



1979 CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION
SEMINAR
PROCEEDINGS

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FOREWORD

The Christian Life Commission's 1979 national seminar on **HELP FOR FAMILIES** drew 742 registrants from 25 states to hear and enter into dialogue with 17 highly competent program personalities.

The addresses from this meeting are provided in this printed form primarily as a reportorial service to seminar registrants. The speakers prepared these addresses for oral presentation to a live audience. Therefore this material should not be judged as if it had been carefully written for formal publication in book form.

It is hoped, nevertheless, that these printed addresses will enable both those who were present in Orlando for the seminar and many who were not present but who are genuinely interested in the subject of family life to profit from the messages of these distinguished speakers.

Special acknowledgement and thanks are due W. David Sapp, who served as the dean of this entire meeting, and to the other Christian Life Commission staff persons who worked long and hard to make the seminar a success: David Currie, Mrs. Gaye Eichler, William H. Elder III, Mrs. Jean Elledge, Harry N. Hollis, Jr., Mrs. Dottie Larsen, Mrs. Faye Russell, William M. Tillman, Jr., Mary Elizabeth Tyler, David Wilkinson, and John A. Wood.

We hope these proceedings may substantially enlarge the impact of the 1979 seminar on **HELP FOR FAMILIES**.

Foy Valentine, Executive Secretary
The Christian Life Commission of
The Southern Baptist Convention

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of the 1979
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HELP FOR FAMILIES
Held in the Sheraton Twin Towers Hotel
Orlando, Florida
March 26-28, 1979**

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PRAYER FOR FAMILIES

Harry N. Hollis, Jr.

O God, who "has set the solitary in families,"
We pray for families everywhere.
We gather here not to mourn the death of the family,
But to celebrate the family's life.
We have come also to ask Your help for families in
trouble.
We believe, O God, in the worth and value of families,
Because You sent Your Son to dwell among us in an
earthly family.
Lord, we celebrate the joys of happy family life—
noisy feasting on holidays,
quiet sharing at worship times,
tender vulnerability in moments of intimacy,
opportunities to nurture each other toward full
humanity,
giving and getting, sowing and reaping in family
relationships.
Teach us to treasure these joys of family life.
Teach us to pray also for people troubled in their
families.
We pray for those who suffer because they have no
children,
For those who believe they have too many children,
For those who wonder if they should have any children.
We pray for couples whose marriage has lost its zest,
That they will use their energies to deepen
Not destroy their covenant with each other.
We pray for parents perplexed by child-rearing
That they will learn from you a discipline that grows
out of grace,
A firmness that flows from tenderness.
We pray for broken homes
With broken dreams and broken spirits.
We pray for those overwhelmed by guilt
About the way they have treated their families.
And we pray for those who have lost the capacity to
feel any guilt at all.
O God, spare families from those fad-exploiters
Who tamper with the stability of homes
By promoting novel immoralities
To sell their latest book.
Spare families from a saran-wrap-thin theology
That limits the possibility of a full-dimensional relation-
ship
Between male and female.
Spare families from those who would turn the home
Into a military camp with little opportunity for mutual-
ity.
Lord, make us aware of the diversity of families
Lest we try to offer solutions that do not even fit the
problems.
Now we pray that You would
give families *faith* to melt the stiffness of their souls;
give families *hope* to keep going in the face of
chronic crises;
give families *love* not just to stay together but to
thrive together.
Grant us the courage to stand up not only for our own
family
But also for the institution of the family.
And teach us that true help for families
Comes from You, the source of all help,

Who can lift us to serve outside our homes,
That we may find true joy within our homes.
In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESSFUL FAMILY LIVING

Foy Valentine

It was Dr. Bill Pinson's intention to talk with us in each of these theme interpretations about some biblical bases for the family concerns that we share as we gather here. As best I can in this opening theme interpretation, and as far as we know, the only one we are sure of having, I want to share with you some of my understandings of the biblical principles for family living.

The Scriptures are often twisted, as we all know; and sometimes we are responsible for some of that twisting. For instance, there was once a Baptist preacher who got through his sermon on Samson and found out he had been calling him Tarzan. I heard of one fellow who read this word, "And he smote Adab the Hittite that he died," and his pronunciation was "And he smote Adab, high-de-tie-dee, that he did." A few weeks ago I was preaching on family in Norman, Oklahoma; and the pastor said he had been reading the week before in the Revised Standard Version and found Psalm 50:9 to say as plain as day, "I will accept no bull from your house." As the idiom changes, so our understanding of words changes. Some of the revised versions refer to Milcah, the wife of Nahor, the brother of Abraham, as being the mother of eight children who are named; and then the rendering is clearly, "These eight did Milcah bear" (Gen. 22:23). The parson preaching on this text said, "I want you to notice three things. These weren't no ordinary eight. In the second place, this weren't no ordinary bear. And in the third place, it goes to show you how stren'th has failed, because which eight of you would milk a bear?"

Well, the Bible is often twisted; it's often perverted; it's often taken out of context; it's often misquoted. We come here with a shared and deep conviction, however, that the Bible had meaning for the world of Dr. Kinsey a couple of decades ago; that it had meaning for the world of Masters and Johnson a decade ago; and that it has meaning for our world here and now as we gather in Orlando this afternoon. There is a special relevance in the scriptures, which Dr. Pinson would have pointed out had he been here, for the concerns that we share.

The basic purpose of God for the family is companionship. When God made Adam and Eve, He made them for each other. The very earliest account of the creation of humanity is the account in Genesis 1:27 where the scriptures say, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." The companionship which God means for us to experience was meant for Adam and Eve in the beginning. Another biblical insight at this point is found in Genesis 2:18, "And the Lord God said, it is not good that man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." He made us

male and female with male and female answering to each other, complementing each other, fulfilling each other, supplying each what the other lacks. Henry Bowman said years ago that sex is the God-ordained means of overcoming the essential loneliness of human existence. That is an appropriate word for that perverted philosophy that spends its life looking for new nerve endings to stimulate. Sex is the God-ordained means of overcoming the essential loneliness of human existence.

Another of God's basic purposes for the family is reproduction. "Be fruitful, and multiply" is God's word to the first man and the first woman as recorded in Genesis 1:28. That drive, as Freud rightly insisted, is as deep as life itself. A couple cannot intentionally, purposefully, and selfishly thwart this intention of God for marriage without violating a fundamental law of God for the family. The Psalmist saw this clearly when he said, "Lo children are an heritage of the Lord. . . . Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them" (Psalm 127:3, 5).

Besides companionship and reproduction, nurture is also a basic purpose of God for the family. Nurture for the young by the old is called for. The young need the family as the violin needs the bow, as animal life needs oxygen, as the fish needs the water. Babies and little children need the family. Teenagers need the family. The succor, the nurture, the attention, the discipline, the loving, the caring, the fencing-in, the closing of the gates are services that the family can best provide. If the young don't get that nurture, that succor, that attention from the family, they will seek to meet this basic need elsewhere. One point in coming together here in this conference on "Help For Families" is to reaffirm our commitment in our families to provide that nurture for the young which they desperately want and desperately need. That nurture is also to be provided by the young for the old, however. It doesn't work just one way. "Honor thy father and thy mother" is not only for little children. "Honor thy father and thy mother" . . . (Exodus 20:12) is for adults also and the command cannot be disobeyed or neglected without grave consequences. To honor is to show respect for and there never comes a time when a son or daughter can stop showing respect for his or her earthly parents.

The old corban custom that the Jews had in Jesus' day, the custom of saying, "I can't help my aging mother and father because all that I have has been dedicated to God," was shot down by Jesus as an unacceptable excuse, an immoral copping out, an unworthy rejection of their responsibility. We cannot escape our responsibility to our parents today by building institutions for the aging into which they can be put. That is a proper last resort for families; but it has to be perceived as the last resort, for it is our continuing responsibility in Christian families to honor our fathers and mothers.

Voltaire well said if we didn't have the family, it would have to be invented. In some sense, it is God's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes. It is not our purpose here to sing dirges or to pronounce jeremiads about the family. The family is here to stay. We are affirming that God's purpose is going to be worked out in history and among human beings in families; and, therefore, we look to the word of God for those biblical principles that help us in family living.

The first one I mention is grace. Grace is not just for God to show toward sinners. Grace is for Abraham to show toward his nephew, Lot. Grace is for Paul and Silas to show toward the Philippian jailor who has them unjustly imprisoned. Grace is for John in exile on Patmos to show toward those who have unjustly banished him. Grace is for John Bunyan in prison in Bedford. And grace is for Roger Williams in the wilderness having been banished by those who thought they understood religion better than he did. So grace is for us to exercise in our own, personal family relationships. Grace means acceptance, the acceptance which each member shows the other members of the family without attempting to make them over in our own, personal image. Each member of the family has been made in God's image. So, it is appropriate for us to accept that person as he or she is without attempting to fashion them over according to our own whims.

I made a decision at this very point on our 25th wedding anniversary with Mary Louise when we had gone to Calloway Gardens. I had been working diligently and with all earnestness for twenty-five years to get her to squeeze the toothpaste from the bottom. It seemed to be something utterly beyond her though she is a graduate of Rice University. But somehow or other, she seemed incapable of squeezing the toothpaste from the bottom, and I seemed incapable of accepting the fact that it might be squeezed from the top. After twenty-five years however, I made a firm decision that I would never speak to her about squeezing the toothpaste from the bottom again. I haven't, have I, Mary Louise? (I do wish she'd learn it, though.) The fact is that grace is really something you have to keep working at in accepting one another.

But grace also means sanctuary. In these days, everyone of us needs sanctuary. When I feel harassed, torn, pulled at, it's especially nice to be in the family where there is sanctuary. It's good, it's redemptive, it's part of God's purpose for the family to cultivate that sanctuary which is so desperately needed in our time.

Grace means understanding.

Grace means adjustment, something that goes on for all of our lives.

Grace means love. Justice sometimes calls for punishment or rejection in the family but grace calls for forgiveness.

And grace in the family means sacrifice. Dr. O. T. Binkley has said that as a boy he decided he was called to preach and had gone off to Wake Forest College, and had stayed through the better part of a semester before he decided he simply could not stay in school because he didn't have the money to do it. He went home to announce to his poverty-stricken parents and the rest of the family that he was dropping out of school, that he was not going to be able to continue with his preparation to preach the gospel. He found, however, that as they gathered around the supper table with the plates turned bottom-side-up and the blessing was asked and they had seated themselves that when he turned his plate over, there was a stack of money—seventy-five dollars. He couldn't imagine where his folks could have laid hold of that much money. On inquiring, he found that his mother had stayed up after the day's

work was done and the children had been put to bed and at night had picked out seventy-five dollars worth of black walnuts in the hills of North Carolina and had brought every bit of the money to give to her boy to enable him to stay in school. That is really what family life is all about. It is sacrificing for each other. It is denying ourselves in order that others may be helped. This is what mothering and fathering is all about. This is what parenting is all about. And this is what tending to our parents when they are old and infirm and unable to take care of themselves is all about. So the first biblical principle that I mention for our consideration is grace.

The next one is commitment. How important it is that we grasp the centrality of this biblical idea of commitment if family life is to be recovered and if it is to be what God wants it to be in the churches and in society in our time. Human beings alone are capable of marriage. Some animals and some fowl practice life-long mating. Swans do that. I've seen them swimming, just two swans on a lake a hundred miles out from a single house in Alaska. Swans join together for life. Some animals mate for life; but only human beings are capable of marriage for only human beings can make the commitment to each other. The covenant with each other has the man and the woman say in the wedding ceremony, "I will" or "I do" as they exercise their wills and give themselves to one another. Without unconditional commitment, Christian marriage is simply not possible. As the long experience of salvation begins with the new birth, so the long experience of marriage begins with the wedding ceremony; and that's the beginning of it, not the end of it. That commitment needs to be not only to each other. That commitment needs to be to the institution of marriage which is seen as a vital part of God's plan for our lives and for the life of human beings everywhere. That commitment is spiritual, it is physical, it is sexual, it is social, it is economic. Actually, it is that commitment which gives the permanence to marriage which was God's original purpose for the relationship between a man and a woman joined together in a monogamous union for life. Such union has been the ideal from the beginning. It has not been the practice, however, almost from the beginning. For the hardness of their hearts, Moses let God's people enter into divorce with all of its attendant problems. If we can have more commitment in our time to each other and to the institution of marriage, then we can have less divorce. We nevertheless recognize that divorce has existed from almost the earliest times, and we believe that institutions are made for human beings, not human beings for institutions, even so important an institution as marriage. We do not believe that God mediates salvation to individuals through marriage. We do not perceive marriage to be a sacrament by which salvation is apprehended, and yet we deeply believe that marriage is sacred but that even when it is broken as it often is now in divorce, it does not constitute the unforgivable sin. We are seeking better ways to work our way through our problems that we have with divorce, but we do not want to get away from our understanding that our commitment to each other and to the institution of marriage will help us to cut down on the current problems that we are having with divorce.

I mention next the biblical principle of freedom. To

leave father and mother and to cleave to one's husband or to one's wife makes good psychological sense; it makes good theological sense. "Let there be spaces in your togetherness" is Khalil Gibran's word which has appropriate theological foundation. Children are not to be smothered; jealousy is not to be tolerated; each member of our families has certain basic rights as a person, which rights we want to guard and preserve and foster and further. Some of the movements in society in our time are actually reaching out toward a furthering and a fostering of those freedoms which are desperately needed by human beings.

A word about the biblical principle of faithfulness is needed. I have thought rather seriously about this statement which I really do want to make. I believe that Christianity has done more to purify family relationships and to lift the level of family living than any other force in human history. I deeply believe that; I affirm that as a Christian; I believe that's the general teaching of history as we look back through history at what has happened in family life. That faithfulness is to start before marriage. I'm not absolutely sure what Paul meant when he wrote to Timothy and said, "Keep thyself pure," but I am absolutely sure that the general teaching of the Bible is that a case cannot be made for premarital sex relations. It does not make sense to burn down a cathedral just to fry an egg even if you have a ravenous appetite. That faithfulness which starts before marriage is to continue in marriage. For this cause "shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife" is the biblical word (Gen. 2:24). That faithfulness, that cleaving, that sticking to each other in thick and in thin, is a principle that the Bible upholds. The faithfulness is partly sexual. The place for sexual activity is within the marriage relationship, not outside it. The Bible condemns sexual activity outside of marriage, and we need not equivocate about that no matter what you read in the books. The Book makes it clear that the place for sexual activity is within the marriage relationship. And the Bible's teaching at this point is crystal clear. "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed [the sexual relationship of marriage] is undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge," says the author of Hebrews (Heb. 13:4). Of course the faithfulness which I have been dwelling on here is not just sexual faithfulness. It goes beyond sex to the larger family loyalties to each other in the home. This minister went calling one time and knocked on the door, and a little boy came to the door. He was about eight or nine years old. The minister said, "May I see your daddy?"

The boy said, "He's working."

The minister said, "May I see your mother?"

The little boy said, "No, she's playing bridge."

The minister said, "May I see your older brother?"

"No, he's on the golf course."

He said, "May I see your older sister?"

"No, she's out riding with her boyfriend."

"Then what on earth are you doing here in the house all by yourself?" he asked.

The boy replied, "Well, I have the old, big, yellow tomcat in the ice box making a polar bear out of him, and I couldn't get away."

Our faithfulness to each other in the family goes

beyond physical concerns for each other that continues all through life. The principle of faithfulness is one that continues toward each other as long as life lasts.

The biblical principle of responsibility, though, is one that must also be looked at, even though it must now be done quickly. We have a responsibility in establishing our homes in the Lord. "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6:14) is the word of God for us in our time, just as meaningful as it has ever been in the last two thousand years. But then once the yoke is established with the believer in a Christian union, we have a responsibility for building a Christian home with our faithfulness in providing for each other. "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel!" (1 Tim. 5:8). Males have some things special to do in God's divine plan, and females have some other very special things to be done in God's divine plan for the family. We cannot safely ignore those roles; and if we insist on ignoring them, then harassments of one kind or another will arise to correct our error. You'll hear more about that point as we go on for some of the speakers will address themselves particularly to what I am trying to say there.

Parents are responsible, moreover, for walking as a worthy example before their children. Children are responsible for obeying their "parents in the Lord: for this is right," the scriptures say (Eph. 6:1). Parents are responsible for providing discipline. "We have had earthly fathers to discipline us and we respected them," according to Hebrews 12:9. No respect, no discipline; no discipline, no respect. The two go together. We see the absolutely fascinating thing now of children sometimes suing their parents for not having disciplined them and winning some of the suits. "Train up a child," the wise man says in Proverbs 22:6, "in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Deuteronomy 6:7 has a better word by far than attacking the Supreme Court or the public schools or Madelyn Murray O'Hair, for the behavior of our children. "Thou shalt teach them [the words which God has commanded] diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

We also have a responsibility for loving one another. Paul said to Titus that Christian women are "to love their husbands" (Titus 2:4). Christian husbands are admonished by Paul in Ephesians 5:25, "Love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" and again in Col. 3:19 (RSV), "Love your wives, and do not be harsh with them." Titus 2:4 is Paul's word emphasizing that women are to love their children. Then in Ephesians 6:4 and again in Colossians 3:21, Paul's admonition is for fathers not to provoke their children to wrath or anger.

