were still there. They were!

Now this idea of Christian good news about sex was a liberating concept for me. Seldom had I heard in the church *any* news much less *good* news about sex. I was a veteran of church retreats where we had been warned about the dangers of sexual misbehavior. As a young adolescent, I developed eye strain looking through religious literature trying to find some news about sex! My ears developed a ringing from all those sermons I heard preached and parts I heard read which warned about the dangers of sexual sins but offered very little positive to put in their place! My bones ached from sitting in church conferences where time and time again I was asked the question "What are you saving for marriage?", but no one even told me what my options were! So the truth of the matter is that I never heard much good news about sex from the church.

The more I pondered Cox's contention, the more I became convinced that he is correct. People caught up in the sexual schizophrenia of our culture need the liberating good news about sex that can be found in the Christian Gospel. Look at the people around us with whom we work out our lives. Here is the jaded businessman who has tried everything so often that he enjoys nothing. He needs the good news about sex. The bored housewife contemplating adultery because she is caught up in a vicious cycle of dishes and diapers needs the good news about sex. The teen-ager struggling with that perennial problem of "to bed or not to bed" needs the good news about sex. The harried and distraught husband nagged by guilt because he keeps a mistress in another town needs the good news about sex. The good news about sex is needed by the counselor who helps people all day long try to solve their sexual problems while harboring himself the deep secret that he cannot solve his own. The good news about sex is needed by the adolescent anxious about masturbation. The good news about sex is needed by the married couple who cannot enjoy intercourse because of their puritanical upbringing. The good news about sex is needed by the middle-aged man who uses pornography as a prop to try to recapture his fleeing manhood. The good news about sex is needed by the wife who has an uneasy conscience because she uses her body to manipulate her husband. Good news about sex is needed by the homosexual who wonders if anyone will help him or treat him as a person. *All* of us need the liberating good news of the Gospel about sex.

Tonight we are going to dialogue about some of the sexual myths and stereotypes that have so often cropped up in discussions about race. For example, like many whites, I grew up believing that most blacks are sexually immoral, that blacks really want to marry white people, and that blacks are always totally uninhibited in their sexual expressions and experiences. As background for this dialogue, it is my assignment to speak first about the Christian family as a resource for smashing these myths about sex and race. And the place to begin, I believe, is with a word about the Christian teaching of good news about sex. By the way, I will use the words "sex" and "sexuality" interchangeably in their widest sense to refer to every-

thing about a human being that has to do with being a male or a female.

Creation. The biblical teaching about creation is an important part of the good news about sex. Now we usually say: "Sex is good because God has made us sexual beings." But then we stop right there. Frequently we do not communicate in our life-styles the celebration and joy so necessary for the healthy acceptance of sex. Usually our articles, our sermons, and our books about sex are somber. Where is the joy of sex within the Christian community? Where is the celebration of the *Song of Songs*? Why have we confused reverence with morbidness? Why so much suspicion of wholesome pleasure? Why do we let the anti-bodies in our midst divert us from the biblical teaching that our bodies are good because we were made by God? Why is it that we almost never hear anyone say a prayer thanking God for sex? Let me put it differently, when was the last time you said a prayer thanking God for sex?

After all, when God created Eve, Adam said, "This is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." Now, a modern translation of that passage might be that when Adam first saw Eve he said, "Oh boy!" You may say that here is the first example of male chauvinism. But the truth of the matter is that Adam did not know enough yet to say, "Oh girl!" What I am pleading for is some wholesome "Oh-boy-ness" in our life-styles.

To be sure, some have focused excessively on creation, and this is dangerous because it leads to a naturalism that is overly optimistic about the possibility of correct sexual behavior. This is why the good news about sex contains a word about judgment.

Judgment. Can good news include judgment? It can indeed because the Christian good news recognizes that sex is dynamite and it needs discipline and control. But judgment must not be confused with antisexualism, such as that of the ancient churchman Gregory of Nyssa, who said that before the Fall people were free from all sexual appetite, and if Adam and Eve had not sinned, we would propagate as the angels do, perhaps by some kind of fission. Judgment differs from the antisexuality of Jerome, who said: "Woman—God's one mistake!" Instead judgment is God's way of building his control of sex into the nature of things, not because sex is bad but because sex is good.

Judgment, therefore, is an authentic part of the good news about sex but when there is too much focus on judgment, as there frequently has been in the Christian community, the result is a negativism which leads to pessimism about fulfillment in sexual behavior. That is why redemption in the Christian good news about sex is needed to bring balanced realism to our understanding.

Redemption. If the word of creation is that sex is good, and the word of judgment is that sex must be controlled, the good news of redemption is that we can express sex responsibly through the power of Christ's love. Now it is dangerous to link sex and redemption because it can lead to a salvation-through-sex philosophy. Sex is often viewed by some as the "medicine of immortality." Such is the case in that ancient story of Nicolette where an ailing pilgrim is restored to health when the heroine reveals her bare legs to him: "Then a wondrous thing befell, straight he rose up sound and well!" While such excesses

must be rejected, the relation of the message of redemption to sexual behavior must be emphasized. And here is the *crucial* element in good news about sex: people can have the sexual pleasure and genuine fulfillment they are seeking, as they allow God's redemptive love to express itself in their lives.

To put the matter differently, the good news about sex is that through Christ sex can be demythologized. Sex can be stripped of those negative myths of the demonizers who are preoccupied with judgment. Sex can also be demythologized of that impossible burden of salvation which the deifiers seek to place on it. The good news is that through Christ's redemptive love we are free to express sex in the realistic way that God intends.

This complete and joyous good news is needed to correct such false impressions of Christianity and sex as that written by Nikos Kazantzakis in *Report to Greco*, where he says: "Christianity soiled the union of man and woman by stigmatizing it as sin. Whereas formerly it was a holy act, a joyous submission to God's will, in the Christian's terror-shaken soul it degenerated into a transgression. Before Christ, sex was a red apple; along came Christ, and a worm entered that apple and began to eat it."

To say that we have good news about sex does not mean, as some fear, that we have a word of unbridled license for people. Sometime ago I attended a religious retreat at a state park in Kentucky. A convention was also being held there, and it had attracted many swingers. At breakfast the next morning, an obviously sleepy male entered the restaurant and approached a girl sitting at a table next to me. I overheard this conversation: "Were you the one?" he asked. "No, it wasn't me," she giggled. "What's your room number?" he asked. "112," she answered. "Well who was the girl in room 118?" And then he continued to walk about the restaurant searching desperately for his anonymous sexual partner of the night before. It is to those who are enslaved by this kind of futile search for meaning that the Christian message brings the good news of freedom under the Lordship of Christ.

II

What It Means to Be Human

Having said a word about the need to communicate good news about sex, I want to deal in the second place with what it means to be human. In our focus here on the Christian family and sexuality from black and white perspectives, we are dealing with an explosive topic. Talk about sex can lead to everything from angry pickets to empty pulpits. Talk about race has split churches and broken families. So when we talk about sex and race together, it is not surprising that the result can be dynamite. Yet talk we must, because it is often claimed with some validity, that sex is the hidden agenda in conflicts between races in this country. To get at racial problems, we are correctly told that we must go beyond race to examine sexual mythologies that blacks and whites perpetuate about each other.

The examination of the role of sex in racial conflicts is an important step, I believe, but it is not the final one. There is another step necessary to get at the

element common to both sexual and racial myths in our society. At the deepest level, sexual and racial myths are based on a *faulty perception of what it means to be human*. We humans cannot be understood fully in terms of anatomy or in terms of our skin color and hair texture. Humans are more than the sum of their private parts. These myths with which we will deal cannot be corrected by a facts-of-life session on the 12th birthday; nor can they be dispelled by the observance of black history week. Instead we must go deeper to explore the nature of being fully liberated humans.

The church must speak to the great confusion among men and women today about what it means to be human. This confusion is echoed in a story that Keith Miller told us in chapel at Southern Seminary. A man was going duck hunting early one morning, and the night before there was a fierce storm with lightning, thunder, and rain. The man and wife decided to pick up their sleeping little daughter and put her in their bedroom so that she would not be frightened if she waked up in the middle of the storm. The next morning at 4:00 the man and his wife got up, she to fix his breakfast and he to go off duck hunting. Suddenly they heard their little daughter crying loudly in the hall, and they rushed out to her to see what was the matter. When she calmed down, the confused little girl said: "Well I woke up and I looked in Mama's bed, and Mama was not there. I looked in Daddy's bed, and Daddy was not there. I went in my room and I looked in my bed, and I was not there, and I don't know where I am." Now in all honesty, many men and women today are like that confused little girl. We are not sure where we are or who we are. We need the liberation to be the humans God intended us to be.

At this time of women's liberation movements, when the hands that rocked the cradle are now rocking the boat, I want to say that I celebrate the advent of women's liberation, and for that matter of men's liberation, but only if they point to that much desired goal of human liberation. What women must battle for is not simply to be accepted, but to be accepted as human beings. Is there not a great deal of truth in D. H. Lawrence's statement that "man is willing to accept woman as an equal, as a man in skirts, as an angel, a devil, a baby-face, a machine, an instrument, a bosom, a womb, a pair of legs, a servant, an encyclopaedia, an ideal or an obscenity; the one thing he won't accept her as is a human being, a real human being of the feminine sex"?