These are the biblical principles which, if God lets Bill Pinson come for some further messages as the time goes on in these forty-eight hours, he will pick up and elaborate on: grace, commitment, faithfulness, freedom, and responsibility.

The Truebloods wrote that successful family living for Christians is a system by means of which persons

who are sinful and contentious are so caught by a dream bigger than themselves that they work throughout the years in spite of repeated disappointment to make the dream come true. I think it was James Stewart who first made the point, which has been widely picked up by others, that marriage is not contract but commitment, not freedom but fetters, not private but public. Family life, theologically perceived and biblically understood, is, indeed, not contract but commitment, not freedom but fetters in the Lord, not private but public.

FAMILIES AND THE FUTURE

Wallace Denton

I have been interested to note that the topic assigned to me, "Families and the Future," has no punctuation mark at the end to help us interpret the title. It could have had a question mark and thus raised the question as to future of the family. In the 1950s the Ford Motor Company attempted to lure buyers by reassuring us that "There's a Ford in your future!" Perhaps this title should have an exclamation mark at the end to say with emphasis, and comforting reassurance to most of us, that "There's a family in your future!"

The demise of the family has become a popular topic in recent years. Some have mourned while proclaiming their dire predictions. Others have joyously stuck their literary knife a little deeper and danced off to the cemetery to dig the grave.

Such predictions are not new. John Watson, influential founder of behavioral psychology, in 1927 predicted, that based on trends at that time, that within 50 years marriage would no longer exist. In 1941 Pitirim Sorokin envisioned a time when "the main functions of the family will further decrease until it becomes a mere incidental cohabitation of male and female, while the home will become a mere overnight parking place mainly for sex relationship" (*Social and Cultural Dynamics*, Vol. 4, p 776, Harper, 1941).

In 1963, Ferdinand Lundberg, in *The Coming World Transformation*, says that the family is "near the point of complete extinction" (Doubleday, p. 295). Feminist Roxanne Dunbar asserts that "the family is what destroys people." Marriage, as Mervyn Cadwallader writes, is a "wretched institution" ("Marriage as a Wretched Institution," *Atlantic*, November 1966). But the most vitriolic and scathing attack on the family in all the literature, in my judgment, comes from an unsuspecting source, therapist David Cooper, in a brilliant and often outrageous book *The Death of the Family* (Vintage Press, 1970). The modern family, he contends, is the "ultimately perfected form of non-meeting." Cooper proclaims the "end of the age of relatives." He sees the family as a trap, and a destroyer of all autonomous initiative and spontaneity. (An interesting sidelight is that he dedicates the book to a brother, sister-in-law and their children who, during a mental and physical crisis during the writing of the book, treated him with "immense kindness and concern . . . just as a true family should.")

To be sure, these are extreme views of marriage and

the family, but they do underline the ferment in the minds of many who write the books and articles and supposedly speak on behalf of many. However, I do not think they speak for the typical "man on the street."

Concern with the future has become a preoccupation with some people. Indeed, this preoccupation has given rise to a whole new breed of people called "futurologists" or "futurists." A concern with the future is one of the distinguishing features of Western cultures. Generally, Eastern cultures have been oriented to the past. There are those who think that it is because Western cultures have been oriented toward the future that they have given birth to the myriad new technologies which have had such a profound impact on society in general and the family in particular.

There are two major ways that social scientists attempt to predict the future. The first of these is the study of the avant garde, the trend setters. The life style of these people is often indicative of what the rest of society will be doing in a few years, or a few decades. Thus 20 years ago a study of the avant garde might have helped us predict that today we would be wearing our hair longer, sporting beards and moustaches, and singing our music with a rock beat. The second way of predicting the future is by extrapolation. That is, current practices and trends and their implications are extended into the future. In either case, predicting the future by social scientists is, at best, an imprecise science and art, and often our predictions are made much like the weatherman who sticks his head out the window. If it gets wet, he predicts rain; if he sees clouds, he predicts cloudy weather. And, like the weatherman, often unforeseen variables come into play and our predictions go awry.

In my presentation here, I will not focus any attention on technological changes impacting on the family. To be sure, some of these would be exciting to talk about, such as a computerized home communication terminal which will help us do shopping from home, pay our bills, and print out only that part of the daily paper we want. And for those of us who must constantly be concerned with the "battle of the bulge," I look forward to no-calorie foods. And perhaps my worn out heart can be replaced with a mechanical one by the turn of the century. But the discussion of such developments is not my intention or purpose here. Rather, I will look specifically at the family and some of the kinds of influences and changes that we can anticipate in the short term, say between now and the turn of the century.

A popular pastime among family specialists is to speculate on what family life might be like 50, 100 or 200 years from now. I am going to restrain myself from doing any far-out "crystal balling" about the possible shape of relationships at some far distant time, though that might be more interesting and dramatic than what I propose to do, namely focus on the next twenty or thirty years between now and around the turn of the century. These are the years over which we have some control and which effect us and our children.

The general outline and patterns of what will happen to the family in the next twenty or thirty years are already laid. I doubt that anything bold, new and

unheard of for any of us sitting here is likely to happen. The seeds shaping the near future have already been planted, and in most cases, the plants have come up.

Let me preface my remarks by saying that some of the things that I think will happen depress me, some frighten me, and some excite me. Nonetheless, I think these are some of the things which will happen.

1. Present trends suggest that in the future there will be fewer and fewer traditional families comprised of the mother, father and their dependent children. That is pretty much what our conception of the "typical American family" is like. However, that type of family is becoming a "vanishing species" and is likely to become even more scarce in the decades ahead. For instance, demographer Paul Glick says that presently about thirty percent of America's children under age eighteen do not live with both natural parents (*Journal of Marriage and the Family*, February 1975).

With the divorce rate climbing each year, in the future we will probably see more and more solo parents. There is also a growing number of single adults who are single by divorce, death, choice, or simply delaying getting married, as thousands are now doing. Is a single adult a family? Certainly, but not a typical family.

Of course, the church will be called upon to refocus its programs if it is to minister to families as they exist.

2. There will be a growing number of couples who opt for cohabitation rather than marriage. To be sure, this will be a transitional stage for most of the young who will eventually marry. While we commonly think that this is a phenomenon practiced only by the young, reports coming from many retirement communities suggest that some older couples are cohabitating rather than marrying. One reason for doing this is that in marriage the wife may lose a part of her Social Security income.

To quote Paul Glick again, he notes that the 1970 census revealed that in the 1960s, there was an eight-fold increase in the number of "heads of households living apart from their parents who were sharing living quarters with a member of the opposite sex." (This is the Census Bureau's way of saying "cohabitating.") Furthermore, during the first seven years of the 1970s, the Census Bureau reported that there was a 100 percent increase over the 1970 census of the number of people cohabitating (*Indianapolis Star*, April 16, 1978). Several recent studies among college students found that twenty to thirty percent of those included in these studies either were, or had been, involved in a cohabitating relationship.

Increasingly our sons and daughters will be called upon to make decisions about cohabitating. It is becoming more socially acceptable, and I see a dramatic increase in the number of students in my classes who admit publicly to being, or having been, in a cohabitating relationship. In fact, I was astounded one day to overhear one secretary tell another, "Did you hear that Bill and Alice have announced that they are living together?" I fully expect to receive engraved announcements next!

Those of us who do family counseling are now called

upon to work with these couples who turn to us with a variety of interpersonal problems not unlike those of married couples. Is this marriage counseling? At the Purdue Marriage and Family Counseling Center, we mainly approach them as if they were married and call it relationship counseling, if we feel a need to pin a label on it.

If the numbers of cohabitating couples increase in the future, as I expect they will, churches will be under increasing pressure to answer the question of whether they want to minister to these who live in violation of the code of ethics of most churches. Are they welcome? Will they be given positions of leadership?

3. Term marriages and widespread use of written marriage contracts may be in vogue long before the deaths of many of us here. Some voices are calling for term marriages which will be in force for a designated period of time, say five years. At the end of that time the marriage expires or the couple can choose to renew it! (Reminds me a little of how we renew the coach's contract periodically.)

Margaret Mead in an oft-reprinted *Redbook Magazine* article (July, 1966) over a decade ago called for a two-stage marriage with the first one easily dissolved if there were no children. I fully expect some form of this to happen by the turn of the century. We almost have it now, if we could easily eliminate the need for an attorney in divorce proceedings.

Already some couples are using written contracts which spell out the rights and responsibilities of the partners. The legal status of these contracts is not clear, but in the decades ahead, such contracts might be invested with legal authority and agreements reached there become binding. What will be the attitude of ministers toward such contracts? Will he (or it may be she by that time) want to review the contract? Will ministers be unwilling to perform a wedding with or without certain clauses which they deem irresponsible or necessary?

4. Divorces will remain at a high level and probably even increase. In 1975 our country passed an important milestone. For the first time in our history, or the history of any other nation, we had over one million divorces that year. The number has increased in each succeeding year. The age group now with the most rapidly growing rate of divorce is those married fifteen to twenty years. At present it is estimated that nearly forty percent of the marriages contracted this year will end in divorce. Four out of five of those who divorce will eventually remarry. Ninety percent of these will do so within the first three years (Glick, 1975). One prediction has it that by the turn of the century the average number of marriages per person will be about 3.5. A Columbia University professor has said that most of us marry the first time for neurotic reasons, so we need to marry a second time for healthy reasons. So Americans are not disillusioned with marriage as such, just with marriage to a particular person. In past, some of us believe so much in marriage, we marry often!

Divorce was once considered professionally suicidal for a minister, but divorce among this group has become rather commonplace. Most of them seem to continue in some facet of the ministry unless a scandal

is attached to the divorce. In the future, ministerial divorces will increase with a growing acceptance of this by congregations. Many will not even change churches. I've ceased to be surprised even by my marriage counselor friends who end up divorced. The truth is, no one of us can guarantee that we will never divorce. All we can say with certainty is that we have not as yet.

What does all this mean? It means partly that reality calls upon us to recognize that we and our sons and daughters stand a very significant chance of not making it "till death do us part." It means that we in the church are and will be increasingly called upon to gear our ministry to meet the needs of this vast host of formerly married people. But too often they drop out of church, especially the men.

5. There will be a growth of marriage based primarily on mutual satisfaction rather than life-long commitment. This, of course, is related to the previous point but stated separately here for emphasis. "Till death do us part" is and will continue to be taken seriously by fewer and fewer couples. It is no longer included in some ceremonies. While I certainly do not decry all divorce, I believe the view that marriage is a life-long commitment is still the best way to enter into marriage, but this viewpoint will increasingly become a minority view. "Till you doth cease to make me feel good" will increasingly replace the older commitment, though probably not stated that openly.

6. The Women's Movement is having, and will continue to have, a profound impact on our lives. No one of us sitting here has escaped the influence of this movement. In my judgment, the central thrust of the movement having to do with mutual respect, equal opportunity, and equality between the sexes is on target and consistent with my understanding of Jesus' approach to people. I have noticed that even some of the most uneducated and unsophisticated women working on an assembly line who never heard of Germaine Greer or Kate Millet have become sensitized to their new roles.

Today approximately forty-eight percent of the labor force is female. They're a financial force! In 1978, for the first time in U. S. history, women in college outnumbered men. They're educated! Being educated, emancipated and liberated and sensitized to ways in the past in which they have been forced to play backseat, behind-the-scenes roles, they are no longer willing to play such roles. They have often been underpaid, underrecognized, and underpromoted for doing the same work. No more!

The education and employment of women outside the home in the decades ahead will have a profound impact on the church: First, women will be pushing more and more for positions of influence in the church. Those who hold responsible positions of leadership and influence during the week are less and less going to be willing to be permitted only to work on the social committee, kitchen committee, and children's committee at church. More of them are and will want to be "where the action is" as deacons, trustees and other significant positions—including being a pastor. I anticipate some woman bringing a lawsuit against a church (if it hasn't already happened) because she was excluded from a position because of her sex.

The employment of women is having a second impact on churches in the area of volunteer services. The church is the largest consumer of volunteer services in the world. Much, if not most, of these services are performed by women. However, what many agencies using volunteers, including churches, are reporting is that it is increasingly difficult to enlist volunteers. Women who are employed by day usually do at night what they might have done in the day were they not employed. With both the husband and wife employed, men and women are more jealously guarding family time. They are, therefore, less and less likely to be willing to serve on church committees. In our church one man I know who had previously served as a deacon, turned down a nomination for becoming active again because his wife's work schedule now called for him watching the children in the evenings, and when they did have time free on the weekends, they were not about to spend that at committee meetings.

7. I expect that the Women's Liberation Movement will be followed by the Men's Liberation Movement in this last quarter of the century. Already in a few places men's consciousness raising groups have been formed. I would expect men to become increasingly aware of the ways they need liberating. In fact, I think we could mount some rather cogent arguments to the effect that men need liberating as much as women, and more so in some areas. The culture has burdened us down with heavy loads of what it means to be a man: emotionally, financially, sexually, physically, psychologically. Most of these expectations ultimately doom us to a sense of failure at some point in life.

I anticipate that our sons and our sons' sons will be liberated to achieve a new level of masculinity. Perhaps they will know, as you and I cannot know, how to be strong without being brutish, gentle without being weak. And when they achieve that level of manhood, perhaps this will help us to develop a new appreciation for the New Testament depiction of Jesus. You see, a two-fisted world has never appreciated the compassionate, gentle, patient, weeping Jesus. Somehow He comes across as weak, effeminate (strange that "effeminate" should be such a terrible accusation). Perhaps this new and liberated generation of men will at least achieve a level of masculinity that Jesus had achieved two thousand years ago.

8. I expect that there will be a rediscovery and renewal of appreciation for the role of the full-time homemaker. While the number of women employed outside the home will continue to grow, I anticipate that a divergent movement will emerge which will attract some articulate followers who affirm the importance and creative opportunities of homemaking. I don't think women are secure enough in their new roles outside the home to do this yet. But once that security is established, some will reaffirm the home as an arena calling for the highest levels of skill, competency and intelligence. I think we can even find ways of coping with the loneliness of the homemaker working alone (a common complaint about homemaking) such as women getting together at each other's homes to do housework. One of the main satisfactions of work outside the home is interacting with other people.

When this rediscovery takes place, we may also

decide that in many (perhaps most) cases, no one can be as dedicated a parent as can the natural parent. (Note that I did not say "mother." By that time the homemaker and primary child care parent may be the husband!)

9. Between now and the year 2000 we will be increasingly becoming a society of older people. Given the birth rates in the years following World War II and recent birth rates, the percentage of older people in the society will continue to grow. Pediatric medicine will be needed less and less, and geriatric medicine needed more and more. These older people will grow in political power and their vote increasingly courted. Groups, such as the Gray Panthers, will press the needs of older adults and demand to be heard—and will be heard. The traditional role for older adults dictated that they sit in rocking chairs and be quiet, submissive and dependent. Many of us sitting here will be the older adults of whom I speak. The kind of older adults most of us are likely to become will be much more activists and assertive. Instead of quietly rocking, we may noisily throw rocks!

By the turn of the century it is predicted that half of the society will be supporting the other half. Many of the half being supported will be older adults. Some of us sitting here will be in that supported other half.

10. There will be a growing number of single adults in the years ahead. If older adults are a force to be reckoned with in the future, we cannot ignore the growing number of single adults who will also be developing increasing clout.

One significant thing which seems to be developing is that a new stage is being added to the life cycle. Formerly people usually went directly from adolescence into marriage. The only single adults around were the small minority who never married and those who were divorced and widowed. But now, particularly among the educated middle class, many are delaying marriage until the late 20s, thus adding a stage of several years between high school and marriage when they are on their own as single adults. I think this new stage needs to be added to the charts of contemporary life cycles. The development of singles' apartment buildings across the country is in part a response to the needs of this group. They delay marriage in order to savor life as a single adult and/or in order to more fully devote their energies to launching their careers.

With the increase of the incidence of divorce is a corollary increase in the numbers of the formerly married. Many of these are choosing to remain single as it becomes more socially accepted to be single. "Once burned, twice cautious," they reason. Indeed, life as a single adult is made by television to almost be the preferred way of life. Some shows depict the single adult life as one grand round of exciting relationships, significant work, and rousing parties. The "Mary Tyler Moore Show" is one example. Marriage would ruin the show!

These growing numbers of single adults present a challenge to the church which has traditionally been organized around the husband-wife-child family. Can churches develop programs to meet the needs of single adults, too? The publication of a new magazine, *The*

Christian Single, by the Family Ministries Department suggests to me that, at least at the national level, we want to minister to them.

Single adults have some needs similar to married adults and some needs unique to their situation. The area that is most challenging to the church is that of saying something significant about their sexual needs. The advice sometimes given to get married is not an option for many, and not a choice for others. (For some time into the future it will not be socially acceptable for women to ask men to marry them.) What are these people to do with their sexual needs? Any conference of single adults that I have ever addressed (and they have all been in churches), when given the chance to draw up their agenda always finds the subject of sex either at the top, or near the top, of their list. What is to be done? I don't have the answer, but I think the time is here for us to address ourselves to the issue. If the answer is still "Don't" then we need to come up with some creative answers to "How, Don't."

11. In the decades immediately ahead parenthood will be increasingly a matter of choice. A growing number of couples will refuse to have children simply because it is "the thing to do." Modern contraceptives properly used make it possible to prevent unwanted conceptions with a high degree of accuracy. Couples who do find themselves in an unwanted pregnancy will be less and less reluctant to have an abortion. The rallying point for many of these childless couples is the National Organization for Nonparents (NON). Childlessness will be particularly characteristic of educated, dual-career couples where the wife is unwilling to interrupt her career in order to have children. But it may be that in the future some couples will choose to have the husband stay home and rear the children.

Of course, in the future most couples will probably continue to have children for any one of a host of reasons why we find being a parent to be rewarding, fulfilling, satisfying and the source of some of our greatest joys in life. These children will likely be cared for in a governmentally funded child care center. In the future the federal government will increasingly impinge upon and control our lives. The government will increasingly become paternalistic taking over some of the last remaining functions of the family through such programs as national health care.

As in the past, in the future, those having the largest number of children will be those least able to afford them financially, namely the poor. And the ethnic poor will probably have larger families than the poor whites. A recent Department of Agriculture study estimates that between now and the turn of the century the white population will increase by twenty-seven percent, while the black population will increase by forty-three percent. So the face of the nation will likely grow progressively darker.

In 1972, for the first time in our history, the birth rate in the U. S. fell below the replacement level, though the rate has increased some since then (Keith Melville, *Marriage and Family Today*, Random House, 1977, p. 313). Should the birth rate remain below the replacement level, I would expect to see efforts launched to promote more births.

So I conclude by asking the question posed at the beginning: "Does the family have a future?" After reading numerous books and articles which explore the future and various alternatives to marriage and the family, I was surprised to find an almost unanimous agreement on the closing pages of each work. That agreement is that in the foreseeable future, the great majority of people in our society will choose to live out their days in a nuclear family. True, a few will choose not to go that way. True, those who do may change families periodically, and true the shape of that family will be somewhat changed from the present one, but the predominant outlines of families of the future will be basically similar to those of the present. So as Morton Hunt paraphrases Mark Twain, "Reports of the death of marriage are greatly exaggerated."

The need for love, affection, recognition, respect, security, sexual satisfaction, intimacy will remain vitally important to people in future generations. Even with all its faults and limitations, we have yet to come up with a good substitute for the family which most of us think could meet our emotional needs as well.

In his book *Principles of Sociology*, author William Goode says:

Long after the last reader of this volume has moldered into dust, the vast majority of human beings will continue to be born into a family unit with two spouses, male and female, with or without another child already there. They will live most of their lives entwined closely in family relations and will experience much of their anguish and happiness because of what takes place there (McGraw-Hill, 1977).

Some of those who decry marriage and children often do so because marriage *does* demand that we give up some of our individuality. Marriage forces us to grow up, to think of someone other than ourselves, to give up our adolescent dreams and fantasies. But in return, the family affords us the opportunity to share our lives with others, to love and be loved, to give and be given to. In the context of the family, we find those who:

Love us when we are unlovely,
Believe in us when we are unbelievable,
Trust us when we are untrustworthy,
Forgive us when we are unforgiving,
Families,
Support us when we are downtrodden,
Stand by us when we stand alone,
Listen to us when we need listening to,
Hold us when we need held.

FAMILY: A PERSONAL STATEMENT

Rosalynn Carter

Mrs. Carter delivered her address via telephone from the White House since the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty prevented her from delivering it in person.

Thank you, Foy. I appreciate those words; and I am glad to be able to talk to all of you today and very

sorry that I can't be with you. I have just witnessed the signing of the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. It was an historic occasion, and I know that all of you rejoice with us and the people of the world as we celebrate this event. We issued a statement also yesterday signed by the three principals, Prime Minister Begin, President Sadat, and Jimmy declaring today a day of prayer around the world; and that proclamation reads (part of it): "We now ask people of all faiths to join again in a day of prayer and thanksgiving for what has been accomplished and then to ask God to guide our nations in the days ahead as we continue to work for a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace. With God's help, we and generations to come, will know peace between our peoples." That's part of the proclamation and I wanted to read it to all of you this afternoon because I know that you will want to join with us in prayer.

And now about our families. We had our whole family here today, our children, our grandchildren, my mother, and Jimmy's mother. They were all here to celebrate this occasion with us. It's so wonderful to be able to share joys with your family, with your loved ones. I'm pleased that you are thinking about families, and I'm also pleased that I can express a few of my thoughts to you this afternoon.

Remember, if you saw the television program, the night his mother died, young Alex Haley's grandmother hugged him close and said, "The only thing bigger than time is the family." Millions viewed this television series recently; in fact, the entire Roots phenomenon has gripped our nation like few media events. We were drawn into those episodes for many reasons, not the least of which is the deep longing for a sense of roots and meaning in our lives, a deep longing, national and perhaps international, for a place to stand in the sweep of history. Our country is being altered in unprecedented ways with nations coming and going, with governments literally changing overnight, with economic uncertainty and talk of nuclear arms and nuclear war; and in all of this tumult, the family alone provides the basic place to stand. More to the point of my belief, the family, built on a moral and spiritual foundation, provides that longed for place to stand in a troubled world. And people in our country are concerned about the family. Jimmy and I had a chance to travel during the campaign into almost every state and we talked with people every day; and we learned that people are worried about the family; they believe the family is in trouble; and they yearn for strong family ties and a sense of stability and belonging that comes from having roots.

For a few days, you in Orlando are going to be focusing attention on "Help for Families." We all agree that our families need help, and it's timely for us to carefully look at and to seek ways for strengthening the families of our nation.

We must begin with a new appreciation of the importance of the family. I see the importance of the family in these terms. Family is the best way yet discovered for people to take people seriously. People make up the family. People are of paramount worth and value, and each one of us needs to feel that we are of worth and value; and the family is best equipped to take its own people seriously.

Charitable, educational, even religious bodies like the church have tried and must keep on trying to take people seriously; but nothing will take the place of that individual family. To be sure, when the family fails or falls apart, the church and government and other alternative family types must jump to become foster families. But in the long run, only the basic family can provide for those deep human hungers bound up in my phrase, "taking people seriously."

Also, family is the best way yet discovered to help people understand that they belong in the world. The family can provide basic self-esteem and can communicate, "You belong to us, and we are happy." I will always be grateful that I grew up in a small town where I felt that I belonged. We had troubles, and I think everybody has troubles, but I belonged. I belonged to a family with roots. I belonged to a family that had identity in my community. It didn't matter to me that Plains was only one mile square and had only six hundred people in it. It didn't matter that we were far from the richest people in town. Parents and cousins, uncles and aunts, people on the street, they all let me know that I belonged. And that's a good feeling to cling to, even today. And I think that in metropolitan areas where street-corner recognition is not possible, the family is all the more responsible to provide that sense of belonging.

Families can provide an atmosphere for love to develop and flourish. It is in this atmosphere of family love that there are opportunities for intimacy and communication, for acceptance and security, for growth and development, for discipline and affirmation. Our nation needs the love that families can provide. And what better place is there than in the family to develop character and to form moral values? What better way to prepare to combat injustice in the world than by first learning to act fairly and justly in family relationships? What better way to diminish the dishonesties in society than by cultivating the habit of telling the truth in the home? Our nation needs the moral values that families can provide.

Early in this campaign for the presidency, as I mentioned to you earlier, we found that people were concerned about the family, and Jimmy made the statement, "The entire history of the human race teaches us that the family unit is the best way for men and women to live their lives, the best way to raise children, and the only solid foundation upon which to build a strong nation." But how do we build that important foundation? How do we make it strong? How do we shore up the family? These are very difficult questions, and I wish I had the answers, and I'm going to be very interested in reading the reports of your meetings and discussions to see what answers you come up with. I do know that there are areas of responsibility and, being here in the White House, I naturally think about government. Government has a responsibility. Government is involved in such family-affecting matters as housing, welfare, education, employment, health. Attention must always be given to the way families will be affected by governmental action. I'm really pleased that there is going to be a White House Conference on Families in 1981. This will place a major emphasis on families and support for families in the years immediately ahead.

Well, the government has a responsibility; and also our churches have a responsibility. The need for healthy family life presents a clear challenge to our churches of which we are a part. We must demonstrate how our faith strengthens our families. Let us share with others that while all of us have family problems of some kind, we find in our Christian faith the resources for dealing with our problems.

Also, we as individuals have a responsibility. We must work at them. Jimmy and I have always tried to do this. In Plains we were busy. We had our problems; we had our struggles; we had our joys; but we tried to create space for our children and for our larger family; and we tried to find time for each other, which I think is so important. We both were very fortunate. We came from Christian homes. We had the security of being surrounded by loved ones. My father died when I was only thirteen, but I remember him coming home after work and putting his arms around my mother and dancing her around the room. The year after he died, my grandfather came and lived with us; he was a wonderful Christian man. Sunday was a day for Sunday School and church and BTU, and it still is. Jimmy, once talking about his childhood said, "I had a stability there. When things started going wrong in my own life, my mother was there, my father was there, my sisters and brother were there, and my church was there, and my community was there." We've tried to give our children this sense of stability and belonging. We are a close family, and we've been bound together as I know many of your families have in a lot of different ways. We have worked together. We've played together. We've won together. We've lost together. We've experienced some real accomplishments together. We've experienced some real problems and frustrations together. We've worshipped together; and we've needed help together. Yes, our families do need help. There's no mythical perfect family, free from all problems; rather, we all have needs. We all have problems. We can all use help. It eases our guilt somewhat to know that famous Bible families knew agony and turmoil—Adam and Eve, Isaac and Rebekah, Samson and his parents, and we could go on. There are no perfect families because there are no perfect people; but we can claim the presence, the power, and the activity of God in our struggle—in our struggle as families to be families, to be God's families.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said that the lesson of life is to believe what the years and the centuries say against the hours. Well, the hours say the family is in trouble; the centuries say that the family will survive.

Help for our families may well be the most significant service that either the church or the state or we as individuals can perform at this hour. So let us as Christians and as responsible citizens meet this challenge so that both our families and our nation will be strengthened.

Thank you very much.

RELIGION IN THE HOME: EDUCATION, INSPIRATION, AND FORMATION

George Gallup, Jr.

It is a great honor and pleasure for me to participate in your national seminar, *Help for Families*.

The title of my talk this evening is "*Religion in the Home: Education, Inspiration and Formation*."

This conference is dedicated to a most important task because survey evidence strongly suggests that many families in the United States need help desperately—spiritual help.

Many Americans, to be sure, belong to the category of "not-quite Christians": we believe but without strong convictions; we want the fruits or rewards of faith without the responsibilities or obligations; we say we are Christians but do not talk about it publicly.

The fact that surveys show levels of religious belief and practice to be much higher in our country than in other nations should not lull us into the belief that churches do not face a major challenge in terms of developing "mature Christians."

The fact of the matter is, the task of bringing about church renewal is a tremendous one. Recently the Gallup Organization and the Princeton Religion Research Center conducted a national survey on the Unchurched American for 30 faiths and denominations and I am prepared to discuss the results of this survey with you later on, if you wish. I believe the findings from this survey point to certain steps which might be taken to help bring about church renewal.

I would like, first of all this evening to discuss briefly certain of the key trends we are noting in terms of family life: Is family life fading in importance in American society?

1. Actually, the percentage of Americans who say they are satisfied with their family life has increased over the last five years.

2. And, in the face of dire predictions by some sociologists that the breakdown of the nuclear family is at hand, it is precisely these aspects of life—marriage, home, and family—that the vast majority of American women say would provide the ideal lifestyle for them. Three women in four in the United States say marriage and children are among the important elements that would provide the ideal life for them.

Among women who would opt for marriage and children, forty-four percent say they would prefer not to have a job outside the home, while the balance, thirty-two percent, would include a full-time, outside job in their blueprint for the ideal lifestyle.

The popular "career girl" life—single, free and in pursuit of a full-time career—has very little appeal for American women, at least as a permanent way of life. Only nine percent say they would prefer this existence.

3. A remarkable ninety-one percent of the American people—including an overwhelming majority of young adults—say they would welcome more emphasis on traditional family ties in the years ahead.

So as far as the American people are concerned, the family is here to stay. Indeed, most would undoubtedly feel that the family is the chief bulwark of society and the best hope for the future.

I like what C. S. Lewis has to say on the subject of the home: "The home must be the foundation of our national life. It is there, all said and done, that character is formed. It is there that we appear as we really are. It is there we can fling aside the weary disguises of the outer world and be ourselves. It is there that we retreat from the noise and stress and temptation and dissipation of daily life to seek the sources of fresh strength and renewed purity."

While the American gives the family an overwhelming vote of confidence, there can be no denying the fact that the family is seriously threatened by forces on all sides. In *Christianity Today*, Virginia Stern Owens wrote: "It seems we know how to do almost everything else in this country except how to make lasting marriages and raise children."

Census data and survey data bear her out. The divorce rate has doubled in 10 years. Two in five children born in this decade will live in a single-parent home.

Each year for the last decade, discipline has been cited by the nation's parents as the top problem facing the schools in their communities, as determined by Gallup-Kettering studies. Hundreds of teachers are physically attacked each month by their students. Thousands of school children are physically abused.

A recent Gallup Youth survey indicated that as many as one teen-ager in five is fearful of bodily injury during school hours.

Most parents cite alcohol and drug abuse as serious problems among youth in their communities. Teenagers themselves name alcohol and drug abuse to be among the top problems facing their generation.

In addition, our teenage population appears to be in a quandary regarding sex. One result is that we are experiencing in this country, as you know, an epidemic of teenage pregnancies. The overwhelming majority of teenagers have developed a whole new set of attitudes toward sex which could have a very deleterious effect on family life in the immediate future.

Many factors can be cited as contributing to a breakdown of the family unit, including poor family communication, the influence of television, our high mobility, the fact that grandparents no longer live in the same households with their children and grandchildren.

Speaking of this last factor, one must regard this as an unfortunate trend because—as I'm sure you will agree—there is a remarkable affinity between the young and the old—an affinity that perhaps should be recognized more often in an organizational way. Arnold Toynbee once said, "grandparents and grandchildren are allies against a common enemy."

One key reason for the threatened dissolution of the family unit is that while rearing children is our most vital role in life, we seem to be least prepared for this role. We plunge into marriage and raise children without any advance knowledge and learn our way by trial and error.

And we should not be surprised at the seriousness of the problems of alcohol and drug abuse among teenagers today when we learn that four in 10 parents who themselves drink have set no rules or guidelines for drinking among their offspring.

Many decry a loss of spiritual values. John Catoir writes in the *Catholic Digest*: "For too many people, their own satisfaction is of supreme importance to them. God is not in the place of highest honor. This kind of individualistic thinking will usually subvert a relationship."

Indeed, many of the problems confronting families

today could be due in some measure to a decline in the proportion of Americans who say they have received religious training in their youth—from ninety-four percent in 1952 to ninety-one percent in 1965 to eighty-three percent today.

It is interesting to note that this down-trend parallels a down-trend in the percentage of Americans who say religion is "very important" in their lives, from seventy-five percent in 1952 to seventy percent in 1965 to fifty-three percent today.

I feel that it is appropriate to relate the decline in religious training to a breakdown in family communications since, as I shall point out shortly, the impact of religion in many American homes would appear to be a powerful one, judging from a national survey we have just completed. The Princeton Religion Research Center conducted this survey on religion in the home in order to present the findings at this seminar today.

The series of survey questions we developed dealt with three interrelated elements in terms of the religious upbringing of children: religious *education*, *inspiration* and *formation*. It is our belief that none of these elements can be neglected if we are to develop "mature Christians."

Religious *education* of course provides the basis for faith. And here we find, from earlier surveys, evidence that many parents and children alike are "spiritual illiterates." Many can articulate only in the most clumsy fashion the significance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ for mankind. While most homes have at least one Bible, many Americans have not learned how to bring the Bible into their lives. Many cannot even name the four Gospels.