Just as it is true that the church, with notable individual exceptions, has been one of the last institutions to integrate the races, so it will be true, I fear, unless we alter the course, that the church will be one of the last to implement the liberation of females and males to be the humans God intended. When we do not work for human liberation, we leave a vacuum which is entered by such groups as SCUM (the Society for Cutting Up Men) and WITCH (Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell.) We pave the way for such licentious liberators as Germaine Greer, who said recently that venereal disease is now so prevalent that no one ought to feel guilty about catching it. She said she wished she could catch VD,

adding: "Despite a lifetime of service to the cause of sexual liberation, I have never caught venereal disease, which makes me feel rather like an Arctic explorer who has never had frostbite" (*Time*, March 12, 1973, p. 59.). From the likes of Germaine Greer will come little germane to wisdom or decency. But, if the church remains silent and negates in its teachings and in its life God's good news of human liberation, we can expect such malicious nonsense to attract attention.

What we desperately need therefore is Christian involvement in human liberation. Our best hope for freedom from all racial and sexual mythologies is to point people toward what it means to be human.

III

Learning to Be Human Through Jesus Christ

The good news of Christianity is that in Jesus Christ we can learn what it means to be human, and we can learn how to relate to other human beings of both sexes and all races. Jesus shows us the fullness of humanity. He teaches us that man is not simply, in the words of Faulkner, "a stalemate between desire and dust." In his own rich and full life, Jesus teaches us how to be fully human. He is the rock on which to smash all myths about race and sex.

In *Racism and the Christian Understanding of Man*, George Kelsey demonstrates that the most damning flaw in racism is its idolatry. Racism elevates color to the place of God. Race is used to define one's worth and ultimate loyalty.

Now there is a parallel between the idolatry of race and the idolatry of sex, or sexolatry, which is the devotion to sex as the ultimate reason for being. Both racism and sexolatry are idols that can be shattered by Jesus Christ, who points us toward the one true God.

In the life of Jesus we find the pattern of love which can empower us and guide us in all our sexual and racial relationships. This should be good news for all but evidently it is strange news for some. Several years ago I was asked to write an article on religion and sex. In it I said that the love which Jesus expressed for others is a pattern to guide us in our sexual relationships. The editor returned the manuscript to me for revision with this notation: "Jesus has nothing to teach us about sex." Now there are many in the Christian community like this editor. Couple this obscurantist attitude with the bombardment of unhealthy ideas about sex outside the religious community, and it is no wonder that people are uncertain about sex.

If Jesus' love is a pattern for our sexual relationships, it also serves to demonstrate how we should treat other races. I remember as a boy the liberating effect that a speech by T. B. Maston had on my understanding of race relations. Smashing against the racism of my culture and church came his liberating word that Jesus shows us how to relate to other races in love. I was never the same again.

Jesus is our best hope to move beyond racial and sexual idolatry to that full humanity which God intends for us.

IV

Being Human Through the Family

The family is the ideal place to teach us what it means to be human, and, in the process, we can learn how to relate to other sexual beings and to people of other races. The Christian family is our best hope for breaking down those cultural stereotypes about sex and race.

In the average white family there has been too little teaching about sex or race. Concerning sex education the attitude and actions of many are mirrored in the words of the mother who said to a seminary professor: "My fourteen-year-old son doesn't know anything about sex, and I plan to keep it that way." Other parents are a bit more bold, and they give an anxious "facts-of-life" talk to their children when it is often too late. To be sure, children have observed the way their parents treat each other, and in the process, they have learned a great deal about the give and take of sexual relationships.

If parents develop a hurried style of life that has little time for gentle affection and tender touching, their children will likely relate to other humans in the same way. If I am so busy ministering and administering, that I have little time left to love my family, I am failing to be human or to teach my children how to be human.

If little has been said about sex in the white community, less has been said about race. And, as with sex, much that has been said is negative. In addition to words, children catch their parents' patterns of behavior toward other races. Children learn quickly that race is a problem, and they begin to look at people of other races as problems instead of humans.

If I treat the black policeman as an inferior person, I am providing my children with an unhealthy model for their relationships to other races. And, if I never invite people of other races into my home on social occasions, I am providing a negative model for my children to learn how to relate to other races.

So the family is the place where education will take place. It will be either *overt, planned, verbal* education or *covert, haphazard, unacknowledged* teaching. The family is the best place to learn how to be human beings. It is the place where children can be loved into being. It is the place to provide models to teach children how to relate to humans of both sexes and all races.

The obscenity of sex in movies today distresses me, but I am also concerned about the obscenity of loveless relationships in the family. When parents placard a sub-human, manipulative relationship for their children to observe day in and day out, they are exposing their offspring to an obscenity more harmful than smut.

The profane words and myths that blacks and whites hurl at each other concern me deeply, but I am even more concerned about the obscenity of loveless relationships between the races.

Such obscenities must be overcome through warm relations in the family. Do you remember in *To Kill a Mockingbird* that lawyer Atticus Finch goes against community customs and defends a black man wrongfully accused of raping a white girl? Finch says he could not face his children, Jem and Scout, if he did otherwise. And he adds, "Why reasonable people go

stark raving mad when anything involving a Negro comes up is something I don't pretend to understand. . . I just hope Jem and Scout come to me for their answers instead of listening to the town. I hope they trust me enough. . . ."

It has been said, and it was true in recent history, that nothing scares the church as much as sex and race. But "the times they are a-changing." There are many within the church determined to help families cultivate through trusting relationships that "humanness" which will obliterate the racial and sexual myths society hurls at us. Empowered by Christ's love, we can move toward that full humanity which God intends.

Note: The dialogue referred to by Mr. Lawson and Dr. Hollis in the above address is not included in the printed proceedings.

"The Real Answer to Today's Family Crisis"

David R. Mace

This seminar has been called because we are troubled about what is happening to the family. If we were all sure that family life in our culture was in fine shape, the Christian Life Commission would have chosen another topic. So we are here because, deep down, we are uneasy and apprehensive.

And not without reason. Our divorce rates are higher than they have ever been. Children are alienated from their parents as never before in human history. We are being treated to many gloomy prognostications. One recent book is entitled *Marriage Is Hell*. Another is called *The Nuclear Family in Crisis*. A third, written by a British psychiatrist, is called *The Death of the Family*. Leading magazines have been running special issues on alternative life styles—alternatives to family life, that is. One writer has said that this is the last generation that will ever marry.

What are we doing about it? Not all we *should* be doing. But we *are* doing quite a lot. We have many services for families today that we never had before. We have done a great deal to give families economic security. We have tried to provide them with adequate housing. Large numbers of professional people are working hard to help families, in one way or another—pastors, social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, lawyers. We have set up all sorts of agencies to offer family counseling—mental health, family service, child guidance, family welfare, family planning, marriage counseling, parent effectiveness, family therapy, and others. Yet the family seems only to sink deeper in a sea of trouble. We are reminded of the old nursery rhyme—"All the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't put Humpty Dumpty together again."

And so we are here to see what can be done. We are like anxious relatives gathered round the bed of a sick patient. And we'd better face the disturbing fact that our medicines don't seem to be working very well. So we have to decide between two explanations.

Either the medicine is right, but the patient is too sick to recover (some people believe that); or the medicine is wrong and we've got to change it.

Is it possible that our approaches are wrong? It's an unpleasant thought. But once I was willing to face it the picture became much clearer.

I have seen a great many family life programs, especially church family life programs, over a long period of years, and all over the world. I have personally started some of them. They were good, but not good enough. They were well-intentioned, but not always well aimed. They were sincere, but often ineffective; and the time has come when we must face the facts.

Archimedes once said, "Give me a fulcrum and I will move the earth." We have a familiar illustration of this principle in the jack that is a part of the equipment of your car. You could never lift the car to change the wheel. It would take many strong men to do that. Yet, with the jack, by applying the right kind of effort at the right point, even a child can do it. That's the lesson we must learn about our family programs. It's all a matter of strategy. In warfare, good strategy has enabled small armies to win great victories and bad strategy has caused large armies to suffer terrible defeats. What I'm saying is that there has been a lot of bad strategy in our family programs.

All right, what do we do about it? What are the principles on which we ought to build a sound strategy? Let me suggest three of them:

Concentrate on Marriage

About thirty years ago, in England, I was invited to run a seminar for a group of social workers. I began by asking them how they were dealing with problem families. They had a number of techniques. Usually they began with a child in trouble. They could arrange for the child to have good health care, to have meals in school so as to receive proper nourishment. If things were very bad, the child could be taken into a foster home. Then, they had programs for mothers. Distracted women could be given a free vacation in the country, where they could rest up and get over their exhaustion and discouragement. They could be enrolled in classes where they could learn about how to manage their children. Then, there were rehabilitation programs for homes that were in bad condition. They could get grants for new houses and equipment, or even move the family to a council house.

So far they hadn't mentioned fathers, so I asked about them. Oh yes, they had some programs there, too. They could take the father to court, if he was beating up his wife and children, or have part of his wages withheld if he wasn't supporting them. If he was an alcoholic, they could get him into a rehabilitation program. Clearly, the fathers were the bad guys.

Then I asked them about helping the marriage. They admitted they had no techniques for this. So I tried to show them how most of the elaborate services were really trying to compensate for the failure of the marriage. Instead of going all over the waterfront, why not focus down on the central issue? Get a really good marriage going, and the other problems would

solve themselves. A loving husband wouldn't starve or punish or neglect his wife and children. A fulfilled wife wouldn't get ill with worry or sink into apathy and despair. Children with happy and loving parents would be cared for and given emotional security. So they wouldn't turn antisocial or delinquent, or end up as school dropouts.