Religious *inspiration* is an essential element in religious training. It has been rightly said that "religion is better caught than taught." It is not enough to tell a child that he or she must go to church if we ourselves are unwilling to do so. So the focus of the current series of survey questions dealing with religious participation was on *shared* religious practices and activities.

Religious *formation* is also an essential element in religious training. Christianity is a growth process. Perhaps too often the focus is on the "day I found Christ" rather than the "day after."

Other social and religious observers maintain that the growth process in spiritual development should not be forced. In a book titled *Your Growing Child and Religion*, R. S. Lee writes:

"Religious ideas can be taught, but the truth of religion can only be discovered; and it is far more important to foster the spirit of discovery—which is the response to the challenge to adventure—than to persuade adolescents to accept without question what their teachers tell them. We should in many cases go so far as to encourage an active distrust, at least a questioning, of the accepted religious beliefs. Only so will these become strong enough, and enough part of the person, to be able to stand the tests to which they will be subjected by everyday life in the world; and only so will they become a taking-off point for further progress into the realm of the spirit."

Barbara Morgan, member of the Word of God, a Christian community in Ann Arbor, Michigan, writes:

"Because a child's spiritual life is wide open, there's no limit to what God can do in His relationship with him. A child approaches God quite freely and naturally, without fears and doubts, and without the burden of a lifetime of sin. We should resist the temptation to measure our child against other Christian children or to mold our child into our image of a young Christian. God's relationship with each child is unique.

"We should keep uppermost in our minds the fact that God is the potter and we are the hands. We don't know what the pot is going to look like, we simply have to respond to the potter. If we allow the Lord to establish His plan for our children. He will be able to shape each child into a masterpiece far more beautiful and enduring than any we could design."

The survey we conducted for this national seminar was designed to focus on these three elements in religious training and to shed light on three basic questions:

1. How important is the home in the religious training of children? Does the continuing outcry over the removal of prayers from public schools indicate that parents think schools should play a greater role? Or do parents feel that Sunday School teachers should be chiefly responsible for the religious training of youth?

This is an important question, because if America's parents are not in agreement that the home is most important in the religious training of youth, a whole new set of approaches will be required.

The current survey, however, indicates that seventy-five percent of parents say the home is the most important, sixteen percent name the church and three percent say the school. The prevailing opinion among all groups and all faiths and in all regions of the country is that the home is the key factor in the religious and spiritual development of children.

2. The second basic question is: "What is actually going on in the homes of Americans in terms of religious practices and activities—most importantly, *shared* practices and activities?"

One cannot exaggerate the importance of *shared* experiences, of a child's having the undivided attention of a parent. Columnist William Shannon writes: ". . . a young child needs a one-to-one emotional relationship with a loving adult if the child is to grow into a stable self-confident person."

In the survey, parents of children under eighteen years old who live in the same household were asked whether or not they had done the following in the previous seven days with their children: said grace at meals, attended church services, attended other church-related activities, read the Bible together, talked about God and religion with their children, watched or listened to religious programs on T.V. or radio with their children.

Here are the findings:

—42 percent of parents said grace before meals with their children

—38 percent attended church services with their children

—28 percent attended church-related activities with their children

—17 percent of parents read the Bible together with their children

—44 percent of parents talked about God and religion with their children

—31 percent of parents prayed or meditated with their offspring

—23 percent watched or listened to religious programs on T.V. or radio

3. What is the impact of religion on the home? Is it strengthening family relationships? Is it helping children deal with the problems in their lives?

Looking at trends in America today—the divorce rate, the epidemic of alcohol abuse, the trend in unwanted pregnancies, vandalism in the schools—one is tempted to answer, "very little."

But the survey findings do give us at least some cause for encouragement:

—45 percent of parents say religion in their home has strengthened family relationships "a great deal."

—32 percent of parents say religion has helped their children "a great deal" in dealing with the problems in their lives.

So here is at least some testimony as to the success of the efforts of the churches to bring religion into the home and to provide spiritual help for families.

There is still further survey evidence that religion does, indeed, make a difference. Persons who fit the category of "very religious"—making allowance for educational level and other factors—tend to be happier, to be more goal-oriented, and to have a higher level of achievement.

The current survey findings—while encouraging in one respect—can nevertheless be looked at in a different light:

—55 percent of parents say religion in the home has strengthened family relations only "somewhat," "hardly at all," or "not at all," while 68 percent of all parents say religion has helped their children deal with their problems only "somewhat," "hardly at all," or "not at all."

Looking to the future we can, however, gain encouragement from the knowledge that homes where religion plays a central role today are producing persons whose future homes in turn will in all likelihood be religiously oriented.

Examining, for example, the religious practices and attitudes of parents surveyed who said that religion was "very important" in their homes when they were growing up, we see that the current level of shared religious activities is very high indeed.

For example, seven in ten parents in this group say they have read the Bible with their children at least once in the seven-day period tested.

Furthermore, sixty-three percent of parents whose upbringing was "very religious" say religion has greatly strengthened family relationships, while sixty-two percent of this group feel that religion is helping their children a "great deal" in regard to problems in their lives.

The survey on the Unchurched American revealed that those who are churched are far more likely than are the unchurched to say they have received religious instruction by their parents at home.

While these survey findings give us some clues as to the overall dimensions of the problem that is faced in helping families spiritually, clearly there is need for further research, both here in the U. S. and abroad:

—to determine, for example, what questions youth are asking and what answers they are receiving;

—to determine how much time children and parents are spending with each other and the quality of these contacts and discussions;

—to determine, as nearly as possible, levels of spiritual maturity in families. Incidentally, we are now developing a scale to measure spiritual well-being.

Much of the focus of the Princeton Religion Research Center this year and next will be on survey research relating to the family. The overall purpose of the Princeton Religion Research Center, incidentally, is to gain a better understanding of the nature and depth of religious commitment in the U.S. and explore ways this information can enable religious leaders to promote spiritual growth.

New and creative efforts to "help families" are urgently needed, because the 1980s could well be a decade of severe dislocations in society—that is, unless we are able to deal with certain basic problems in society: unemployment among youth which breeds crime and lawlessness, alcohol and drug abuse, voter apathy, a lack of deep religious commitment.

What would appear called for is a new "team effort" between parents and clergy to deepen spiritual values in the home and to deal specifically with certain problems such as alcohol abuse which call for immediate attention. Certainly the nation's churches, which have contact on a regular basis with half of the U.S. population, have a unique opportunity to help with the problem of alcohol abuse—particularly in the area of *prevention*.

Such a "team effort" between parents and *teachers* is now occurring—indeed this could be considered to be one of the most important developments in education in recent years. Parents for years have generally been content to dump all the problems of child-rearing at the door of the school. Now, shocked by certain trends in society and in schools, parents are ready and eager to work closely with teachers. Many say they would like to come to schools to discuss with teachers problems related to discipline, drug and alcohol use, as well as educational problems.

Hopefully, team efforts between parents and *clergy* will help to open up communications within the family, because surely the secret of strong family ties rests in good communication within the family, rooted in the love of Christ.

A recent publication of the Christophers Society notes: "Person-to-person family communication, verbal and non-verbal, means an exchange at all levels. It reinforces in each family member the message each needs in order to grow as an individual within the family. At the deepest level, that message is: 'You are lovable and I love you. I need you. I need to be loved.'"

CHILDREARING: AN IMPORTANT CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

Logan Wright

Is childrearing an important Christian stewardship? To solve the equation, one simply needs to determine first of all if it is *important*, and secondly if it is a major area of *Christian* responsibility.

To say that childrearing is important, is to excel at the fine art of understatement. Childrearing is America's biggest industry. Exceeding in size such giants as national defense and even the fast foods business. Over fifty million Americans are now engaged in the process of rearing or otherwise refining over seventy-five million youngsters under fifteen years of age. More man hours and woman hours are expended in this endeavor than any other. Clearly it is our nation's largest enterprise; it is also our most important.

America has been accused of "slipping," and the jury is still out. What is going to happen to us monetarily, with the gross national product? with the value of the dollar? Scientifically, can we maintain our position of international leadership in the space program and elsewhere. Moralistically, where are we going with respect to human rights and the problems of human suffering in underdeveloped countries and here at home?

Whether this nation flourishes or flounders, depends on its national character, and that in turn depends upon the character of its individual citizens. And nothing is more important in determining the character of individuals than the quality of childrearing they receive. Dr. Ernest Fremont Tittle has written "every new generation is a fresh invasion of savages." If today's generation of savages are going to turn around the decline in the American dollar, to establish permanent colonies on the moon or terrestrial bodies which lie beyond, to solve the problems of welfare, corrections, health care, etc. which threaten us internally like spreading cancers, then the parents of America have their work cut out for them. A lot hangs in the balance. And whether we succeed or fail depends on the personality and the character our children develop now. That in turn depends on the childbearing skills of America's parents. *Obviously*, childrearing is important.

Part two of our equation concerns whether child-rearing is Christian; and to answer that we must determine what is Christ-like, or like Christ. One of the most profound experiences of my young adult life was an attempt to discover Jesus first hand by reading the gospels' accounts of how He spent His time and how He behaved Himself in day-to-day life. The Christ I

discovered in the gospels was different in important ways than the one I had heard about repeatedly from the pulpit. Mainly, His priorities seemed to be different than what I had been led to believe. First of all, He was not an institutional man. Rather, I got the impression that if He were walking the earth today, He would be less concerned with subscribing the annual budget and otherwise undergirding the institution than I had been led to suspect (particularly on stewardship Sunday). It still puzzles me that we rarely hear anything about childrearing or a number of other relevant topics on stewardship Sunday.

Secondly, I was astonished to find that the Jesus of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John was not an aggressive evangelist. He did *not* do anything equivalent to handing out tracts or holding revival meetings. He never aggressively pressed individuals whom He might never see again for quick changes in their basic religious commitments. He is reported on only three occasions to have been called "preacher." By contrast, Jesus was referred to as "teacher" on approximately seventy-five occasions but even more frequently was portrayed as one who responded to the needs of those whose path He crossed: the blind, the poor and needy, the outcasts, the fatherless. His main trait, as well as His main activity, was compassion. If this picture of Jesus is an accurate one then those among us who are most Christ-like may be the workers in our children's homes or others who work to treat or prevent human misery.

If the best way to be Christ-like is to respond to human misery, and the best way to respond is to prevent it; then one of the best ways we can be Christian is by helping parents to succeed in their childrearing efforts. So, as the author of another book released last year used to say: "Let me make this perfectly clear." With this topic of childrearing, *we are here tonight about the Lord's business!*

Allowance for Changing Times

Both the problems of childrearing and the proposed solutions have changed greatly over the last half century. Today, the problems which would ensnare a child along the course of proper development are quite different than those of one or two generations passed. Strange drugs, other than old familiar villains of alcohol and nicotine, no longer merely lurk in the shadows, but emerge in open defiance on the school grounds and in the recreational parlors which are frequented by today's young people. Running away is no longer an infrequent, individual undertaking, but an epidemic in which the victim may be abetted by everything from religious cults to pimps. Groups of runaways now covey together for protection in neighborhoods like Georgetown on the Sun Set Strip. They are usually well subsidized by money which is provided by guilty parents or which results from the fact that today anyone who is willing to work can find a job. It seems ironic that many parents who have worked hard to spare their children the pains of financial insecurity, have instead produced an iatrogenic monster which cripples and maims.

Fifty years ago when the majority of children in this country grew up on farms they tended to learn responsibility irrespective of whether their parents were

skillful or not in their childrearing practices. They performed useful work and were depended upon by the rest of the family. Today in urbanized America, there is very little work for which children are really needed. They grow progressively more dependent than dependable. Getting a kid to carry out the garbage is regarded as a major victory in many homes. Today, for a child to develop the trait of responsibility requires *skillful* parents. It will not happen in a normal course of events as it did in the past.

Not only have the problems of childrearing changed but so have the prescriptions which so-called experts have to offer. In the early part of this century, most parents had a great deal of overkill in socializing their children. That is they started too early and were unduly harsh in weaning, toilet training, and teaching children to inhibit their unacceptable (i.e., sexual and aggressive) impulses. For that reason, Sigmund Freud, Benjamin Spock, and many others recommended parental permissiveness as the best potion for curing these ills. But, we soon learned that permissiveness alone was not enough. During the 1960s, the idea of reasoning with children came into vogue. It was during this time that books on active listening and other communication skills (e.g., *Between Parent and Child* by Haim Ginott; *Parent Effectiveness Training* by Thomas Gordon) were published. Now, in the latter half of the 1970s we are realizing that other ingredients are still missing. This has led to a period which some have called *The Age of Responsibility*. Now we see books with titles such as *Dare To Discipline* and *How To Rear a Responsible Child*. This new age brings with it an emphasis on discipline, on rules or limits, and on rewards and punishments. So now, in order to be modern, one must be a little old fashioned. Yes, the times have changed as far as the problems of childrearing and the prescriptions we make.

State of the Art

During the early 1940s Albert Einstein asked for and received an audience with President Franklin Roosevelt. During that meeting, he explained that there was now sufficient knowledge to build a bomb which was many times more powerful than anything that had ever been known. Roosevelt personally saw to it that three million dollars was set aside for what became known as the Manhattan Project. Several months later Einstein and his colleagues delivered the bomb which was exploded on the New Mexico desert near White Sands. The rest of what happened at Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and other places is now history. Irrespective of whether you see the development as positive or negative, the fact remains that where military capabilities is concerned, if someone builds a better mouse trap, the world will beat a path to his door. The same, however, is *not* true where new advancements in mental health or child development are concerned.

For years experts and parents alike have argued about whether a "good" parent is one who is firm, consistent, and otherwise able to manage and control a child; or whether he or she is one who is loving, supportive, and can provide for the child's basic psychological needs. We now understand that this is like arguing about whether a child needs food or water. Both are obviously

indispensable ingredients for wholesome development. And, though the field of psychology lags behind that of many other disciplines, we are now at the place where the physical sciences stood in the early 1940s. That is, we now have the knowledge about how to get a child to do or not do anything, taking one behavior at a time. We also know how to skillfully provide love and other forms of emotional support, so that a child's basic psychological needs are met; and so that self-esteem (with its inseparable companion of acceptance for others) emerges.

Adequate control for children results when parents understand certain principles of behavior related to: (1) accepting the challenge to be in control; (2) focusing on overt behavior (rather than dynamic *causes* of behavior); (3) emphasizing reward rather than punishment; (4) understanding individual differences; and (5) being consistent. Principles of human behavior are just as essential to childrearing as principles of physics (such as gravity) are to properly roofing or plumbing a house. The Chinese have a proverb: "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for life." Cookbook solutions which attempt to tell parents what to do every time Johnny does this or Mary does that will never solve our dilemma. There are too many Johnny's and Mary's, with too many different kinds of problems. That would require that we learn the answers to literally thousands of questions. What *can* help parents is an understanding of basic principles of human behavior applied to childrearing. Once these are learned, they can be generalized to whatever problem may occur.

One name stands out among those who write about principles of behavior for providing emotional support for children. It is that of Dr. Carl Rogers. He is generally regarded by workers in the mental health field as the one who provides the best information in this area, and his own personal history is something you may find interesting. Dr. Rogers grew up in Wisconsin and originally planned to enter the ministry. After attending the University of Wisconsin, he went to Union Theological Seminary in New York. This was during the 1930s, something of a "hay day" for theological liberalism. The thinking in most seminaries at that time was that religion should be stripped of all of its supernatural or metaphysical trimmings. It was viewed as nothing more than a means for helping people. Rogers reasoned that if religion was just helping people, that other professions were more advanced in this respect than was theology. So he literally walked across the street to Columbia University and enrolled in their doctoral program in psychology. Following graduation Rogers took a position at the Rochester Child Guidance Clinic and eventually served on the faculties at Ohio State, the University of Chicago, and the Wisconsin Medical School. At one point, long after having ceased to be a "religious" man, Rogers wrote on the "Necessary and Sufficient Conditions for Healthy Personality Growth." Here he outlined the five basic ingredients for helping relationships which are intimacy, genuineness, valuing, empathy and responsibility. I would like to elaborate on these briefly and then, at the end of that discussion, return to what may prove to be a very interesting exploration about where these concepts may have come from in the first place.

Intimacy

There is an old saying, "close only counts in horse shoes and hand grenades." But within a family, closeness can count for a great deal. A child who does not experience intimacy during early childhood will invariably experience psychological problems. He will have difficulty establishing close and meaningful relationships with others both inside and outside the family. He will have a variety of other difficulties including a disinclination to behave spontaneously or to be his *real* self.

Genuineness

Genuineness, sometimes called congruence, means both an absence of phoniness and a high degree of self awareness. Congruent parents are not hypocritical and possess a high degree of credibility in what they tell their children about such topics as drugs, sex, and happiness in general.

Valuing or Loving

Rogers used the term "unconditional" to describe the best way of loving children. This means loving them at all times irrespective of whether they are behaving or misbehaving. It means loving them whether they agree with us or reject our beliefs. Unconditional means loving children irrespective of whether we have had our morning cup of coffee. Unconditional love means never communicating rejection under any circumstances.

Understanding

The term "understanding" has two very different meanings. One is what might be called *diagnostic* understanding. This involves figuring out *why* a child behaves in a certain way. Empathy on the other hand involves a completely different type of understanding. It is not diagnostic but rather the capacity to understand something from the *other* persons point of view.

Responsibility

Every person (including every child) has a free will. If this is not true then little else in life or religion makes sense. Each person must eventually make his or her own decisions about important behavior and assume the consequences for those decisions. Every parent desires to rear a responsible child, but children will not behave in a responsible manner unless they *are* responsible. Therefore, allow children to take responsibility for their own beliefs and behavior. Over a hundred years ago the Danish theologian Kierkegaard said: "To make our religion someone else's without allowing them, yea requiring them, to go through the process necessary to make it their own; is to deprive that person of his relationship to God."

In summarizing, I would like to reflect on where Dr. Rogers may have gotten these ideas in the first place. Remember his early exposure to religion and his theological training. Possibly Rogers retained more of his early Christian concepts than anyone realized. Reflect for a moment on the scene of Jesus with the woman at the well. Notice how suddenly their relationship becomes a close and intimate one. And how

skillfully He deals with her on the most intimate aspects of her life.

Concerning genuineness, who in the process of becoming a leader never pretended to be anything other than a simple carpenter and teacher?

And, who in your opinion provides the best example *unconditionally* valuing others? Who was able to say "Father forgive them for they know not what they do" of the people who were at that very moment crucifying him?

Who in your opinion was best able to emphasize, that is, to see things from the other person's point of view? Picture the scene of Jesus with the woman taken in adultery. Notice how He writes in the sand, "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone." Here we see a clear example of an individual who is able to see both sides of the situation and thus provide true understanding.

Finally, concerning the principle of responsibility, who never twisted anyone's arm into following his way of thinking? Who always respected the other person's right to self determination?

It is entirely possible that what Dr. Rogers has done is to translate the best teachings from Christianity into modern day mental terminology. As such the best principles on how to be a good parent may be nothing more than the message of Jesus translated into modern day language which people can both understand and hopefully apply.

Means to an End

What remains in this discussion is an identification of the *process* or mechanism by which this important aspect of Christian stewardship can be accomplished. One solution involves training parents as paraprofessional therapists. This simply means they are provided with knowledge which is generally transmitted only to psychologists, psychiatrists, psychiatric social workers, psychiatric nurses, and others who serve as counselors. If I as a psychotherapist spend one hour a week doing psychotherapy with a child, I have in essence altered one hour of that child's experience. If on the other hand I spend one hour a week training a group of seven mothers who have an average of three children each and who provide a somewhat different environment for those children four hours per day seven days a week (as parents so trained indicate they do); then I have translated my our hour of professional time into $7 \text{ parents} \times 3 \text{ children} = 21 \times 4 \text{ hours per day} = 84 \times 7 \text{ days per week} = 500 + \text{ hours of difference in children's experience}$. If I provide these parents with a full length book on childrearing which they read, research shows the amount of time required to get the same amount of change in parent attitudes, parent behaviors, and children's behaviors is cut essentially by fifty percent.

Pediatricians and other consultants are discovering the value of bibliotherapy, that is of giving parents something to read prior to consultation in an attempt to maximize the benefits of these short sessions.

Having a common set of concepts provided by the reading can provide a common ground which maxi-

mizes the benefit of any help parents may receive. In fact, if forced to choose between the most commonly offered form of mental health assistance (5 to 10 minutes of advice from a non-psychiatric physician) and five to ten hours of reading, most parents and professionals would bet their money on bibliotherapy.

What is needed in this country is a plan. At the risk of sounding bureaucratic, I will say we need a program. We have an energy program, one with specific goals to be accomplished by 1985. It involves such objectives as: (1) decreased dependence on foreign oil; (2) degasification of coal; (3) development of more energy efficient units in housing, transportation, etc. I submit that a more crying need in our society is for a program of child development which focuses on families, and parents' ability to meet their children's basic psychological needs. This means we need a program whereby in 1985, 95% of the children in this country will be born to parents who both want them and who are capable of providing for their development. We need a program which clarifies where we must be in 1984, where we must be in 1983, 1982, 1981, and 1980 in order to achieve this goal.

Childrearing is not only an important Christian stewardship it is an important problem for national survival. I am asking you to join with me in an effort, the objective of which is that the children born in this country will have parents who both want them and are capable of providing for their development. I ask you to join not only in an individual commitment but one which you would attempt to foster within your church, your community, your denomination, and the nation as a whole.

"Someone is waiting right outside your door.
Someone is waiting whom you've never seen before.
Not the ones who crowd the city streets,
But the someone who is lying at your feet."

THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT AND FAMILY LIFE: TWO VIEWS

Harvey Cox

Mr. Chairman, Mrs. Schlafly, and brothers and sisters, it's always a great treat and a privilege to be with the Christian Life Commission. This is my third time to be with you and I have appreciated each opportunity. The assignment that came to me from Foy Valentine over the telephone was to talk from a theological and biblical perspective about the relationship between the women's movement and the family; and that's what I intend to do this morning.

I want to try to look at this phenomenon in the broadest and deepest of contexts. I'd like to look at the women's movement, the movement seeking equality and justice among women, as part of the much larger and much deeper movement which has issued from the original impact of the liberating action of God in history recorded and testified to in the Bible. I am talking about that revelation of a God who is working in history, beginning with the exodus and with Sinai, coming through the life and death and resurrection of Jesus

Christ, and up until this very moment as the God who continues to liberate all people, men and women, black and white, from sin and death and bondage.

The second context in which I would like to look at this is the world setting. I am not going to be talking only or exclusively about the family in the United States of America. I have just come from two months, and will be returning today, to a poor nation, one very close to us on our borders in which I have a particular concern, so that I bring a special concern for the impact on the family of poverty and hunger and death. I think very often we don't think enough about what those enemies of family life are doing to children and to the structure of family life.

Now underlying all of this, I want to be perfectly straightforward about my theological commitment. I believe that God has created men and women to live in full mutuality as helpmates to each other in mutual submission, that this is the original design of God in creation; and I think this can be documented from the Bible itself. I believe that what we see around us is the distortion and alienation which results from sin and especially from the structural and social expression of sin, not just its individual expression. I also believe, as a Christian, that we live in a world in which God is still acting, still liberating, still restoring his creation to his original intention, which, from my point of view, is love and mutuality among peoples of different genders and colors and nations. So this is part of a much, much larger story; and I would personally prefer to talk about this on the theological basis, on the biblical basis, myself. That's my own competence and I invite you to ask questions or differ with me on that basis because I think that's where we as Christians really have to make our underlying decisions.

So let's start with this. And let's start with the affirmation that the Bible begins with the story of the liberation of a people from bondage, slaves from Egypt, pyramid constructors. And this is a liberation which was not simply an internal or spiritual liberation; it was an actual, economic, political, and historical liberation of real people undergoing real suffering. And after these people arrived in what we now know as Canaan, something very remarkable began to happen. Other groups of people who had never been in Egypt but who were suffering the kind of injustice and deprivation, the dispossession that rural workers and poor campesinos and farmers and peasants often suffer, were so inspired by the story of this people whom their God had helped to escape from the oppression of the Pharaohs that they entered into the same covenant. And we now know from the work of such people as George Mendenhall in his great book on *The Origin of the Biblical Tradition* that the very word, Israel, refers not to some ethnic group or some racial group that found its way out of Egypt; it referred to a coalition of groups, some of whom had never been to Egypt, but who were invited into the coalition and were welcomed into it by the leaders of Israel if they would pledge their allegiance to this liberating God. They became part of the same covenant. We have evidence for that in the Book of Judges. Now this is a liberation movement which was therefore, in principle, open to all people, all who would forswear idols and enter into the covenant of the one true and liberating

God. I think that is the most important and fundamental theological premise that I would like to lay before you this morning.

The next one is, of course, that this God works with us, through us, and among us with his liberating activity, saving us from sin and death and despair, captivity and bondage, within human history, within the contexts and limitations of human history, and that, therefore, we have this treasure in earthen vessels, and that as history has progressed and moved, other groups of people have also heard the word of this liberating God and have entered into the same covenant.

But at the time that we are speaking of, in the original impetus of God's liberating activity, being a part of a real history and not some artificial history, there were some groups that even the Israelite prophets and the leaders of that people did not recognize as being in a dispossessed condition. Two of these, of course, were their own slaves and the women. This was a society characterized by patriarchy and by slavery so that although people were warned to be kind to the animals, to the strangers within their gates, and to the women (sometimes the list went in about that order), the idea that women and the strangers and the slaves also had the same identical claim on the liberation and fulfillment that God makes possible to all people began to dawn very slowly.

But by the time of the ministry of Jesus Christ, in which we believe this liberating God actually came among us in the fullness of human life, by this time, a quantitative leap was taken; and we began to read names like Priscilla as one of the leaders of the early church and that wonderful woman named Lydia, dealer in purple, who was a leader of the early church as recorded in the book of Acts. And we read in St. Paul that it is the intention of God in Jesus Christ that all people should be equal, that there is now no longer to be Jew or Gentile, barbarian or Scythian, male or female. Now this word has gotten out. We can't keep it a secret. It has been heard by people all over the world. It has been heard by the poor, the broken hearted, those suffering various forms of captivity. And it has been heard by women. I think our particular era is characterized especially by the time in which the poorest and most dispossessed groups in the world are beginning to hear this gospel and respond to it in ways that we will find eventually irrepressible.

I move now from the truths of theology and biblical theology, especially, to what may be my own condition and possibly mistaken interpretation. I do not think that those views of the liberation of women which suggest that liberation requires escape from history or from nature are anything that can be reconciled with the biblical perspective. Anyone who wants to look into the history of this tactic could simply read all of those endless sermons written by the church fathers to the nuns and sisters and virgins in the early history of the church.

Of course, there was a way to escape oppression by your husband; that was not to have a husband. Celibacy, virginity was the answer. There was a way to escape the alleged sorrow of Eve; that was, of course, to have no children. I think we have to insist, however,

against this particular deviation, that God has not created nature as a trap; that nature itself is not sexist; that what we see around us is a human distortion of that original mutuality which God intended for all people, a human distortion entering in through sin taking its toll on the way we lead our lives and the way we relate to each other.

We do not have to opt out of human relationships, opt out of the particularity of being a male or being a female, in order to savor and enjoy this original mutuality which God created and gave us as one of His most precious gifts and which we believe God is restoring to us in the grace which comes to us through Jesus Christ. Nature is not sexist; and, therefore, liberation does not require saying "No" to nature. Salvation is the restoration to us of our original nature, and the phrase that in Jesus Christ there is neither male nor female in Galatians does not, I believe, mean there is no more difference. It means rather there is no more domination, misuse, manipulation, or alienation between the sexes. There is the restoration of that beautiful form of mutuality which can exist only between people who are really different, who really know and enjoy their difference. It does not mean leaving behind the specificity of what it means to be a man or what it means to be a woman; rather, it means enjoying that in its fullness including childbirth for women. Equality does not mean identity. Being equal does not mean negating the specific qualities which God has endowed us with any more than we hope racial equality means everybody has to be white. We enjoy and affirm the heterogeneity of the colors with which God has so richly blessed us in the world, and we know that equality does not have to mean the blanking out of that richness and of that diversity.

So I believe that we have what I call the prophetic model of the biblical vision operating here which has these three great moments. The first moment is God's intention and God's creation of an original mutuality. The second is the alienation and the brokenness, the suspicion and distrust, the domination and subordination which creeps in through human sin and disobedience. And the third is the restoration of love and mutuality which begins with God's first action in human history which culminates for us in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ and which will see its final fulfillment in the Kingdom of God which is even now dawning in the midst of us.

What then should be the response of men to this newest expression of the liberation vision and struggle which God has placed in all human hearts? I long for the day when I as a man can be fully liberated from the kind of distorted and twisted view of what it means to be a man inflicted on us by our distorted culture. I long for the day when I don't have to be the victim of what somebody thinks it means to be masculine or manly, the day when I can express just as much tenderness and intuition and feeling as any woman. I feel cheated because I have been in part a victim of the twisted, perverted notion of what it means to be a woman and what it means to be a man which has been inflicted on us, not by God's creation of us, but by the twisted and broken notions sifted to us by our culture, especially through advertising and the socialization of little boys and little girls.

We need to come to an end to this false and impoverished sexual division of labor so that we can not only look forward to the day when women can help men to feel but also in which men can help women to feel; not only when men can help women to think, but also in which women can help men to think. This is why I am a little suspicious of this idea of complementarity and prefer the word mutuality. Complementarity seems to be based on the notion that there are some kinds of mysterious, inherent qualities like more intuition or more feeling on the part of women, or whatever the opposite would be on the part of men. I prefer mutuality as the relationship in which God has created men and women and the relationship that He is, I believe, restoring to us. I am sorry and I am a little angry that the macho man image, that I was in part brought up on, has cheated me in some very important ways from moments of intimacy and closeness with my children. I'm angry that I am not young enough to have appreciated and participated in some of the much more mutual kinds of marriages and arrangements that I see among my younger friends and colleagues. I am grateful to God for this movement, for a movement which is not just liberating women but liberating men from this kind of strait-jacket notion of what it means to be a man, allowing us to express what in our finest and deepest moments we know is there within us, too, and which we can only express as both of the sexes are truly liberated by the love of God and the power and grace of God from the distorted and hateful kinds of relationships into which we've been placed.

Sexism, in all of its worst expressions, has created a vast structure of unpaid labor. The home support system is something without which most of us as men could not possibly work. I do not believe that any kind of legal remedy for this, including the Equal Rights Amendment, can succeed fully in liberating either men or women from this structure until we have a new vision of what family life should be like, a vision of mutuality, in family life.

What would real Christian mutuality mean in your home and in mine? Would it mean that the woman would be liberated by some kind of legal mechanism to go out and work, and that she would then still have to come home in the evening and do all of the cleaning, cooking, child care, and all the rest? As one of my friends says, equal opportunity for employment doesn't mean much for a woman because a woman needs a wife at home. We ought to be reminded also that in periods before the industrial revolution, men and women worked together in the home and in the fields. The separation of men and women from each other in the process of human work is a relatively new phenomenon in human life as is the whole notion of a full-time wife and mother which most cultures and most periods and most of human history have not known about. But I don't think we have to go back or need to go back to some kind of romantic notion of the way it once was. As Christians, we have a vision of a kingdom which is not of this world but which is breaking in at this very moment into our lives, into our families, and into our households which is not based on some distorted division of labor but is based on the vision of mutuality. I believe this kind of family, if we could possibly begin to live those lives with our husbands and

with our wives and with our children, would be a healthier, saner, and infinitely more Christian family. So what I am talking about far transcends anything a constitutional amendment can give us. I'm in favor of the Equal Rights Amendment, very much in favor of it. I live in a state which has already passed something like the Equal Rights Amendment, Massachusetts; and I can tell you something about how it's working if you want, but this is really more. What I am talking about here is something far more, far deeper than that, a transformation of our notion of what it means to be men and women in the light of God's intention for us.

Now finally, we surely need to say in a conference on Help For Families that the greatest threat that families face today in the world is the threat of war and hunger and unemployment and debt. I work in a country now in which the children are out at six o'clock in the morning selling Chiclets on the streets of Mexico City, in which a million fathers have left their families to cross the border into the United States in a desperate search for some kind of work, in which poverty and hunger and disease are breaking up families.

Let's get our enemies straight: it isn't a woman's movement that's destroying families in the world today, it's injustice and war and depression and debt and hunger. The thing that Southern Baptists and American Baptists and all Christian people could do for families more than anything else is not to concentrate simply on that little unit of the family itself but on those terrible conditions which destroy and tear apart families. This means, I'm afraid, that we live in a world in which, although sexism and certainly racism are important and destructive forms of division, the real underlying divisions are those between the haves and the have-nots, between those who own and those who have only their own work to auction off, between the privileged and the disinherited, between the overfed and the hungry. And how can we make it any clearer than it is that the Bible is not neutral about this issue? The Bible is not neutral about the poor and the rich, the oppressed and the oppressor. It is one-sidedly, consistently, and always for the poor. It's a message for everyone but principally for the poor, a message of hope and of good news.