Social workers have made a lot of progress since those early days. But examine the record of what we have tried to do for families. The emphasis, again and again, has been on the child, or the mother and child, or on shoring up the family from outside with economic or social supports. Consider the enormous resources we spend on trying to deal with crime, delinquency, addiction, personality disorder, social maladjustment, and the various ills that have again and again been traced back to the fact that the families of these unhappy and troublesome people just didn't function. And what do we mean when we say a family doesn't function? We mean that it can't function because it's unsound at the center. Malfunctioning families nearly always are the result of malfunctioning marriages.

If a river gets polluted, you don't deal with the problem by getting armies of technicians to divert the water through tanks that will cleanse it and pump it back again. That would be a crazy method. No, you go back to the source of the trouble, and clear it up. Yet many of our family programs have been ineffective because they didn't deal with the trouble at its source. Nearly always, the source is the marriage.

When I first decided to spend my life working for better marriages, I wrote out a simple statement. It said, "The quality of relationships in any community can't be sustained at a higher level than the quality of relationships in the families that make up that community; and the quality of relationships in any family can't be sustained at a higher level than the quality of relationships in the marriage on which that family is based." I believe that statement is as logical today as it was when I first wrote it down some 35 years ago.

So we must concentrate on marriage. I know why we tend to avoid doing this. Marriage is very personal, and it seems a bit embarrassing to probe into the relationship of husband and wife. It has to be done with great sensitivity and delicacy. But that's the place where love begins and life begins and the family begins. And if you don't start there, you're not really starting at all.

Concentrate on Prevention

I have never been in any doubt about the first principle. From the very beginning, I have always put the emphasis on marriage. But I haven't done so well on the second principle.

In the early days, we could only work with marriages when they were in bad trouble. The marriage relationship was surrounded by very strict taboos. Married couples never talked about their personal life together. Having marital trouble was regarded as a humiliating failure—especially for a husband. So the problems were shrouded behind veils of secrecy. Only when the situation was desperate did the facts leak out.

By that time, the marriage was often beyond help. The early marriage counselors had to chalk up many failures. The problems they dealt with were far advanced—and unfortunately the counselors were *not* far advanced in their ability to deal with them.

However, we did our best for these people, and we learned a lot from them. One of the things we learned was that most marriages in bad trouble take a long time to get that way. Marital disharmony is like cancer—it grows slowly and silently, and then strikes to kill. So the best way to deal with it is to reach it early, before the damage is beyond repair.

We marriage counselors worry a lot about this. We know that while we're doing our best to help husbands and wives whose marriages are at the point of breakdown, out there in the community there are other husbands and wives for whom the rot has already started, but who are paying no heed to the early warning signals. Yet we know that they are getting deeper and deeper into trouble, and when they finally get in such a mess that we can't do much for them, they'll be coming in for counseling.

I may spend 20 hours with a couple in serious difficulty and not get them very far. Yet I know that, in the same amount of time, I might be able to help three or four couples, earlier in their marriages, to avoid trouble altogether, if only I could reach them. But how?

In order to have a sound strategy we just *have* to reach them. I'm not saying we should give up our marriage counseling services. Compassion compels us to do what we can for people in deep trouble, even if the best we can offer is to help them out of marriage with as little serious hurt as possible. But I am saying that we are spending far too much time on the kind of counseling that does little to deal with our family crisis in general.

I believe the time has come for us to make a major switch from remedial efforts that bring very limited results to preventive efforts that can achieve a great deal. So when people come to me now and ask me about starting a marriage counseling service in their churches, I ask them how good a service of marriage preparation and prevention they already have. Nearly always they have none at all. So I have to say, "Well, go and get one going. You're trying to start at the wrong end."

I now believe, too, that preventive family programs *could* be made to work, if we're prepared to put the same amount of effort into them that we have put into remedial programs. Going to doctors and dentists for regular checkups was completely unheard of when I was a boy. Now it is accepted without question. Can't people be persuaded to give as much attention to their marital health as they now do to their dental health? Are our teeth really more important than our marriages?

Concentrate on the Dynamic Approach

I've been talking about working with couples before their marriages get into trouble. Well, we've been doing that, haven't we? What about marriage preparation? That's working with couples before they get married at all. Surely that's prevention.

Yes, it is. But take a close look. *How* have we been doing it?

Years ago, in England, I started some programs for engaged couples. We ran a course of lectures—a doctor spoke on the sexual side of marriage, a banker on money management, a pastor on the spiritual side, and so on. We thought this was great.

Some years later, this program was extended on a nationwide basis. On a return visit to England, I asked Alan Ingleby, who had taken over, how the lectures were going. He laughed. "Lectures?" he said, "We don't give them lectures any more. You're completely out of date!"

"You see," he went on, "we began to check with the couples, to see how they responded. At first they were very polite, and said the lectures were fine. But as we probed a little deeper, we soon discovered we weren't touching their real needs at all. These couples were far too much involved in their present experiences to be thinking much about what they would do after they got married. They were having real problems of adjustment here and now, and that was where they needed help. So we stopped lecturing to them, and put them in small groups. Then *they* began talking to *us* and to one another. And then things really happened."

"And now," he said, "We've changed our whole approach. Now we believe that the best way we can prepare a couple for marriage is to make them an effectively functioning couple here and now. Already they are coping with sex, money, in-laws, decision-making, and interpersonal conflict. If we can help them work through their present problems and really grow together, they'll be well prepared later to cope with the more complicated adjustments of married life."

But you can't do that by lecturing to them. That's the didactic approach, and what they need is the dynamic approach. We just don't learn to live by being talked to. A much better method is by demonstration. The best way of all is through *participation*. Changes in behavior seldom start in the head. They come when something happens in the *heart*; or, in the modern vernacular, at the "gut level." We are changed not by thinking, but by *experiencing*.

Unfortunately our preventive family programs are almost totally didactic; and because of that, they are poor programs. They may give those who run them a sense of achievement, but for those at the receiving end, I'm afraid they accomplish very little. We must begin to concentrate on the dynamic approach.

A Practicable Program

So, in the time that's left, let's outline a program built on these basic principles, and see what it would look like. We'll focus on marriage—although of course the program would also include parent-child relationships and many of the aspects of family living. But marriage is the fulcrum, and that's where we have to start.

We've agreed, too, that the focus is not on marriages in trouble. The people to go after are the engaged couples, the recently-married couples, and the so-called "stable" marriages.

First, then, the couples moving into marriage. Young people today know, much better than the previous two generations did, that marriage can be tough. They don't buy the romantic moonshine that was sold to their parents. This puts youth today in a receptive

frame of mind to the idea of marriage preparation.

But it must be a sound program, or they won't buy it. And all too often, it isn't. Pastors have tried valiantly to do a conscientious job of premarital counseling. But I find them often discouraged, feeling deep down that they have been ineffective. I suspect they are right.

There are five ways of doing marriage preparation. The first is giving the couple a book. The second is organizing lecture courses, as I did in England. The third is to give so-called "instruction" to the individual couple. Any of these would be better than nothing. But all are largely ineffective, because all are didactic.

The fourth way is to work with the couple on their patterns of communication and interaction. This is quite different from giving them instruction. You can easily tell the difference by checking to see who is doing most of the talking. This method of helping the couple to take an honest look at themselves, at one another, and at their relationship is very effective, and very rewarding; but it takes a certain amount of counseling skill. I have described it fully in my book, *Getting Ready for Marriage*; so, you'll excuse me if I don't go into further detail now.

The fifth method is through couple group interaction—the method I described as having been widely adopted in England. This is a very good method—the best method of all if the group is skillfully led. In some cases it needs to be supplemented by personal or joint interviews with individual couples, as we do when we use the fourth method.

If you use these last two methods of marriage preparation, you have an effective program. But even the best marriage preparation is not enough in itself. You can't give any couple a guarantee of success.

Sometimes premarital counseling gets started so late that it has to continue after the wedding. But in any case, a follow-up appointment should always be made with the couple for six months later. If all is well, this may turn out to be nothing more than a pleasant reunion. But if all is not well, this renewal of contact can be a life-saver. Because of this, it is necessary to insist on the appointment being kept. I say this with some feeling. In the past year two of my medical students and their wives, whom I had prepared for marriage, failed to come back for their six-month checkup; and in each case they finally did come back about a year later, in serious trouble—trouble which I had predicted and expected. In both cases I was able to clear up the difficulties; but the couples had by that time suffered needless distress, and the growth of their relationship had been very much hindered.

It is this first year of marriage that is the critical time. In the first six months, the couple normally work out the interaction pattern that decides their future destiny. If it is a good pattern, the marriage goes on growing. If it is a bad pattern, growth is arrested and the marriage begins to deteriorate. It is possible to correct a bad pattern later in many cases; but it is far, far easier to do so at this point than by marriage counseling years afterwards.

The ideal would be to continue with all couples on the basis of an annual checkup. In our mobile culture, however, couples often drift away and we lose touch with them. And, of course, there are many couples to whom the very idea of regular checkups would appear

strange and threatening. These are the couples who have what we call "stable" marriages. They have been almost impossible to reach in the past. Fortunately that is now rapidly changing.

One of the most promising and exciting developments of recent years is what we are now calling the "marriage enrichment" movement. My wife and I have now been conducting retreats for married couples for more than 10 years. But it is only recently that this movement has taken a great surge forward. The Catholics call it "Marriage Encounter," and have published a book about it. The Methodists call it "Marriage Communication Labs." The Quaker version, in which my wife and I have been deeply involved, is called "Marriage Enrichment Retreats." We have written up the story in a booklet that has just been published.