Therefore, I have my doubts about a certain kind of middle class feminism which seems to me to be trying mainly just to get a bigger piece of the privilege of the ill-gotten rewards of a system which is inherently unjust to the poor and the broken hearted, which can only eventually consolidate the power of ruling elites. I hope that women have a much larger vision, a much more ample vision than simply ERA. ERA is the least of it. We need a vision which goes beyond the simple equality of women within some kind of an unjust and oppressive society into which this mutuality which we are now discovering between men and women, mutual respect, helpfulness, and justice, can be extended to other groups; because what we see now is the use of sex and of race as a way to divide and conquer, to maintain oppression, to perpetuate power, to set group against group.

I'd like to close with a critique of one sentence of the women's movement which I suppose I'm supposed to be defending today, although certainly it needs no defense from me. My only criticism of the women's

movement is that it is too timid. It's vision is not quite cosmic enough. The changes that are envisioned are not sufficiently sweeping. So I would call upon all of you who are women and all of you who are men who find yourselves also caught up in this vision of liberation to go beyond the timid and modest goals of simply including women in positions of power and privilege to a vision of the world which is more in keeping with the Kingdom of God.

So may I close by reading a song, a song sung by a woman, a song sung by a woman called Mary? There are some scholars who tell us that this song existed before it was placed in the mouth of Mary, that it was the song of Maccabean rebels, a hundred and fifty years before the time of Jesus. Others claim that this is the song which originally began with Mary herself. But I think we could do no better than to think of this particular woman.

My heart sings out to the Lord, and my spirit leaps up to God, my liberator.

For he has seen the low status of his handmaiden, and now just watch, because all future generations will call me blessed.

For he who is mighty has done wonderful things for me.

His name is the holy one. His mercy is showered on those who stand in awe of him from generation to generation.

He has shown the power of his arm and has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He has hurled the mighty ones off of their throne and raised up those of low degree.

He has filled the hungry with good things and he has sent the rich empty away.

I call on you not to be closet, death-of-God

theologians, brothers and sisters, believing that God has died or left the world. I call upon you to affirm that this God is still active, is still present, and is still doing the same thing He was doing then, casting down the mighty, lifting up the poor, restoring us to love and to mutuality.

Thank you.

Phyllis Schlafly

Mr. Chairman, and good morning, dear friends. The subject assigned today is, indeed, an important one: the women's movement and family life. It is important that we, first of all, define the term. I would not agree that there is just *the* women's movement. In order to make sure we know what we are talking about, I will first of all describe what I think could be more appropriately called, the women's liberation movement. It could be defined as the movement of women who have, in a general way, been working for the Equal Rights Amendment.

This movement was born in the mid-1960s with the publication of Betty Friedan's book, *The Feminine Mystique*. This movement accomplished the task of getting the Equal Rights Amendment through Congress in 1972. It reached its peak in November 1977 in Houston at the National Conference of the Commission on International Women's Year. Since that date, it's no longer a nebulous thing. It is a very precise movement

which can be definitely defined with particular people and particular goals.

Gathered at that Houston Conference were all the leaders of the women's liberation movement. Members of the IWY Commission included the head of the National Organization for Women (NOW), the head of the Women's Political Caucus, the head of ERAmerica (the lobbying group for E.R.A.), the head of the Gay Task Force, the person who put E.R.A. through the Senate, the person who put E.R.A. through the House, Gloria Steinem, and Bella Abzug was the chairman. These were all presidential appointees, and they gathered together in Houston. They had five million dollars of federal funds to spend and they passed twenty-five resolutions, which represent the goals of the women's liberation movement.

The four "hot button" issues (the term used by *Newsweek* magazine)—their most important goals—were ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, government-funded abortion, lesbian privileges to be recognized with the same dignity as husbands and wives and with the right to teach in schools, and massive, universal, federal child care (which *Time* magazine estimated would cost us an additional twenty-five billion dollars a year). There were other resolutions, too, but the four "hot button" issues were admitted by everybody—the media plus both sides—as being the main ones.

These are the goals and those are the persons of the women's liberation movement in our country today. It is my belief, based on working with this movement for quite a number of years, that the movement is having a very adverse effect on family life, that it is a major cause of divorce today, and that it is highly detrimental to our country and to our families. This morning I will discuss how the women's liberation movement is an attack on the moral, the legal, and the economic integrity of the family unit.

First of all, let us consider its effect on the *moral* integrity of the family. For a woman to function effectively in the family unit, it is necessary for her to believe in the worth of her position, to have a certain amount of self-esteem, to believe that her task as wife and mother is worthy, is honorable, is useful, and is fulfilling. The fundamental attitude which is preached by the women's liberation movement takes all that away from women. I have listened to thousands of their speeches and, basically, those speeches inculcate in women a negative attitude toward life, toward the family, toward their country, and most of all toward themselves. It was best summed up in an advertisement developed by the principal women's liberation organization, the National Organization for Women. It was run as a spot announcement on many television stations and as ads in many magazines and newspapers. This advertisement shows a darling, curly headed child. The caption under the picture is: This normal, healthy child was born with a handicap; it was born female.

Think about that. That is the starting assumption of the women's liberation movement: that somebody, it isn't clear who, God or the establishment or a conspiracy of male chauvinist pigs, has dealt women a foul blow by making them female; that it is up to society to remedy these centuries of oppression. So we

hear endless lingo about oppression, about bondage, and about slavery. Women are told that they are not even persons in our society. They are told that they are second-class citizens. I have given speeches where women have been picketing up and down outside, wearing placards saying: "I am a second-class citizen." I feel so sorry for women who are deliberately inculcating this inferiority complex. Women are not second-class citizens in our society. Whatever women may have been hundreds of years ago, in other lands or in other countries, that is not the condition of women in our country today.

The thesis of the speeches which women's liberation movement speakers are giving runs basically like this: "Sister, when you wake up in the morning, the cards are stacked against you. You won't get a job, and if you get one, it won't be a good one. You'll never be paid what you're really worth. You won't be promoted as you deserve to be. You simply will never get a fair break in our society. And if you get married, your husband will treat you like a servant, like a chattel (that's one of their favorite words), and life is nothing but a bunch of dirty diapers and dirty dishes."

It's no wonder that women have problems when they listen to that line. The women's liberation movement literature is the greatest putdown of women that anything could possibly be. It's difficult to pick yourself up off the floor after you have listened to those tirades about how women are kept in bondage and enslaved, and how the home is a cage or a prison from which women must be liberated. This line creates a natural hostility between men and women. No longer are men people with whom we work in harmony. Men are the enemy who must make it up to us for these centuries of injustice.

Whatever lowly status women may endure in other lands, that is not the situation of American women. It is also true that nobody in this world who wakes up in the morning with a chip on your shoulder, whether it is man or woman, is going to have a happy or fulfilling life, or get ahead in this world.

This is not to say that there aren't any problems. The world is full of problems. I don't know anybody who doesn't have problems. Women face all kinds of problems: husbands out of a job, handicapped children, senile parents, or not enough money. The world is full of problems. But you don't solve your problems by waking up in the morning with a chip on your shoulder, believing and telling yourself, hour after hour, that you've been oppressed, and that it is up to somebody to remedy years of injustice.

After having flattened women by spreading this negative attitude, the women's liberation movement then comes along and offers its solution. The solution can best be described as the "new narcissism." You remember the story of Narcissus: the Greek youth who fell in love with his own image in the reflecting pool and finally died of unrequited desire.

The women's liberation movement teaches women this fundamental approach to life: "Sister, you must seek your own self-fulfillment over every other value." It's a free country for those who choose to establish their scale of values that way. Some women make that

choice, and they are free to do so if that is what they want. But I simply have to tell women that *that* attitude, that choice of goals, is *not* compatible with a happy marriage. It is *not* compatible with a successful family life, and it is *not* compatible with motherhood.

In order to live in harmony in family life, with a man who's been brought up in another environment, you have to make social compromises. That's what marriage is all about. One person can't have his or her way all the time. You have to make those social compromises, and most of us think that marriage is worth the price.

Motherhood must be a self-sacrificing role, a role of dedication and service. The mother must be able to subordinate her self-fulfillment and her desire for a career to the well-being of her children so that she can answer her child's call any hour of the day or night. This is what marriage and motherhood are all about, and it is not compatible with the dogmas of the women's liberation movement.

The women's liberation movement preaches that the greatest oppression of women is that women get pregnant and men don't get pregnant, and so women must be relieved of this oppression! The second greatest oppression of women, according to the liberation movement, is that society expects mothers to look after their babies; that therefore society reduces women to this menial, tedious, tiresome, confining, repetitious chore of looking after babies.

Well, I suppose it's all in your point of view. Many of us believe that the ability to participate in the creation of human life is the great gift that God gave to women. The task of taking care of babies, despite its tedious drudgery, is better than most of the jobs of the world. Women should find out how exhausting most of the rest of the jobs of the world are. Besides, a mother has something to show for her efforts after twenty years. Instead of just a watch for showing up at a job for twenty years, you've got a living, breathing human being—a good citizen, a wonderful human being you've given to this world.

But the women's liberation movement is causing wives with relatively good families to walk out. Women's lib is a dogma which is especially contagious among women in their forties and fifties, especially after their children are in school. Wives who "catch" women's liberation are walking out on marriage, not because of the traditional problems in marriage such as alcohol, or money, or adultery—but just to seek their own self-fulfillment.

I speak almost every week on college campuses and I see these abandoned teenagers. Young women come up to me and say: "My mother has left. What can you say to my mother, who has brought up four children and now thinks her whole life is wasted." The women who "catch" women's liberation are walking out. It makes no difference whether they're northern and eastern liberal homes or southern and western conservative homes. Once they get this message, they go out into emptiness, abandoning their families.

This women's liberation dogma is also very contagious among the young college women. They have bought a large part of it. The biggest thing that hits you

on the college campuses today is that the educated young women of our nation are rejecting marriage and motherhood. Most important, they're rejecting motherhood. And they're saying that, even if they happen to have a baby or two, they're not going to take care of that baby because they don't want it to interfere with their careers. I have young men coming to me now saying they want to marry a young woman, but she tells them very frankly: "If we have a baby, I'm not going to let that baby interfere with my career. I see nothing the matter with putting the baby in some child-care facility at the age of three or four weeks." Remember, this is not a matter of need; these are not hungry people. These are a class of women who expect to have two degrees, but they don't want that baby to interfere with their careers. Of course, my answer to those young men is, "Forget her." A woman who's unwilling to take care of her own baby is a pathetic sight; there's nothing in marriage for that. This is what the women's liberation movement is doing to the young women of our nation.

Now let's talk about the *legal* attack by the women's liberation movement on the family unit. This aspect is best localized in the Equal Rights Amendment, although there are many other attacks, too.

The Equal Rights Amendment will require us to make all federal and state laws and regulations sex-neutral—internally sex-neutral as between male and female. Therefore, it is obvious that we could never again have a law that says "husband must support his wife." Such a law is sex discriminatory. But that law is a good law. It is society's answer to the fact that only women have babies and that men don't have babies. It is society's recognition of the fact that we have not discovered a better way for the care and nurturing of babies than to provide a full-time homemaker. But the Equal Rights Amendment makes that law unconstitutional.

There are today, of course, some husbands and fathers who don't obey the law, just as there are criminals who disobey other laws. But there are today forty million husbands who are supporting their wives. Why would anybody want a constitutional amendment that makes it unconstitutional to have a law that says "husband must support his wife"? That law proclaims the duty of the marriage contract, the husband's duty to support the family unit. But the Equal Rights Amendment would make such a law unconstitutional. Our country has a whole array of laws, mostly at the state level, which give certain rights to the wife in recognition of the fact that she is the homemaker and that she pursues an honorable occupation. But the Equal Rights Amendment would wipe out all those laws which give certain special benefits to the wife in recognition of her role as homemaker.

There are many different ways that "equality" in the marriage can be defined. Nobody knows how equality in the family situation under the support law will be defined by the Supreme Court if the Equal Rights Amendment is ever ratified. But I can tell you what the leading E.R.A. lawyers want as the definition of equality in the marriage contract under the Equal Rights Amendment, because I have debated this with them. They want the version which imposes on one

spouse the obligation to support the other spouse *only* if the other spouse is indigent, incapacitated, or about to go on welfare. I want you to think about the social consequences of establishing this as social policy. I'm a perfectly healthy woman. I can't say that I have been incapacitated in my life except for the week after I had each baby. All those other years of my married life and my motherhood then, under the E.R.A. equality concept, my husband would have no duty or obligation to provide any financial support. That is really what the ERAers are after. What that would do would be to take away from the child its right to have a mother in the home.

I do not believe that a wife's right to support, or a mother's duty to care and nurture her children, should be dependent upon her inability to get a job in the labor force, or her physical incapacity. We believe in motherhood. We believe that children need mothers. We don't want to turn them over to institutions for their care and upbringing, especially in their formative years. But remember, under the Equal Rights Amendment, you can't have any rational recognition of the differences between men and women or respect the tradition of supporting the mother in the home. That would be wiped out by E.R.A.

The drive for the Equal Rights Amendment is an attempt to wipe out all laws that give benefits to wives, mothers, and widows. The state of Florida has a law which gives a little property tax exemption to widows. That is sex discriminatory. Of course, E.R.A. will not reduce taxes: you know it won't do that. But Florida gives a widow a little property tax exemption, having made a rational deduction that a widow is a class of person to whom Florida wants to give a helping hand. Would you believe: the women's liberation movement took that law all the way to the Supreme Court to get it knocked out as sex discriminatory! This is exactly the type of law which gets wiped out by E.R.A. However, the Supreme Court held that, under our present Constitution, the law is constitutional. A state can make a rational determination to give a widow a little helping hand.

Of course, this law would be unconstitutional under E.R.A. Why would anybody want to tie our hands so that we can no longer give certain helps to the wife, the mother, and the widow, in order to compensate for the natural differences that women have babies, that women don't have the same physical strength as men, and that women live longer than men? There *are* these differences between the sexes. And we should be entitled to have laws that respect those differences.

The women's liberation movement is also an attack on the economic integrity of the family unit. Of course, the biggest attack on the economic integrity of the family unit is inflation, and perhaps that will be addressed in other sessions because that is not peculiar to the women's liberation movement. But the women's liberation movement has developed specific economic attacks on the integrity of the family. You need to consider the question whether we as a nation want to adopt the social policy of driving all the wives out of the home into the work force. *That* is what the women's liberation movement is doing. And I'll give you two examples of how they are trying to do that.

We have federal laws today requiring equal pay for equal work which we all support. Sex discrimination in hiring and promotions is against the law everywhere in our country. But that doesn't satisfy the women's liberation movement. The Office of Economic Opportunity in Washington is pushing reverse discrimination for women to get women in the jobs in place of men. I talk to personnel managers all over the country who say, "I feel like a dog interviewing men for these jobs when I know the government has ordered me to hire a quota of females." I have friends who tell me, "My husband has been told, 'Don't expect a promotion for ten years because the government tells us we have to give all the promotions to women.'"

Many of these affirmative-action jobs result in two-income families. They are driving out of existence the one-income couple: that is, the traditional family where the husband is trying to provide for his family and the wife is caring for her children. That is what reverse discrimination to achieve a statistical quota for women is doing to our country today.

Now let's be very clear. I believe in equal employment opportunity regardless of race, creed, color, sex, or whatever; but I do not believe in reverse discrimination to give the less-well-qualified woman the job in place of the more-qualified man in remedy for alleged discrimination 25 years ago. That is what is pushed by the women's liberation movement, and that is what is being pushed by the federal government today. This is a direct attack on the economic integrity of the traditional one-income family where the husband provides the income and the mother looks after her babies.

Another attack on the economic integrity of the family can be seen in the new proposals to change Social Security. Social Security is one of the most pro-women institutions this country has ever had. Women pay approximately twenty-five percent of the taxes into Social Security, and they draw out approximately fifty percent of the benefits. For many years, the working woman got a higher benefit than working men. The homemaker has always drawn benefits under Social Security even though she never paid taxes into the system. Why? Because our society recognizes the value and worth of that role. The women's liberation movement doesn't like that. They don't like it that the homemaker draws Social Security benefits even though she may have been in the labor force only a few years, because the women's liberation movement considers the work of the homemaker in the home worthless since it's not paid; they value everything only in money. So last month the Social Security Administration came out with a 323 page volume of proposals for changing the Social Security system.

There are basically three different proposals. The bottom line of all these options is that they are designed to punish what we would call the single-income couple—the traditional family where the husband is the wage earner and the wife is the homemaker.

It's all very complicated, and you have to study the tables carefully to find out the effect of the proposals. But when you get down to what it really means in cold cash, it means that the one-income couple (that is,

where the homemaker is in the home) will be cut in cash benefits fifteen percent, or the one-income couple will be hit with an additional federal tax during his working years of approximately \$1,000 a year. This is the way women's liberation movement plans to drive the single-income couple out of our society today.