Marriage enrichment groups take two main forms. Some meet regularly once a week. But far more effective are the intensive weekend retreats for six to eight couples. They have some similarity to encounter groups, but in marriage enrichment we reject the confrontation methods which have disturbed many people, and we concentrate instead on promoting positive interaction. These weekend retreats meet all the requirements for an effective program. They are for married couples; they use the preventive approach; and they work through dynamic group interaction. Their effectiveness has to be experienced to be believed—no description can be adequate. They represent the most hopeful development I have encountered in all my long years of working in the family field. I know many couples whose stale and dull marriages took on a new lease of life during one of these retreats; and they have been growing and sparkling ever since.

I may add that the renewing of these marriages always has a beneficial effect on the children. Couples who give up on their children usually do so because they have already given up on each other. But when they rediscover love, the children soon respond to the change in the atmosphere, and marriage enrichment leads to the enrichment of parenthood.

Conclusion

Now I must conclude. I am deeply convinced that the most effective way in which we can meet the family crisis of today is to give our full support to the kind of program I have outlined—marriage preparation for the young couple with appropriate follow-ups, and then a commitment to seek marital growth. These are the couples who will be successful parents, who will create truly happy families. The more of them we have, the more effective will be our response to the skepticism about marriage and the family that is widespread today.

But I want to go one step further. My wife and I are so convinced about this program that we believe the time has come for married couples themselves to unite in a campaign to promote better marriages, beginning with their own. This is not really a new idea. Let me quote something to you, and then identify it—

"We have been so furtive and secretive about our married happiness that many people have grown cynical about marriage altogether. It has been said and written that marriage is an overrated and outmoded institution; and the thousands of gloriously

happy married people in this country have never raised their voices to deny it. I have been told in all seriousness by an able man and a keen observer of human affairs that he had scarcely ever in his life come in contact with a successful marriage. Why, I said to myself, are the best married people hiding their light under a bushel? Is it not time that some of them emerged from the seclusion of their happy, peaceful homes and began to 'sell' marriage to a generation which is rapidly becoming cynical and disillusioned about it?"

These words could have been written last week. In fact, I wrote them a few days before Christmas in the year 1947, on board the liner "Queen Elizabeth," as I was returning to England from my first visit to the United States—just over a quarter of a century ago!

"Is it not time—?" I asked in 1947. Maybe it wasn't then—or maybe I was too hesitant to act. Now I believe it really is time to act. Liberated women have united and formed organizations to declare their convictions. Retired persons have formed an association to foster their interests. Parents without partners have joined together to give each other mutual help and support. Why not an association of married couples, united in a common quest for growth and enrichment in their own and each other's marriages, and dedicated to the cause of working for better marriages everywhere?

After a quarter of a century, my wife and I have decided to make this venture. We have as yet no organization and no money. But we have some plans; and already a small group of couples are pledged to support us. We have faith that many other couples will rally round, and take up the cause. We shall make a beginning in the near future. We shall call ourselves the Association of Couples for Marriage Enrichment. Some of you may want to join us.

I have been working for a long time in the family field—nearly forty years. I have been involved in many programs, some of them have been very successful. But I have also made many mistakes. Experience has taught me many valuable lessons. And looking back and looking forward, I think I now see the issues more clearly than I ever saw them before. I believe I can see the real answers to the family crisis of today, and I am full of hope. I offer you a plan—a plan that I believe will work. I shall not be able to carry out these new tasks—I belong to the first generation of early pioneers. But a new generation stands ready to take our places—a new generation with youth, strength, knowledge, and vision. To that new generation, hopefully and confidently, I commit the unfinished task.

"The Local Church Working for the Family's Future"

W. Randall Lolley

Our program designers have told me that my presentation is to be both personal and practical. Personal, I can be. But practical, well that remains to be seen.

First, the PERSONAL.

My Father was a teen-age groom. Before he was twenty years old, his wife of one year died at childbirth. With an infant daughter and an eighth-grade formal education, he buckled down to a job on a Coffee County, Alabama, farm.

Two years later he met and married the woman who in four years would become my mother. I was six years old when my brother, Tom, was born.

My Mother was a school teacher. My Father, in time, acquired partnership in a commercial feed business.

My brother and I grew up in a Southeast Alabama town, population—1900.

My sister was reared by her maternal grandmother. Her life was cut tragically short; she died of leukemia at age 34, leaving two teen-age daughters and an elementary-school age son.

My Mother was the active driving force in our family constellation. Dad was a bit passive by nature and quite content to let Mom's strong will most frequently prevail.

All in all, ours was a sturdy family. We experienced most of the rhythm and growing pains typical of a family in our circumstance.

Three overwhelming convictions linger with me. I am sure they are the products of the influence, both direct and indirect, of my family.

1. *I was loved.* No doubt about that. Through thick and thin, in all the ups and downs, on both sides of "fool's hill," I was loved. In myriads of ways that fact came crashing through every day's experience.

2. *I was accepted, warts and all.* Somehow I got the idea that my folks liked me (as well as they loved me). I never thought that I had to become someone else or drastically alter my makeup to qualify for their esteem.

As I read it, we were out in the weather together. I could count on them counting on me.

3. *I was trusted.* Of course, I lied sometimes and occasionally "broke the rules" of the household. But never once did I get the impression that my parents had lost confidence in me. Their confidence underpinned my confidence in myself.

So at home I got the components for my own SAMROB (security, adventure, mastery, recognition, organic needs, and belonging).

Color me fortunate!

My parents' simple faith was as contagious as measles. Both my brother and I gravitated toward the pastoral ministry. The impact of my family could scarcely be exaggerated in that pilgrimage. . . .

Mother died in 1967. Dad lives still in our old house in Samson, Alabama.

Parallel with this primary family, there was another one. They were the 310 or 320 persons in the Samson Baptist Church; they too were my family. In more ways than I know, these persons buttressed the impact of my parents upon my life. They, too, loved, accepted, and trusted me. These people were as grateful as my parents when some good thing came my way. They agonized as deeply as humanly possible with me whenever I hurt.

Perhaps most of them would be surprised to know it, but that church family made me want to grow, both as a person and as a Christian. The years have

passed swiftly since I graduated from high school and left home really never to return again.

Since Samson, home for me has been Birmingham; Franklin County and Greensboro in North Carolina; and Fort Worth.

During the past decade my life has been indelibly shaped by two other families. One is those three women who live with me at my house—my wife, Clara Lou, and my two teen-age daughters, Charlotte and Pam. The other is that 2,550-person family which comprises First Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The agony and the ecstasy of growth with them has been boundless.

Two things I know. First, that First Baptist family has had a definite, measurable impact on the four of us at the Lolley house. And second, I am convinced that First Baptist family can have just as profound an impact on other families.

So much for the personal. But it was necessary in order to establish some sort of credential for what follows.

Now, the PRACTICAL.

I do not have to be told what kind of impact a local church can have upon a family. I have experienced it first-hand.

There are several levels of engagement for the local church as it works for the family's future. Elizabeth O'Connor's fascinating book, *Journey Inward, Journey Outward*, focuses on church renewal, but with just a tiny bit of translation it could be made to apply to family renewal.

Her thesis is that persons experiencing renewal in their lives are on an inward and an outward journey at the same time. The journey inward involves three engagements: with oneself, with God, and with others. The journey outward is determined largely by the gifts of the persons discovered on the inward journey.

This inward/outward journey is precisely the pilgrimage which every local church should be helping every family within its ranks to make. In the church, as in the family, commitment is not tentative. The fellowship is so intimate and real and deep that we are willing to take risks that would not be taken elsewhere. It is a risk to know and to be known, to care and to be cared for. But that is exactly the kind of robust risk the church must take NOW for the family's sake.

Here are some levels of engagement we are discovering in our situation.

1. *A Winston-Salem Family Life Council.* Winston-Salem, North Carolina, is a city of approximately 240,000 population. Multiplied thousands more live in the county and the "Piedmont Golden Triangle" region. During 1972 a growing group of interested people, both lay and professional, recognized a need for improved services contributing to family life in Winston-Salem. This group investigated successful programs in other communities and proposed a similar program for the greater Winston-Salem area. Hopes were high, but as for now they have been continually dashed. No responsible planning group in the community has acknowledged the need for a coordinating agency such as a Family Life Council. I personally, on behalf of the church I serve, have given full support

to the effort to develop such a Family Life Council for our community. That work is still in process but I am certain it will eventually be fruitful.

Since such an endeavor is in my opinion a very definite arena in which a local church can function, I intend to continue applying my energies as well as the resources of our church in the direction of developing a Family Life Council for our community.

The most recent endeavor in this direction has been a survey of family-related services in greater Winston-Salem. The survey was conducted by Dr. Donald M. Hayes, Department of Community Medicine, Bowman Gray School of Medicine, in late 1972.

Vital statistics show that Forsyth County in 1971 had 45 divorces for every 100 marriages. This statistic suggests less than optimal marital adjustment in our region.

The objective of our study directed by Dr. Hayes was to determine the availability, accessibility, and extent of family services in our County. Among these were services for problems of youth and parents; problems of prevention and education; and problems requiring therapy for existing situations.

A survey of our telephone directory and of an *Information and Referral Service Directory* issued by the Winston-Salem Junior League revealed 235 church listings and 13 agency listings for family-related problems. These churches and agencies were the target for a telephone survey.

An interview guide was constructed listing the areas of concern. A group of volunteer interviewers was recruited and instructed in the use of the interview guide. Each was instructed to call the churches and agencies on his or her list during regular working hours.

All the 13 agencies were easily reached and interviewed. Of 235 churches in Forsyth County, 229 have telephone listings. These 229 were assumed to be 100 percent of the churches potentially offering family services. Of these 191 (81.2 percent) were reached and interviewed.

The responses have been carefully graphed and tabulated by Dr. Hayes. Results of the interview showed a general dearth of family services. There was a particularly marked deficiency of professional pre-marital, marital and abortion counseling. Among churches the tendency was to provide services only to their own members. Among agencies the trend was to provide services exclusively to indigents. It was concluded that there is a great need for a Family Life Council in our community. This would become the vehicle for a detailed assessment of the needs and for facilitating subsequent developments related to family life in the region.

In my opinion neither our church nor its pastor can spend its priority time any better than to see to it that such a community family life council be developed.

I offer this as a suggestion for one of your engagements in your own community.

2. *A Family Life Program for a Group of Winston-Salem Churches.* The second engagement consists of a local church joining forces with other churches in a community effort of family life development.

In Winston-Salem, this began 3 years ago, not too long after Dr. David Mace came to live and work in our community.

The program as we conceived it would provide a

group of churches with a comprehensive family life program, designed to encourage and help all church families to explore the meaning of Christian family living, and to develop to the full their family potentials. While help for families in trouble was included, the major objective of the program was positive—to help good families function even better, to help youth prepare for family life, and to help new marriages get off to a good start.

The program was based upon the use of the most up-to-date knowledge and skills, under the guidance of a highly qualified program director. This would scarcely be possible for one church working alone, so our program was projected on the basis of seven churches cooperating in the cluster. These were Baptist, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Moravian.

Our goal included the training and supervision of the pastors, staffs, and selected lay persons, in the churches concerned, so that they might cooperate in providing services to all their members.

The key to the success of the whole venture lay in the hiring of a highly qualified person who could bring to the leadership special skills, and who would assume full-time responsibility for the task. The function of the program director was not so much to run the program himself, but to develop the resources of each church to run its own program.

Our program was designed to be a model which could be taken over by groups of churches in other communities. Dr. David Mace worked closely with us in working out the details.

Enrollment in the project by a church involved:

(1) A three-year commitment to a major emphasis on Christian family life on the part of pastors and members. This meant much more than just providing a counseling service for families in trouble. It meant a willingness on the part of church members to examine their own family relationships as a major area of Christian living, and to seek together to learn the full meaning of living in families, and to achieve high levels of fulfillment in their family relationships.

(2) A financial commitment to the project for three years—\$5,000 a year. The basis of the agreement was that a church could withdraw from the project any time after the end of the second year by giving one year's notice to do so.

(3) Each participating church was to appoint three representatives—one pastor and two lay persons—to the Steering Committee. This committee of 21 persons was responsible for the management of the entire program. Each church would, therefore, have full and equal share in the direction of the program.

A timetable for the project was carefully laid out. The program was designed to provide both breadth and scope. Some of the activities would be provided for an individual church, but it was understood that most sections of the program, particularly in the first year, would be shared jointly by all participating churches.

The program components included:

(1) *Youth Programs.* Each church would devote one month in the year to a special emphasis on sex, marriage, and family relationships for all its high-school youth. The director would be available to work with the youth leaders of the church for four successive Sunday evenings, in an ongoing program based on

discussion of anonymous questions submitted by the young people. Junior-high and senior-high sessions would be separate. Short courses for the youth of all the churches would also be scheduled from time to time, and facilities for special counseling, where needed, would be provided. The youth would also participate in joint programs with parents to explore the "generation gap."

(2) *Marriage Preparation.* All young people approaching marriage would, as engaged couples, be offered comprehensive preparation. This would include short courses in marriage preparation, retreats for engaged couples, group discussion sessions, and individual and joint premarital counseling. The pastors of the churches would receive special training and supervision from the director in marriage preparation.

(3) *Marriage Enrichment.* All married couples in all the churches would be invited to take part in some aspect of a "marriage enrichment" program. This would include short courses on marriage at the different stages in the life-cycle—married couples discussion groups under skilled leaders and married couples retreats. It should be stressed that these programs would *not* be therapy sessions. The emphasis in all of them would be on the growth and development of a good marriage.

(4) *Parent Education.* All parents who were members of the participating churches would have the opportunity to study together the art of bringing up children to be healthy and happy adults. This would be provided through short courses—in discussion groups, in retreats, in "generation gap" conferences, etc. Special courses for parents of preschool, grade-school, and high-school children, as well as for single parents, would be included.

(5) *Family Advice Service.* Such a service would be available to all church members. It would be operated at four levels. First, contact would be made, directly or through the program director's office, with one of the team of "family advisers." These would be laymen and women, members of the particular churches, who had been very carefully selected and trained to give "first aid" to families in difficulty of any kind. The adviser would decide, after consultation with the family member or members, what help was needed. Referral to a pastor for counseling might be appropriate; or referral to a team of "family consultants"—professional specialists in health, law, education, social work, housing, finance, etc., who were members of the participating churches, and were willing to give initial advisory service without charge as their contribution to the program. Where necessary, referral to a community agency might be indicated; and the advisers, as part of their training, would have become fully conversant with the community agencies and what they had to offer. Family advisers would be trained and supervised by the program director, and his guidance would be available to them at all times.

(6) *Training.* All pastors in the participating churches would be expected, as a part of their participation, to enroll in a training seminar, conducted by the program director on a weekly basis, for the entire first year. Supervision of the counseling would also be available to the pastors. The training of the family advisers, as indicated, would be provided by the director. This would be undertaken initially through a series of evening sessions and weekend retreats, and then

continued as "in service" training when the advisers were ready to begin their work.

This attempt to provide a comprehensive family life service for a group of churches is a very new concept. There is no viable model available anywhere in the world. Although our project has not been implemented in Winston-Salem, we hold high hopes for it.

3. A *Local Church Family Life Council.* Some churches on a local level, discover a family life committee to their liking. At our church we opted for a Family Life Council. The difference is that the persons on our Council are primarily members due to their representation of various components of our church's life and work.

The Council provides a fine spectrum of the needs, concerns, and opinions of our church regarding family life. All ages are included. The present chairman is a very communicative member of the Wake Forest Law School faculty. A church staff member who serves as the director of children's work has been designated as liaison for the Council. Through her, the Council's plans and programs are communicated to the staff and to church leaders.

The ministries undertaken by our Family Life Council within the past few months include:

- (1) A teen-age and parent seminar on personality growth and sex education.
- (2) An eight-day elective on "Human Sexuality" offered to the Sunday School, college through adults; taught by highly skilled professionals in the field.
- (3) A marriage enrichment seminar in a retreat setting.
- (4) A "country shindig"—an evening of sheer fun, featuring country cooking, square dancing, string band, costume contest—the works!
- (5) A six-week seminar on the general theme of family life. The thrust was toward problem-solving, led by a member of the Counseling Staff of the School of Pastoral Care at Baptist Hospital.
- (6) A retreat for young couples led by Dr. Don Moore, Professor of Counseling at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.
- (7) A six-week "Family Forum" led by a group of distinguished speakers, knowledgeable in the area of death and dying. The areas covered were:
 - a. Theological aspects of death
 - b. Helping children understand the mystery of death
 - c. Medical ministry to the patient and family
 - d. Funeral preparation and arrangements
 - e. Making a will and preparation for the future
 - f. Ministry to the bereaved

There have been numerous spin-offs from these various emphases upon family life in our church. We see them in the six-church ecumenical Downtown Church Center through which our church attempts to minister to the people right in the shadow of our buildings. The services afforded families through the Center include a day nursery, a medical clinic, food and clothing distribution, and scholarship aid for preschoolers in one of the churches' preschool programs.

We see the impact of our family life concerns in our own Child Development Center where 3-, 4-, and

5-year-olds are ministered to from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. And we see it in our after-school enrichment program in which we pick up first through sixth graders from a half-dozen elementary schools and bring them to our building to enjoy a variety of activities from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. every school day. Over 50 college students serve as volunteers in these two ministries alone. Seven college students in Winston-Salem spent their recent January minimester in various projects through our child development and after-school programs.

Our family life concerns are paramount in our work with poor and disfranchised persons.

Our future hopes include a full-time staff member on the ministerial team to anchor our counseling and family development ministries. We are also projecting in the foreseeable future a weekend with Dr. Wallace Denton of Purdue University. The typical family concerns us and we hope to shape even more ministries to persons whose families are unusual in situation or circumstance. A ministry of family camping holds high and exciting hopes. Curriculum development in the area of family life is on the agenda. There are plans being laid for a sharing group among the "neglected" middle-aged people in our church.

In summary, the local church working for the family's future has at least three levels of engagement. The first is through its own Family Council (or Committee) to its own families. The second is in concert with other interested churches to the families of a specific region. The third is through a city-wide or regional family life council.

In all these spheres, the sky really is the limit!

"Christian Faith and the Family's Future"

William Lawson

Thank you very much. I have been tremendously benefited by the few hours I have been able to spend here and I am grateful, not only to the Christian Life Commission for the invitation to be with you, but for Gardner-Webb College which had first asked me to come to this state and which allowed me to play hooky from there last night and this morning to be with you. Their chaplain, Reverend Charles Freeman, is seriously ill at this moment and so I have not had any contact with Charles except by telephone, but he sends his greetings to those of you who know him and to the many of you who do not.