Now the whole volume is a masterpiece of semantic trickery. It says "reductions are provided . . ." Well, I don't know how you "provide" reductions. After you study the tables, you find that "providing reductions" means cutting the cash. Let me give you some of the figures. A one-income couple whose monthly Social Security benefits today, under the present system, would be \$288 a month, would be cut to \$244. A one-income couple which would receive \$528 a month under the present system would be cut to \$464. A one-income couple that would receive \$648 under the present system would be cut to \$544.

As I said, the volume is a masterpiece of semantic trickery. It talks about the homemaker with the belittling word "dependency," as though there's something wrong and servile about being dependent. The volume tells the homemaker she should have Social Security "in her own right." I think few wives would opt for that type of a change if they knew that having Social Security in her own name means she will be cut in cash up to \$100 a month. The report slyly implies that these changes have something to do with eliminating sex discrimination. There is *no* sex discrimination in Social Security. Supreme Court decisions have eliminated all sex discrimination.

So these are some of the ways that the women's liberation movement is pushing an attack on the economic integrity of the family. It is an assault on the family unit, morally, legally and economically. But, fortunately, the women's liberation movement is *not* the only women's movement in our country today.

There is another women's movement. You don't hear much about it, but I believe it is more powerful. It is the Positive Woman's movement: the woman who knows who she is. The Positive Woman is not searching for her identity; she knows God made her; she knows why she's here, and she has her scale of values in order. This movement was born in 1972 when some of us realized we had to protect ourselves against the takeaway of the legal rights of the homemaker that was embodied in the Equal Rights Amendment. This movement showed itself at that marvelous Pro-Family Rally in Houston where 15,000 people came at their own expense (not like the other one where people came at the taxpayers' expense). Our movement of Positive Women came of age last Thursday night in Washington, D.C., when we celebrated, at a marvelous dinner in Washington, the expiration of the seven years that was set as the time period for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment.

We had a beautiful gathering there. Women and men came from at least forty-five states. They represented all the faiths. We had Baptists and Presbyterians and Methodists and Mormons and Catholics and Episcopalians and Jews and every denomination. We had people who are very strong in their own individual faith, but who recognize that we have a community of interest in terms of respecting the family unit.

We had people of all ideologies. We had Republicans and Democrats, and conservatives and liberals, and blacks and whites, and rich and poor, and married and single. But all our positive people recognize that the family is what we're really for. This was a tremendous victory of the Positive Women who have been fighting for the last seven years against the expenditure of millions of federal tax dollars which have been used to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment. Our force of Positive Women has shown that we can take on the greatest type of a David-and-Goliath fight that this country has ever seen, and that we can defeat the negative E.R.A. forces.

Our Positive Women are not seeking their own self-fulfillment as the highest value—as the women's liberation movement tries to teach women. Our Positive Women are dedicated to service, to faith and trust in God, to the family, and to this great country that we have been fortunate enough to live in. We are not seeking to get our bit at the price of taking benefits away from others, as the women's liberation movement is doing. We have taken on these great odds, believing as in II Chronicles, "Be not afraid, nor dismayed by reason of the great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God's."

We have fought the greatest political forces that anybody has ever fought in our country in this century. We have won, with God's help, because we are Positive Women. We don't wake up in the morning mad at anybody. We have women who are talented, articulate, capable. We have lady legislators and successful career women. We have some who are solely successful career women, others who are wives and mothers but who are also successful in an auxiliary career. The great thing about a woman's role is that she can have different careers at different times in her life. But our Positive Women have their scale of values in order: no matter what they may seek for their own self-fulfillment, they know that the family is more important.

Our women are, I believe, the greatest positive force in our country today. We believe that we can do great things. Now that we move into the more positive phase of our activity, we will work for the restoration of the family unit, which is coming apart at the seams in many areas. We want to show women how, in this great country, women can do whatever they want, and have all kinds of exciting lives; but for a woman to be a successful wife and mother, during that period of her life, marriage and motherhood must come first over selfish values.

In conclusion, I share with you the comment of a French writer who traveled our country in another century and wrote many commentaries which are still studied in our schools. When he came to the conclusion of his travels, Alexis de Tocqueville wrote:

"I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her commodious harbors and ample rivers, but it was not there. I sought for the greatness of America in her fertile lands and boundless prairies, but it was not there. It was not until I went into the churches of America and found her pulpits aflame with righteousness that I understood the secret of her genius and her power.

America is great because she is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, she will cease to be great."

The Positive Women of America are pledging themselves to do our part to make sure that America continues to be good.

SINGLENESS AS FAMILY

Sarah Frances Anders

Introduction: The Recent Revolution

One of the several revolutions we have been witnessing during our generation, even in this decade, has produced the cognitive phenomenon which prompts the inclusion of this topic on the program of such a national seminar on family life. Some of us in the fields of behavioral science and religion have been using the concept of the "single family" for over a decade, beginning coincidentally when singles or the maritally unattached began their doubling pattern in our American population.

However, you could say that the biological Doctrine of Original Singleness precedes the theological Doctrine of Original Sin! Adam and Eve, created through some mysterious divine and biological process, were born in singleness ready for mating but needing divine guidance to prepare for familism in lieu of Sociology 337, Marriage and the Family! So it has continued to be the universal pattern of humans: to be born in singleness to a family that will condition toward a pro-family adult experience. It is a radical social and biological doctrine: this process is not just a survival kit for the infant and young human, but more importantly, it is the root source for the family as an institution and for society as a system of ongoing relationships.

Singleness may be our first marital status, but family is our primal group experience; and I would suggest that we never outgrow nor outlive the impact of each on our self-identity. Yet singleness in most cultural settings, particularly our Judeo-Christian heritage, has been repressed as an acceptable, yea normal, lifestyle for young or middle adulthood, and only tolerated for late adulthood as a necessity. The Talmud leaves little room for doubt when it states, "Whosoever remains unmarried does not deserve to be called a man." Our own Deist Ben Franklin referred to any unmarried person as "the odd half of a pair of broken scissors!" Non-marriage has historically been one of the more visible deviances, in some instances to be equated with a harelip, retardation, or leprosy. The "unattached" individual has been set apart from the normalcy of "family-ness," viewed often as opposing and even threatening to the institutional family.

Singleness: An Increasing Reality and Option

The "great war" for the security of the nation might have been the War Between the States twelve decades ago; but the great war for the security of the institutions of marriage and family began almost four decades ago and echoed through two lesser ones, globally speaking.

But the three wars of our lifetime have been near equal in the thrust of our people toward singleness as both a circumstance and an option. 1940 was the last favorable year for the marriage of Americans as reflected in the sex ratio—all but one of the 48 states had a balance between the sexes, most of them with even some male edge. But war casualties plus the negative factors of the technological revolution have overridden the positive potential of a variety of marriage-related factors to produce a deficit of marriageable males. Less than a dozen states have favorable sex ratios now. If we demand marriage as the ultimate life experience for all persons, it can be attained only in the frequent and general turnover of partners.

Over two decades of successful technique for pregnancy planning are behind us and the apparent conception rate has remained favorable to the male: between 120 to 180 for every conceived female embryo. But predominantly male spontaneous abortions dropped the sex ratio to 105:100 at birth, followed by life-long tendencies for the male to predecease the female. Besides being innately less durable, he will abound in hazardous occupations and warfare, commit two and one-half times as many suicides and be successfully victimized by three times as many homicidal attacks. Men will live longer if they choose marriage and family as their lifestyle; yet a greater proportion of men than women will never marry. On the other hand, a greater number of women will have had at least one marital experience even though they outnumber men by seven million!

The paradox is simply this: Americans are both the most married and the most single of any nation of people. We have one of the highest marriage rates among advanced nation states. Even though we also have one of the highest divorce rates in the world, one-third of these divorced "singles" will remarry within a year; one-half within three years. Divorce for Americans is a rejection of a spouse, not of marriage or family living. In fact, the non-marrieds I have met in seminars often seem more pro-family than many marrieds! Although most widows are older by fifteen to twenty years than divorcees and twenty-five to thirty years older than most never marrieds, they have a less favorable sex ratio for re-marriage. The vast majority of once-married males start restructured families and eighty percent of older Americans live in "family-type" settings, whether married or single.

The reality of contemporary culture is simply this: we are having a growing number of "marriage" periods and increasing experiences of "singleness." At the same time, we are aware of the tendency of most Americans to look for "family" in whatever marital state they find themselves. Indeed, the variety of family patterns for the single population may well exceed those variegated structures and roles of the contemporary conjugal family.

As is often the case, the government in general and the Census Bureau in particular have been slower to identify the "single family" as a viable economic and social option than some of us in the behavioral sciences. In 1950, the census was still continuing to distinguish between a *household* and a *family*. One was a dwelling unit, the other was a tightly prescribed marital unit.

A family was two or more individuals with blood, marriage, or adoptive relationships living together in the household. Most kinds of maritally unattached persons living apart from families were lumped under the rather offensive label of "unrelated individuals" or as simply "household units." A decade later, 1960, Uncle Sam began to speak of "primary" and "secondary" families. "Primary" units were conjugal families in their own households; all other families were regarded as "secondary" or "sub-families." But the *single* was still non-family: there remained that forlorn category of the "unrelated individual." Then, in 1970, the census began to humanize singleness; and the non-married persons living apart from either parents or former spouses began to be "primary individuals" if they lived alone or "heads of households" if they were the breadwinners of an incomplete nuclear family. Now *those* are more respectable labels!

My own use of the concept of "single family" developed in the context of teaching marriage and the family for over two decades and observing that the family orientation of the never-marrieds and once-marrieds was little different from that of my married students. It is a comprehensive term for both a census reality, that is, a household pattern, and for a special kind of family pattern.

Today, there are more single units in America than there are couple units: this could easily be a dramatic first for the history of humankind. Fifty-two million singles well exceed the forty-seven million conjugal or couple units, and a more significant observation is that the number of non-marrieds living alone has increased fifty percent during the 1970s. They constitute twenty-one percent of all U.S. households today. In rank order, these "single families" are forty-four percent widowed, thirty percent never married, seventeen percent divorced and nine percent separated. By 1985, the prediction is that one-fourth of all households will be composed of single families.

The Historical American Tension:

Individualism vs. Familism

Inherent in our cultural origins has been the tension between individualism and familism. The three overlapping, simultaneous movements that precipitated our settlement and shaped our American Dream fostered rugged individualism, hard work, frugality. The spirit of capitalism with its emphasis on free enterprise and the rise of a middle class rewarded the *sole* proprietor, the *individual* who dared to defy feudalism and go it alone. The democratic surge manifested in new forms of government and the renaissance of the arts emphasized the reason and autonomy of the *individual*. The Protestant revolution further spotlighted the singularity of human worth and the separation of institutions/persons. *But*: the agrarian economy dictated familism and fertility: it encouraged the practice of household-centered life and team effort. Out of this tension emerged an idealized family in which individual members had the autonomy to become all they could be, making independent life choices. Ideal concepts, nevertheless, are usually tinged with some degree of mythology and seldom in full practice. The ideal family for our forebears was the husband, wife

and numerous offspring; a two-generation, first degree kinship unit separated geographically from the extended family. There were at least three implicit myths about that conjugal unit: (1) husband and wife can meet all of each other's needs—no human relationship can expect to accomplish this; (2) parents are all-sufficient for their children in care and socialization—even the colonial family could not promise that both parents would live until the maturity of all the children or even until the end of childbearing, nor were they able to provide total and perfect role models for the American Dream; and (3) the male is the *only* adequate head of the household—which put unusual strain on some colonial families and which now would put about seventeen million households in the U.S. at incredible disadvantage!

Obviously then to our forebears, rugged individualism did not equate with rugged singleness! The early Massachusetts colony and others started the verbal branding of unmarried females as "stale maids" or "maiden ladies"; they pitied them while suspecting the bachelors, who were taxed doubly and required to report in to the magistrate every fortnight to give an account of their activities. Women who were not claimed in matrimony were liabilities because they were not "hitting on all their cylinders"—they were intended by the Maker to be both reproductive and economically productive. Not to marry and have children was to defy the scriptural admonition about fertility: Be fruitful and multiply. Someone has recently proposed that we might soon have to replace the Old Testament admonition with a New Testament Christian Medal of Honor. Married couples may choose to reinterpret that mandate to mean spiritual, not biological fertility! But 18th and 19th century men who did not use their initiative and choose a wife were obviously flaunting their irresponsibility in a family oriented society, as well as threatening the chastity of married and unmarried women alike!

All of this accrues to indicate that singleness was viewed as a limited, but necessary antecedent to marriage or remarriage. Today we propose a new perspective: it is a social status complete in its own right, possessing its own characteristics distinct from marrieds. Singles are not only *on* their way to creating "familyness" . . . they are *already* "families."

Yes, there are many barriers to singles being families; but only somewhat more so than marrieds being families in the Christian meaning of the word. Not the least of these have been the contemporary stereotypes that shoved aside such earlier labels as "spinster," "unclaimed blessing," Beau Brummel, lady of the night, cavalier or monk. Replacing the supernormal-subnormal examples of singleness found in religious celibates or the physically and mentally unfit are the equally stereotypical, polar options of the "70s"—the swingles and the losers. Thanks to Helen Gurley Brown, Hugh Hefner and other free spirits of the pen a swingle image has emerged who acts like Joe Namath, looks like Julie Christie, and spends money like Jackie Onassis. In the *Lonely Loser*, we found the prototype spelled out in the drama *Sheila Levine Is Dead and Living in New York*: the young woman who goes home for her younger sister's wedding, finds herself the center

of interest with the recurring, probing question, "Now, Sheila, *when* are you going to get married?" and reacts in despondency with an attempted suicide that night. The greatest disservice of these modern labels lies not in illogical generalization from a small segment of the singles, but in the denial of a greater truth: most singles have responsible, contributing, stable, and creative lifestyles; i.e., they have everything we would call "family living" except a spouse.

Many singles find themselves tilting at the windmills of an assumed traditional value orientation, which includes these sample half truths or untruths:

1. Marriage is the only meaningful lifestyle.
2. Singleness is always a transitional experience before or between marriages.
3. Sex is as essential to normalcy as food, drink, exercise, and rest; so a belief in Christian chastity dooms the single to frustrated repression or guilt-ridden sexual encounters.
4. Singleness can result from "God's accidents," but the single by choice must surely be unattractive, too bright, or handicapped.
5. The non-marrieds are irresponsible, unreliable employees, yet unweaned from their parents.

Taking the time to invalidate these myths would only insult your intelligence; they say more about the adherent than they ever could about the non-married.

Patterns of Single Family Living

At last report, only seven percent of our population are living in the traditional family pattern of husband-breadwinner, wife-homemaker, and two children under eighteen years. Fifty-three percent of our household families are non-traditional married families then. By 1976, we had fifty plus percent of all households with only one or two persons—mostly single. What can we say then about the single family?

The Ever-Single

Twenty-five million American adults, mostly in their 20s and 30s, have never lived in a traditional conjugal relationship: about one-half never will. Most of them do not live with parents, as generally is the case in many European and Asian countries, nor even in the former single-room settings—they are domesticated, whether living alone, with a roommate or with a semi-stable sexual partner. The reasons for singleness in recent years have shifted from negative to more positive attitudes about marriage and family.

Some never-marrieds are claiming the right to postpone marriage for more positive reasons about self identity, career stability and childrearing. They see all around them people who married immaturely, unwisely, and some whose personalities were never suited for marriage or parenting. They want time to discover whether "family" includes spouse and children for them. In some states, they are choosing to adopt children, without benefit of spouse; some are knowing the blessings and joys of parenting through the role of god-parenting. Even those who are bitter and pessimistic about marriage are quite domesticated creatures, seeking artificial kinship relationships.

An estimated fifteen to thirty percent of the college population have cohabited during their lifetimes, but it is harder to estimate just how many singles in the total population are living with unrelated persons of the opposite sex. Latest census estimates say there are 1.3 million such two-person households—thirteen percent of these over 65. Even though there has been a sharp increase in such households in the last two decades, these unmarried families represent only about one percent of all households at a given time. Studies indicate that while most such young couples do not believe that long-term commitment is necessary before cohabitation and sharing domesticity, they do favor commitment which is both personal and behavioral (Budd, 1976 and Johnson, 1973). Forty percent in one survey (Macklin, 1978) expected strong, affectionate, monogamous ties. Five types of cohabitation have been apparent: the temporary, casual convenience; the affectionate, dating-going steady relationship; the trial marriage type; the temporary and permanent alternatives to marriage. (Macklin, 1974; Petty, 1975; Storm, 1973) What proportion of cohabiting older adults fall into each of these types is unknown. One thing is sure: unmarried cohabitants are *not* a homogeneous group and they are *not* all opposed to marriage and domesticity.