I also have counted it a major blessing to be on the same program with some of the greatest thinkers and writers of our time. I was flattered beyond all proper estimates when Elmer West called and asked if I would come to the Christian Life Commission workshop here in Charlotte, and I was even more than complimented when he began to tell me some of the people who were to be on the program. When you are told that you are going to be on the same program with world-famous scholars, you almost automatically begin putting together whatever sugar sticks you are going to pull out of your barrel, and I don't have very many

scholarly sugar sticks. So, naturally, I began to think about how one would approach an audience like the august body that would certainly be here in Charlotte, North Carolina, when my peers and teammates would be such persons as these who have been on program during these days here. And I suspect I got a little bit carried away. Some of the things I had planned to do, as it turns out, I can't do at all. I was going to use some of the newest words, of course, and I was going to talk about dialectic and concrescence because they sound good. I was even going to make up some that just might impress you. We would talk about superpietization or fortissimistic things or something. And taking it for granted that I had a monolingual audience, naturally I'd say such things as "J'ai mangé la fenêtra" (french translation) and since you don't know what that means then nobody would ask me, "Why did you say, 'I ate the window'?"

And while I thought about all of these scholarly things that I was going to do, Elmer West continued and said, "I just want you to preach," and such a comedown did I have. But you know, as a matter of fact, there is no greater compliment that can be paid to a preacher than to be asked to come to a place where the august gather and sit among the scholars and be fed, and then at the end let us know that we are all sinners who need a Christ.

I want to thank Elmer for having asked me. I certainly want to thank you for having received me, and God knows that it has been a tremendous experience. Those of you who have been blessed to stay throughout it certainly will know this better than I. But it has been a tremendous experience for me for these few hours I have spent with you.

It is somehow significant that you are doing this. You of all people. You who represent a landed tradition. The Southern Baptist Convention is largely urban now, but you still have a strongly agrarian heart. There is some sense in which you may for a long time be the people of the land. There are those who are somewhat ashamed of that, somewhat defensive about that, who would like to be much more sophisticatedly cosmopolitan, but it is very important that you never lose that heritage. Take it from one who has just begun to try to rediscover his own. Whatever your roots are, love them, nurture them. You ought to be able to make adjustments in spite of them, but never forget them.

I recognize that any people who has been a people of the land is also a people of the family, which is not the urban predicament at the moment. And the fact is that you bring to the urban scene changes upon which you now have an emphasis which I think is very important. You bring an emphasis of mammas and daddies and boys and girls living together in corporate realities, and that ought to be part of the fabric of your interpretation of the gospel. It seems almost odd that the Christian Life Commission has waited this long to make this emphasis, but it is just tremendous that it is being made now.

I hope that we will at least look seriously at what the gospel is all about as we go back to our home churches and to our places of service and will challenge and will make every attempt, beginning at home, to make the family an integral part of our own Christian witness and ministry, for it must be. We are, as

a people right now, undergoing a transformation which is painful and traumatic, but which is fairly necessary. For right now, what we have called the generation gap probably represents a form of therapy, a form of medication. I think that some good things are happening to us in the midst of our gulping of the Excedrin tablets and we ought to recognize that those good things are there. We ought to at least realize that there are some social transformations which, while painful, may also be healing in their nature.

I'm going to take a text today. I'm not sure if it will seem very applicable, but I'm going to take one and hope that it is. It is taken from the prayer which Jesus taught us to pray, and there in Matthew 6 or Luke 11, Jesus taught us as our first petition to ask God to "Give us this day our daily bread," and that first petition has in it the implications of anything else except the child's prayer we have made of that little prayer. We have assumed that this is something that ought to be memorized and ought to be recited. And there are those of us who have been upset because the Supreme Court's interpretation of the Constitution has now allowed it to be extracted from the public schools. But we have felt that this ought to be somehow relegated to the juvenile. Anything but that. If anyone dares to go into the ramification of that model prayer, one soon discovers that it can only be prayed by the mature. It can be recited by the child, but it can only be prayed by the mature.

When Jesus suggested that we ask for daily bread, he said not only by implication but almost by direct affirmation that God cares for the body. That's the reason why it seems to me as we talk about sex and the family life we are beginning at long last to turn to an emphasis which Jesus gave us a long time ago. Probably the greatest of our heresies is that ours is a non-physical faith. I'm not positive where we got that from. I can guess. I'm not positive where we got it from, but I know it has caused some of the greatest aberrations, some of the greatest perversions of the faith which Jesus Christ came to give to us. Ours is certainly not a nonphysical religion. As a matter of fact, the Apostle John did almost all of his writing against that notion. He tried his level best to say to us that the Word which was divine became flesh and dwelt among us. He tried to let us know that everything that is physical that now appears was made by that Word and as you go through John's gospel over and over again, he brings Jesus down to the ordinary places where you and I live, for in Chapter 2, is it not Jesus who shows up beginning his work of miracles at a wedding feast and going into the temple? He is not so much upset with the theology as with the merchandising there. And does not one quickly see him trying to explain to a rabbi that it is possible for both the body and spirit to be redeemed as he tried to tell Nicodemus what it means to be born again. And doesn't he make one of his first and most important witnessing assignments sitting on the side of a well saying to a woman who is not at all acceptable to her social climate that she is acceptable to God who offers her rivers of living water? And as one who goes through that gospel over and over again one sees the same thing. He heals a man who has been lame for some 38 years and angers the Pharisees because he did it on the wrong day of the week. He finds people who

are hungry and tries to explain to his own confused disciples that in spite of their absence of groceries, that these 5,000 can be fed. How many chapters do you have to go through before you realize that John talked basically about a God who cares about us at gut level, and that's an important thing for us to know.

Why do you suspect we don't know it? Probably because we have bought from some Western idea the fact that the most important single unit of life is the individual. That's a concept, by the way, that doesn't even exist in the Bible, the individual. That's purely a Western concept. There is really no such thing as an individual. In this room, as I look around right now, I recognize that there are many people who have changed over the years. Last night I kidded a little bit about sideburns, but the fact is that ten years ago, nobody in this room would have had their hair this long. Nobody in this room would have worn ties this wide. There are many things that have happened among some faces that I've been looking at for ten years, and that means that we have begun to change with our peers. All that means is that you and I are what a group has made us. The idea of an individual separated from everybody else, either in terms of rights or punishment, is an absurd idea because it is such an artificial idea. If you stand on your hind legs and speak some language and wear clothes instead of going naked and eat food that has been cooked rather than raw and use some kind of utensils, all of that says that you have been influenced by the group. If it were possible for a child to be extracted from any group and simply left out in the wilderness, if it were possible for him to live at all, he would not be human; whatever else he might be, he would not be human. Let's assume he were picked up by the wolves or by the bears or by the apes or by somebody, he would not be a human being. The only way you can become part of the human family is to be part of the human family. There is no such thing as an individual. You and I are what a group has made us, and the old German proverb is right, "Ein Mensch ist kein Mensch" (German translation)—"A man alone is no man at all."

It becomes important, therefore, for us to at least recognize this kind of error, where we have lived for many, many years assuming the most important thing was the individual. And I speak of it here because our churches are loaded with it. Our churches are built on that very philosophy. We have not built our churches on the kind of philosophies that would say that man is part of a group, and that is why it becomes significant that you should be the ones that will talk about it during this week.

Those of you who have come from the land or your parents or your grandparents did, or at least your heritage did; those of you who have come from the land know how vital the family as a unit is. It has always been the basic unit of any stable civilization, and you can almost take the difference between those civilizations which live and those which don't. Whenever any civilization focuses on the individual, it does develop profit, it does develop technology, it does not develop families and it does develop isolation. Basically, this is what we have.

Any kind of civilization, on the other hand, that focuses on the family, seldom develops very much technological progress, seldom develops very much of

a scientific body, seldom develops very much profit, but it does live and live and live. Greece was here; for a while; she's gone. Rome flowered for a day; no more. There have been Teutonic empires that have come and gone. There was once a great British empire; it's just about crumbled now—at least no longer can one say that the sun never sets on it. How long do we have to live to know? And yet, from such cultures as these have come the ideas about the glory of the individual, have come the progress and the technology that has built great profit and rather poor longevity. How long the Chinese have been with us, nobody knows. India is still here with its poverty and with its misery and with its sickness. The Jews, wherever they are, are persecuted, discriminated against, but still very much here. And the Arabs are very much the same way, arguing sometimes about the same things, using different facts of the same argument. But these are the kinds of civilizations that seem to endure, and the reason—not because one has technology, but rather because one has a family as a unit of the transmission of its cultures.

If we break down the family, it does not matter how many new suburbs we build. If we break down the family, we have cut our own civilization at its root. And this is the reason why it becomes vital that those of you here who came from that rural tradition which has been the Southern Baptist Convention recognize the error of the focus on the rights of the individual, and recognize our need to talk about the corporateness of the individual, the communality, if you will, of the individual.

Where ought we really to go? I've talked about the generation gap, and I said that while it's painful, probably it's part of our own healing. Something good has happened in the 1960's and the 1970's. It doesn't look good at the moment. It will increasingly, as you look at it more closely, but at the moment we have produced a new set of conditions growing out of the postwar prosperity following 1945. For those years were years when we for the first time began to experience global notions. Here we are looking at a world war, and then following that world war we are looking at a kind of world boom, a sort of world period of prosperity. And the growth of these United States and its economy, of West Germany and its economy, of Japan and its economy, of much of South America and the several national economies there indicate a sort of global money boom which was an important time. But we developed something that we had never seriously developed before, and that is the matriarchal family. Now does that sound odd coming from a black man? Ours should have been called the matriarchal family. As a matter of fact, the matriarchal family had started to exist when the fathers were withdrawn during World War II. It was at that point a fairly necessary thing, with the sudden extraction of a large number of young men to go off to war. But when they came back, rather than to rebuild the family that once was whole in the 20's and 30's, they plunged immediately into the boom for postwar profits. Homes all over the nation, almost all over the world, were motherly homes, as the house was no longer close to the inner city but someplace out in the suburbs with daddy down at the market place making it on his one job that kept him 12-15 hours a day, or two jobs, whichever the case may have

been. One found youngsters growing up in those 50's and 60's who more and more lived in a house where the father was a vague and shadowy figure who showed up every once in a while, but where the youngster was being emotionally tied to the mother. And because the child was emotionally tied to the mother during those 50's and 60's (that seems to be almost a national constant, by the way), because he was emotionally tied to the mother, we created a new monster called unisex. I've got three children at home who are in the teen years and if I don't see one of the children wearing a given sweater or pair of pants, I'm not sure which one it belongs to. It becomes important to recognize this as one of the signs that that emotional attachment to mothers rather than to the fathers had a lot to do with the draining away of the old fashion drive and aggressiveness that once marked the growing boy. Some of us have thought of this as bad. But one of the things it has done is to give to boys a great deal more sensitivity than they ever had before, because daddy was basically a driver and daddy was interested in one thing and one thing only—building the family plot. Daddy had a kind of territorial obsession, daddy was concerned with making his fortune, and therefore, daddy was not a very sensitive man. He didn't have great feelings about justice or injustice, he didn't have that many concerns about sub-communities whose problems may have been constantly brought up, he didn't have all that much concern about whether the nation went to war or didn't go to war, and yet his youngster was living throughout two generations where war was virtually constant. Ever since 1941 we have been at war solidly, almost without stopping, and he grew up at a time when national hostility was almost the only alternative to international differences. Well, that's the time when he was developing, not his daddy's drive, not his daddy's insensitivity, not his daddy's inflexibility, but his mother's reactions to a great deal of life.

So many of the boys who are now 16, 17 and 18 years old are far more like their mothers than like their fathers. That's not especially bad; it's frustrating, but it's not especially bad. It also means that he has reached a time when knowledge is no longer a matter of ideas. He has grown up with T.V. Many of you and I have not grown up with T.V. Our own personal philosophies were formed before there was that one-eyed monster reaching into our living room and telling us everything that we ought to believe. But now he has grown up in a world in which all of his ideas could be given to him in simple visual capsules. His has been a sensory world. His has been a world, and you can probably see it this way, when you go into a room and the music is playing, the child's feeling is "leave it loud," but the parent's feeling is "turn it down." There's some reason for that. The parent lives in an age where things ought to be kept under control—an age of buttons, an age of technology, an age of taking over, and the youngster lives in a world in which you simply are always immersed, you are always sort of "part of." A youngster lives in a world that is not an individual's world where he rules things—he lives in a kind of communal world in which he is part of things. If you turn the music down, it doesn't have the same feeling for him because it wasn't wall paper for him anyway, it was really intended to be

his environment, and you have turned down his environment, Its something very meaningful in a world in which a youngster gains his knowledge through experience rather than through ideas. So when mammas and daddies begin to pass the little sermons to the youngsters and the youngsters seem deaf to the sermons, when there are constantly books and sermons and all kinds of ideals that are thrown at them and they don't seem to live by ideals, when we try to make them live according to our code ethics, the ethics with which we have grown up with, the "thou shalt not's" that always marked the nice from the naughty and they operate on the basis of some kind of situation ethics where they simply wait until the situation which still environs them tells them what are the options, and then they make a decision on the basis of that which they experienced rather than on the basis of that which belongs to the fixed code. When we run into that kind of conflict, and we often do, we may very well need to recognize that there are some blessings in that as well as some frustrations.

We are easily annoyed by the difference between the child who has grown up in the kind of world ruled by the women, fairly well controlled by profit, pretty well dedicated to the idea that hostility is normal and it is the best way to straighten out differences and in a world which is mostly experience rather than ideas, ideals, and codes; when one recognizes that difference, one also recognizes the difference between an individualistic generation, which was yours and mine, and a corporate generation, which is the generation of the youngsters. That's why I say that I'm not sure if it's altogether bad.

While we're living with the frustration of a corporate age which is on us—I'm not saying which is coming, I'm saying which is here right now while we're living with the frustrations of a corporate age, the Southern Baptist planned a meeting which is talking about the Christian family and the Christian future. That is so extremely important. How do we deal with it? I don't have recipes at this point, and many of the recipes that could have been given, by the way, have already been very effectively shared with us by some of the speakers who have been here. But let me ask if you for a moment would look at that particular area of the ministry where you serve and think about what it looks like right now. In the first place, see what a tremendous reflection of your own generation it is. The central pulpit with the single preacher and everything leading up to the sermon, this very well suggests that worship for us is still basically a matter of lecturer-audience situation—where somebody spits out the ideas and the primary function of the audience is to absorb them and hopefully implement some of them.

Almost everything that is done in the church is done in terms of some kind of western isolation. We break our churches up very easily, and all of the women go that way and all of the men go that way and all the boys go down the end of the hall and all of the girls go up the hall. But there is some sense in which we break our families up, into singles, and all the juniors sing in the same choir. There are obviously certain reasons why some of that has to be done, but our whole church tends to be some reflection of fragmentation, of some kind of isolation. We sit in groups but we are not really part of a worshipping family.

Each person sits alone, and the whole message is aimed at what God's feeling is about you personally and because of that very kind of emphasis our feeling is, "I don't know the guy who is sitting next to me and I couldn't care less about what his name is. Most of all I'm interested in how well I'm received unto my God, for there is a single line which goes between me and heaven and hopefully there's a line that goes between him and heaven too, but that's his problem and not mine."

Fragmentation is basically a part of the whole thrust of our worship. Many of us have spent a great deal more time witnessing one by one to people, assuming that when you come in and when you accept Jesus Christ as Saviour and when you make your own public profession of faith you have done what the church expects most. It does not in the same sense try to recognize you as some part of the corporate whole. What do you do when you go back to your environment? For you have to be immersed in some kind of environment, somewhere you learn how to talk and how to stand on your hind legs and how to eat cooked food. What happens when you go back to that corporate environment? The church doesn't have very much to say about that. You just see to it that you stay clean, so that we become the people who are most marked by the white robes of sinlessness. And the fact is that a child of Christ almost has to be dirty-garbed, he has to bear the stench of sin on his garment, because his job is to have regular contact with the murk and mire of whatever environment he comes from. And therefore, he can't simply be clean, he has to be, after a fashion, sinproof. He has to go back out there and make contact with people who must not drag him back down to a lack of commitment.

Jesus says when we pray we ought to ask "Give us this day our daily bread." What is it we ought to ask God for? He doesn't say, "Give me this day my daily bread," because Jesus was an Easterner. That's the reason why nowhere in that prayer does one find "I" or "me" or "mine." It simply does not occur that way.

"Give us this day our daily bread." We who are part of the corporate body, we who are part of the family, we who are part of the tribe, we who are part of the commune, give us what we need. I'm saying that I'm not sure what to do about a church which fragments and which isolates.

At the Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church in Houston, we don't have Sunday evening service. We do about once a month, but we don't have regular Sunday evening service. We have one meeting per week, and that's on Wednesday evenings. And the reason for that is because as I grew up as a boy, I can so well remember being dragged out of bed on Sunday morning and we went to Sunday School at 9:30 and worship service at 11:00. Ours was a leather-long preacher, so we had preaching service at 3:00 in the afternoon. We'd have ham and potato salad between the end of morning service at 2:00 and the beginning of the afternoon service at 3:00. Then we stayed for training union at 6:00, and for evening service at 7:30, and, if some great tiger from Detroit came in, we'd have an after-service which would probably keep us nodding until 10:30 or 11:00 at night. All of that was Sunday for me, but that was only one day. My daddy was a deacon in the church and that meant on Monday night he

was to be at deacons' meeting, and my mother belonged to the general missions, so on Tuesday night you can be sure where she was. They both sang in the choir, so on Wednesday and Thursday they rehearsed, and so it went, right straight on through the week. We were usually dragged along with them because I was growing up before the age of babysitters and that meant that we just simply went to the church and we went to the church until the church ran out of my ears. The miracle is that I was able to hear God's call to preach at all.

The church became an instrument in the fragmentation of family life. There was no such thing as our family being home listening to the radio. We didn't have T.V. then, but there was no such thing as my family simply being or being out in the yard barbecuing, and the very important relationships that ought to have somehow been nurtured by the church—between husband and wife and children—were not being nurtured. We were simply being told that the only way you could get brownie points is to keep going to the church house.

So, in our church, where the average age is 26 years old and where we've had only six funerals in the last ten years (and I couldn't count the number of babies who've been born), we have decided that there is no point in our having a whole lot of meetings where everybody goes to the missions circle and to choir practice and all the rest of it, and wherever two or three are called together there's somebody rapping the gavel and somebody reads the minutes. We almost got sick and tired of the church as a fragmentor of family life. Church does that. On Sunday morning it is almost a kind of automatic thing: the kids are going to sit in the back and the babies are going to be taken to the nursery. The husbands and wives may or may not sit together, but they all will be split up almost as soon as they come to church. The very nature of our Christian mechanic is to reflect an individualist society which isolates and which fragments.

"Give us this day our daily bread." You see, the Jew never thought in terms of automat, where you sit down and eat your sandwich and drink your coffee alone. Eating was always a corporate experience among the Jews, as it was among the blacks, as it has been for many years among you. That's not the case anymore, not where dinner is done on T.V. trays and shifts, and you eat whenever you happen to pass each other. There's some sense in which the church needs to completely reorient itself towards families. And that's why I say I wish I had recipes or formulas. I don't, but I do have this much. I recognize that what the young people are doing at the moment is to establish a new life-style for the nation. We don't always like it, but they are establishing a new life-style. We are having to deal with their situation ethics. We are having to deal with their kind of group activities and dynamics. We're having to listen to their sometimes supersensitivity—the various kinds of screaming minority, and it is true that the time was when you might have been expecting blacks to be screaming for their rights, but now you aren't ever sure who's going to rise up next. This is an age of everybody saying, "I need to be heard because I'm one kind of underdog or another."

Our youngsters are starting to set a whole new style of life for us. And that style of life is important at this one point—it is based on experience. That takes us right back to the heart of the Christian faith. What is individualism based on? It's based on reason. What's wrong with our churches? Our churches are HEAD, not HEART. That's basically where we went wrong. We went wrong at the point of trying to figure out how we ought to do things and because we are a people who turn down volumes, because we're a people who take control, because we are a people who want to rule our environment rather than somehow be a part of it. We have created a church which is a monster of our own reason. It isn't based on the New Testament very much at all. If it were, it wouldn't be the doctrine that is the most important thing, it wouldn't be whatever denominational theory or practice that is the most important, we wouldn't be controlled by whichever of the loudest voices in the Vatican we heard. We would be controlled by what we hear from Jesus Christ if we had hearts that were open to experience instead of simply brains that were open to reason; we could become part of something which moves us instead of our always wanting to be something that moves and somehow manipulates others.

Our youngsters are now part of a world where reason is no longer king. And that may bother us a great deal. "What do you want to be?" That's the rationalistic question. It means that I've got a 10-year plan for my life and 10 years from now I plan to be a business executive or a doctor. "What do you want to be?" "I don't know." "What do you mean you don't know?" "Well, I'm just gonna kind of wait till the breaks come." You know, I sound like that sometimes at my best. If I tell you that ten years from now, I want to be at First Baptist Church, Podunk, making \$25,000 a year, then I've done something wrong. That's not the way it should be. At my best, I say, because when God makes clear to me what he wants me to do, I'll do that. Isn't that exactly what we've been taught, to wait until something bigger than what we are leads us and guides us and somehow directs us? Well, that's what the family is. The family is an intimate network of personal dynamic, or interpersonal dynamics, where you don't make 10-year plans for you nor for anybody else, but where you are constantly reacting to, constantly adjusting to, constantly fitting into the plans of a whole commune of some sort. And that's where our weaknesses come in. Husbands become inflexible, wives become unyielding, kids become disobedient because we've all learned how to be like concrete, and nobody gives or yields anyplace, not when each person stands on his own territorial pride and has his own decision about what he wants to be ten years or ten minutes from now. If the church is to somehow reorient itself, it has to start from the pulpit. Ministers of education can do a great deal toward programming in the churches, but it has to start from the pulpit.

I wonder if it would be possible for the preacher who has, let's just say, 156 opportunities to preach to his people Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday evenings, and maybe out of those 156 opportunities he talks 100 times, if he could really urge family closeness. How many times does he talk about something that is as important as sex? There's a whole lot of wives who don't make good biscuits, but I've

run into very few people who break up because of biscuits. In the Tennessee Williams play, "Cat On a Hot Tin Roof," the mother, a rather cynical woman, says to the daughter who is a kind of phony little moppet, trying to convince her mother-in-law that everything is alright between her and the woman's son, "You can't lie to me, I hear the nightly begging and the nightly refusing. I know he won't go to bed with you." "And whenever a marriage goes on the rocks," and she patted the bed where they slept, "the rocks are right here." Now that's a rather cold way of looking at marriage, but we have ignored for too long the most important single expression of complete corporate love—sex. How often does a person dare to bring from the principles of Jesus Christ what it means to love completely, not orgasm-directed sex, but love-directed sex. Somehow that needs to become part of the preacher's bill of fare before anybody else starts trying to program stuff.

I understand how difficult it is to preach to a family audience where you've got youngsters 8 and 10 years old sitting there listening to you, but it seems to me that some of the creativity that I have known Southern Baptists for needs to be brought to play, that something as important as this needs to be brought out, and let's face it, there's something else that comes out of our younger generation. You don't need to worry anymore about what your kids know and don't know—they by and large know a whole lot more than we do. What is really needed is a sense of sex direction. You almost don't need sex education. Too much sex mis-education goes on all the time. If you could see some of the stuff that is passed around in grade school halls and in junior high schools, you'd know what I'm talking about. There needs to be some sense in which the church makes an affirmation and admits: this is vital, this is important, important enough so that the whole thing begins at that crux of the male-female, husband-wife relationship and goes all the way out into the kind of relationship with children and with in-laws and with people who are secondary in the church-area family.

Maybe there are ways in which the church can stop fragmenting. Maybe there are ways in which the church can stop isolating. I don't know what some of those ways are. We've tried one. Our church is not yet sophisticated enough to have a staff so there isn't any minister of education or minister of youth or minister of music. It's just me, that's all. We now have two worship services per Sunday and now we've got some ten different church auxiliaries operating. It was founded ten years ago when there were only 13 people and it was very easy to lead them then. Now we are very close to 700 and it's awfully hard to lead them when it's just me. So, I took Jethro's advice and did something that I didn't realize was going to help me a great deal. We split the church up into family groupings. We have 20 deacons and deacons' wives and we took those 20 couples and said to each one of them, "Will you take these 17 families, will you take those 18 families, will you take these 16 families." We simply split the whole church up into families and now we have groups that are fairly well responsible for different things. One group is now responsible for church fellowship suppers and we have a group that is responsible for church musical pro-

grams, concerts and special groups that come in. And they do different things in the church. I don't have anybody that I can lean on to say, "Look, you're hired to do this so you do the programming." They do some of the programming. It gets sloppy sometimes. They aren't paid to do it, and sometimes they get busy and sometimes they just simply forget, but what has turned out good about this is the family is getting together to work out musical programs or fellowship dinners or furnish flowers for the sanctuary. They have gotten to know each other as families. I just happen to have split them up as families because that's the way the church clerk had them split up. It was an accident, but it was one of the best accidents we have ever found. The church is now clustered by families. We used to have to have a church for children where on Sunday mornings everybody would come to the main sanctuary and then just before the family altar, all of the children would file out and they would go back into the children's church. Do you know we had to cut that out. We don't even have children's church anymore. It's difficult for us to segregate the youngsters by sending them back. Now that forces me to preach in some way that a 7- or 8-year-old can understand what I'm saying, and it changes a whole lot of the sermons on a high flown theology that I might liked to have talked about, but it's been good for us as a church. I'm saying that there needs to be some kind of reorientation of the present fragmenting church so that the family becomes a part of it, because I am just as convinced as I stand here that if the church does not nurture the family, there is nobody who will. It can't be done by other institutions. The church is the only institution that is almost universal throughout this nation that deals consistently with whole families. The school deals with part of them, the lawyer has to deal with certain kinds of people, the doctor deals with certain kinds of people; only the church has this kind of universal contact with clusters at a time. And if there is any turning away from the old profit-oriented individualism of our great forebears, it ought to be done by the church.

I'm convinced, therefore, through the gospel of Christ, beginning from the pulpit and somehow according to your own ingenuity, transmitting out through the programming, that the family can once again become an important consideration of Jesus' gospel. How about you?

"Give us this day our daily bread," implies, as we sit down together in the regular corporate experience of eating, that the source of all of our blessings is a common Father. There's something very beautiful about that.

"Love thy neighbor," an injunction of Jesus, comes most close to me at this point. You see, when I think "neighbor," I almost always have certain kinds of distances set up. It is a person who can be relatively close to me, but not too close. It can be somebody far away if I'm fairly sophisticated. I can think of somebody from China as being my neighbor or I can think of somebody who lives in the slums as being my neighbor. But what happens to my whole definition of neighbor when it comes to Audrey, my wife? There are ways in which I know better than anybody else what will hurt Audrey, and if she irritates me I pull out my arsenal of weapons—just one sentence or two

words—that will cut her. I do it, and I do it with glee. And when I do it, while I may have helped the man in the slums, or may have sent some dollars to China, I have just cut my neighbor's throat.

Those of us who have families with whom we live ought to recognize that this is really where it starts. And I think that since the whole fate of our civilization rests upon the family, we ought to begin to use some of this Baptist ingenuity to bring that to bear. I don't even listen to anybody's apologies that we're small or that we don't have enough influence. I have seen how we have gotten across whatever we wanted to get across. We have an ingenuity that is greater than that of almost any other nation in the world, and if we want to get the name Coca-Cola all over the world, we get it all over the world. If we want to get the IBM techniques every place, we manage to get computers wherever we want to get those computers, and I'm convinced that if we want to touch our nation with a restoration of family love, that's possible for us—provided that we understand our business is not something nonphysical, our business is not something disembodied spiritual, our business is as much daily bread as it is daily prayer.

Let us pray.

Lord, we give thanks to you that you refused to be an individual, but gave to us an image of a corporate God: Father, Son, Holy Ghost. And even when making us, having given to us a corporate nature, said it was not good for a man to be alone, that he would not be complete until a mate was added, and children were born. Forgive us because we have perverted that pattern. We have chosen not to be families, we've chosen not to be corporate, we've chosen to be alone. Forgive us for our voluntary solitary confinement. Help us, we pray, to see neighbors as close as our own wives or husbands or children, and to begin at home the expression of love which we ourselves both badly want and need. Then give to us the skills and the effectiveness to make this a part of our ministry as we leave this conference and all of the wonderful things that have been said to us. We pray that we may leave here with a new commitment to the restoration of the family in a nation whose urbanization fragments it badly. To that end do we bend. For all of the gifts you have given us, and to that end do we pray that you will help us bring about a revolution as a Christian church, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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