The Homosexual Family

Many in church and society would question the inclusion of the homosexual in a discussion of singleness as family. The truth is that many homosexuals marry and have children; but the most committed, or the bravest I might say, homosexuals obviously avoid heterosexual marriages, choosing instead singleness, cohabitation with or "the right to marry" another homosexual. As this group of singles has moved out of the closet, indications are that the image of the swinging gay who patronizes gay bars and clubs is not typical at all. The Gay Liberation Front maintain their right to be "families" whether they live alone as any straight single with occasional sexual encounters or they cohabit with a semi-permanent partner.

Interrupted Families

There has been a proliferation of writing in the last generation about the interrupted family, more commonly referred to as the broken or incomplete family. Its quasi-single status is confused by the fact that the childless, once-married person reverts to an almost peer relationship with the never-married, whereas the single parent may well have the best and the worst of both worlds!

Single parenthood is a lifestyle to which few people aspire but which many will experience. One-fifth of our children in America grow up in one-parent households, mostly headed by once-married working women. Although an increasing number of unwed mothers have been choosing the single parent lifestyle, they still represent a very small proportion of the single mothers. The adequacy of child-rearing in single parent homes may well be greater than the adequacy of their economics. The old wives tale that children of interrupted marriages are more prone to maladjustment has been seriously challenged; but the income of such

working mothers is woefully short of that earned by a comparable father. At least one recent study has indicated that the two parent-dual earner family may be experiencing a greater stress and strain.¹

School-age children are much more apt to have divorced parents and hence the greater possibility of split, even contradictory family experiences. The widow/widower is more apt to have mature, married children, even grandchildren; hence, loneliness and bereavement may be the barriers to recreating familism, rather than deficient income or conflict in dual parenting patterns. I hesitate to call either of these families "incomplete"; for almost every semester I encounter children of such single families who have enjoyed quality family experiences and are able to initiate heterosexual relationships of an enduring and wholesome sort.

The Theology of Singleness?

Recently I was invited to speak as a part of a symposium on the topic "The Theology of Singleness." My first reaction was to recoil. . . . So was my last! But I spoke anyway, stressing that I basically have difficulty with topical theology: . . . of Race, . . . of Business . . . of Ecology. . . . Mainly, because I see all of these as derived or evolved theological positions. Maybe it is only a game of semantics, but there is only one theology—that of persons in relationship: to God, to other persons, to conglomerates even. Singleness is incidentally a marital state; it is also the lifelong spiritual denominator . . . we all approach the Eternal and His work without derivative status.

Biblically, there is little concern with marital status. The commandments ignore marriage; but there is assumption of family. There is the commandment to honor your parents, but none to be one. The ten laws of Moses nor any words of Jesus tell us that monogamy is the only family; but any relationship, particularly those made more intimate and meaningful through common Christian experience, becomes "family," a *gemeinschaft* experience.

As we understand ourselves more, we know our creation is dual with drives and balancing attributes. We are born single with the potential organs with drives for mating and procreating but not "automatic transmissions!" We possess hormones that are as useful for singles as for marrieds at any age cycle. If there is reason to believe that marital status has nothing to do with being a part of the family of God, it is inconceivable to me that the family of God can not permit any marital status to become family.

Footnote

¹ Johnson, C. L. and Johnson, F. A. "Attitudes Toward Parenting in Dual Career Families."

FAMILIES IN CRISIS

David K. Switzer

All of the dire predictions made ten to fifteen years ago by some number of loud voices about marriage and

the family have not come to pass. We heard that marriage as an institution was outmoded. Men and women would simply live together whenever they pleased for as long as they pleased. When they no longer enjoyed one another, they would just move out to live alone for awhile or to move in immediately with someone else, without going through all of the unnecessary expense and the socially induced emotional trauma of divorce. How easy. How convenient.

New sets of relationships would replace the traditional family as a setting for raising children. No longer would the little darlings have their psyches warped by the American nuclear family with its intense (and often merely tense) relationship between mother and father, and the equally intense (and often merely tense) relationship between mother and child. The father, of course, as far as the children are concerned, is outside of the significant picture, since he's busy killing himself with overwork in order to satisfy his compulsive ambition, a combination of that awful evil force, the puritan (or sometimes broadened to read Protestant) work ethic and the destructive imperatives of a corrupt capitalistic society. Rather than growing up in this destructive setting, children in future years would increasingly grow up in groups of people who are living together in some communal relationship, where children do not *belong* to a mother and father, where all adults are responsible for some of the parenting of all of the children. This, of course, would hardly be something new on the scene of the world's social institutions since this describes reasonably precisely many primitive tribal living situations. Or, if not a part of such a latter day tribe, the children will have a mother or father, along with a succession of other adults who "live in" for varying periods of time. Fewer people would be getting married, fewer couples would be having children, fewer children would grow up in the traditional style of the American family life.

These predictions, as I say, have *not* come to pass. Granted, we *do* see more men and women living together for awhile, or even for a long time, without benefit of license and ceremony. But one of two things tends to happen. Eventually, perhaps after living with one or two or three other people, a particular pair will gradually grow into a commitment with one another and actually live together as husband and wife, and therefore in a test case of any kind brought about by a variety of circumstances would be declared legally married by the courts. Or, after discovering that they have such a commitment to one another, they decide to get a license and go through a ceremony. The point is, the phenomenon of living together without being married has not decreased the total number of marriages. As a matter of fact, the total actual number of marriages in our country has continued to increase since 1957, although there was a slight decline in 1974 and 1975, but rising again in the three years since. The marriage rate overall has also been increasing somewhat each year for over twenty years, except for a slight dip in 1974 and 1975. However, among the people fifteen to forty-five years of age, there has been a twenty-two percent decline since 1970.

Also, although some of these couples, probably an increasing number, decide not to have children or at least to postpone the having of children for quite a

number of years, and although numerous different types of urban and rural communes have been established, there is no evidence at all that fewer children are being raised within the so-called traditional American family, whether two-parent or one-parent families.

Therefore, if we as ministers of the church of Jesus Christ are going to be effective in proclaiming the gospel in different ways, through different acts, always with a view to addressing the real needs of people, we must continue to pay attention to the family as defined pretty much like we have always defined it. Granted, we must in no wise overlook the growing young singles population in any community, more especially in the cities. And we must not emphasize the traditional family in all of our preaching and church programming so exclusively that more mature single people (the never married, the divorced, the widowed) feel out of place, awkward, not welcome, not really a part of this congregation. This, by the way, has too often happened in the past, however well intentioned we have been in seeking to emphasize and minister to the family.

We also need to accept the realities of our present society. This does not necessarily mean that we have to accept them as final, if we believe that these realities are morally wrong or harmful to our society in some way. However, we must start *where we are* as our society really is. The practice of a man and a woman living together without being married officially, I believe is not going to decrease, or at least not in the foreseeable future. Many of these people, although often raised in the church, will not be actively related to the church, although some of them will be. Whoever they are, they still provide us with our opportunity for ministry.

Paying attention to the family in ministry can mean many different things, only a few of which I can even attempt to discuss in detail in this one presentation.

There are at least three major dimensions to the church's family life ministry. First, there is the ministry to families in crisis, where the purpose is merely (although essential and significant) to reduce symptoms of crisis, diminish the pain of this crisis, and to change the behavior of crisis.

The second ministry is in the form of marriage and family counseling where there is not technically a crisis, but in which people wish to change the patterns of their relating to one another so that they too may diminish their pain and distress in the relationship and accomplish better with one another the primary goals of marriage and family for human beings.

The third is what we might call growth oriented ministries. In these instances there are not immediate and/or serious problem areas, but husbands and wives, or whole families, want to enrich their lives with one another. In so doing they develop the forms of relationships with one another and the communication skills which prevent certain types of complicated problems from developing and enable them to solve real problems when they arise and resolve the inevitable crises of life more effectively. Growth oriented ministries which are clearly Christian are also concerned about drawing families into the fellowship of the church and

assisting them in their missional commitments as a Christian family.

The last of these three should certainly receive our primary time and attention in church planning if we are to reap the largest harvest from our ministry. But who among us can ever turn our back on individuals and families who are immediately in distress? It's this latter that I understand to be the focus of my presentation. However, in order to speak with any coherence at all about ministry to families in crisis, it is necessary to state briefly, in the first place, the purpose of family life, second, to clarify that the family itself is a single organism, a system, and third, what a happy and effective family looks like. All of this, of course, speaks also to the other areas of family life ministry. Therefore, the next major section of this presentation will try to speak to these issues I have just raised and the last section will seek to address briefly the family in specific crisis.

First, what is the purpose of marriage and the family? There are several possible ways of responding to this question, but whatever else is said or how it is said, one way of stating it is in terms of mutual need fulfillment. There are many ways of specifying the needs, but the major one is to provide self-defining experiences for each family member. By this is meant that each person provides and is provided those sorts of experiences which encourage the development of clear-cut, but at the same time flexible ego boundaries, that is, the ability to know oneself as oneself in relation with, but separate from others. In the family we are also provided with experiences which lead to effective and meaningful or ineffective and self-defeating styles of interacting with one another, with the result being dependent upon how clear a sense of our own personhood we develop.

A primary issue is, however, how such identity is given and received in families. To understand this process of identity development it is important to view the family not just as a group of individuals, but as a system, a single organism in a sense, just as each one of us is a single organism. Each one of us has a variety of individual organs which are linked together. Generally, when we are functioning well, these organs work together for our benefit within our particular system. If one part of our system malfunctions, then the whole organism feels it in some way. When this happens, certain other parts of the organism seek to adjust to make up for it, different organs of the whole body constantly operating to maintain a relatively stable physiochemical balance (or homeostasis) within the person for that person's health and most effective functioning. Obviously, we realize that in the extreme, either the body cannot adjust, or the adjustment itself may be dangerous.

The same holds true of families. Even though families may differ from one another in many ways, every family develops its own internal operations that seek to maintain the family as a unit while trying to meet the needs of the individual members. Unfortunately, some families do this very poorly, and therefore to the detriment of its individual members, and some families accomplish this dual function (maintaining itself as a unit *and* meeting the needs of its members as individuals) quite well.

An obvious assumption of viewing the family as a system is that any behavior on the part of one person affects the entire system and therefore each individual within it. Therefore, in the face of any new learning on the part of any member or the introduction of new behavior of any kind into the family or in the case of a new family member or of the loss of a family member, or any other situational crisis, the members initiate behavior toward one another which they have learned in the past as the way to meet the needs of the entire system. For example, children tend to act out the strains and stresses of their parents' marriage relationship. They act out the anger they have at their parents or they behave so as to divert the parents' attention to them, thinking (not necessarily consciously) somehow to unite the parents.

Now obviously all families go through changes. Most of those changes are going to come about in very small doses though. You do not see, for example, the child's physical and emotional maturing process very much from one day to the next. There are certain periods of life, however, when within a reasonably short time a child changes considerably. These are times of stress or crisis, either developmental or situational, for the family. A child starts to school or enters puberty, or a young person goes away to college, or a father loses his job, or the mother starts to work, or someone dies. These either happen or are noticed within relatively short periods of time. All families make changes to accommodate the differences within the energy interchange system of their family as their roles and their relationships with one another are changed by these circumstances. Some families handle these crises very well, some moderately well, some extremely poorly. Some families become extremely rigid in the attempt to resist the changes. Other families become severely disrupted, just as we observe with individuals in crisis as they seek to adjust to threatening events.

We see the extreme in a family where there is a very deeply emotionally disturbed person. The whole family system is often involved in the production of the disorder, with members of the family being in collusion with one another to keep one person "sick" as a method of maintaining the whole family in some way. If that designated "ill person" becomes well, it is experienced by the rest of the family as a threat to the family system, a threat to the way they have learned to assign and take roles, the forms of relationships which they seem to be able to tolerate better than others, and therefore a crisis. It often occurs in a family where there is an alcoholic. The alcoholic stops drinking and the family begins to collapse. The wife, for example, has needed for something to be wrong with the husband, or needed him to be dependent on her, or for the children to look to her alone. She gains satisfaction from being in charge. So many different things have to change if a husband and father or a wife and mother stops drinking. Or, mother or father comes back from the psychiatric hospital and seems to be doing relatively well. Again, the family members have to relearn how to relate to one another, to reassign some of the roles and functions, and the whole system is changed by this sort of movement. Or, a family member dies, and the healthy life of the family system is dependent upon the successful reassignment of roles and new forms of

relations. Again, some families may handle this group task rather effectively, but others fall into a trap. Some may tend unconsciously to enter into collusion in seeking to assign the total need fulfilling role of the deceased to one individual member rather than allotting the functions more appropriately to those persons most capable of meeting the particular needs. Others may contain an individual who unconsciously identifies with the deceased to such a degree that he or she seeks to assume the total role. The former system has been broken and a new system of interrelationships has to be learned.

What do those family systems look like that accomplish most effectively the family tasks: providing self-defining experiences for each person, while at the same time maintaining itself as a unit, having the ability to solve problems and deal with family crises constructively. The Timberlawn Psychiatric Foundation in Dallas in a very sophisticated study, taking several years to complete, discovered that families could be clearly distinguished from one another on the basis of their happiness and efficiency in fulfilling what I have been stating as the purposes of a family. There are severely disturbed families, those designated as mid-range, and those which they call healthy. Even within the healthy category they distinguish between the "pained but adequate" and the "optimal" families. It is this last group that I would like to define for you briefly.

Dr. Robert Beavers, a psychiatrist who was one of the Timberlawn researchers, in his book, *Psychotherapy and Growth*, lists eight variables that he considers to be most important in the family environment for the development of human competence.

The first criterion by which to evaluate a family's capacity to produce human competence has to do with its own system's orientation. For example, optimal family members know that people do not prosper in a vacuum. Human needs are satisfied within an interpersonal system. Second, they are aware that within the system certain behaviors cause certain reactions and that these reactions in turn may become the cause of additional reactions. By contrast, members of dysfunctional families do not seem to be able to make such connections between their behaviors. A third aspect of the family system's perspective is that human behavior results from many different variables, not just a single, simple cause and effect. Finally, a system's orientation includes the awareness that human beings are finite, that they are limited in power, and that self-esteem lies in relative competence rather than in omnipotence.

The second major criterion to apply is that of boundary issues. Optimal family members have clear boundaries between family members in the context of a family structure in which there is a commitment to one another. It is easy to determine how mother feels as compared with father, or how one child views a specific situation as compared with another child or with a parent. These differences are accepted and respected. Individuality is encouraged. Even though the family is distinguishable by its commitment to one another, they also have whole family permeable boundaries to the outside world, allowing for an effective interchange of information and interests and energies through the

different members' participation in outside of the family activities.

A third standard of evaluation to apply to any family is whether or not there is contextual clarity. Contextual clarity begins with a strong parental coalition, both in function and affection. In the healthy family this means a relatively equal parental overt power with the parents holding the balance of power over the children. These generational boundaries are necessary for meeting the needs of both parents and children. Children do not threaten the parents, and the parents meet one another's needs well enough so that neither parent has to try to exploit the children in the service of their own adult needs.

The fourth criterion seems to overlap in some ways with the third because it has to do with power issues, the contrast between the power of a loving relationship with a meaningful other, without coercion, versus the power of coercive control over oneself and others. The clear generational lines referred to under contextual clarity expresses itself here in the parental leadership with their egalitarian coalition, with the children being less overtly powerful, but with the parents being open to children's contributions, and these contributions actually influencing decision making.

The fifth influence of the family upon the life of its members may be conceived of along the continuum of the encouragement of dependence versus the encouragement of autonomy. Autonomous persons know what they feel and think. They take responsibility for their own behavior. They are able to think of themselves as unique persons no matter how closely entwined their lives are with that of others. Encouragement of autonomy is a function of several specific characteristics: the ability of family members to take responsibility for their own thoughts, feelings and behavior; openness to communication from others; respect for the unique and different subjective views of reality found within and outside of the family. In the optimal family there is a striking absence of blaming, of personal attack, and scapegoating. Initiative is encouraged and failures are well tolerated. There is a whole family awareness that children grow up and leave home. When one's subjectivity and differentness is respected, then spontaneity becomes possible, and spontaneity produces both fun and growth.

A sixth area of family life to look at has to do with affective or emotional issues. What is the characteristic family mood or feeling tone? May individuals feel and express their feelings openly and clearly to one another? Is empathy present in the family and if so, to what degree, empathy meaning sharing of another's subjective experience without the loss of one's own self-boundaries, the ability to experience another's anger without necessarily becoming angry or to share another's sadness without necessarily being sad oneself.

A seventh standard of evaluation of family life has to do with the effectiveness of negotiation and task performance. Can individuals and the whole family hear and accept directions, organize themselves to respond to a task, develop input received from other members, negotiate differences and provide some coherent and effective response to a challenge?

The final criterion which Beavers extracted from this long and extensive study as being crucial in the evaluation of families has to do with what he calls transcendent values. Is there some underlying supporting guiding set of values, philosophy of life, or religious faith which provides a perspective out of which not only to judge one's own behavior, but to view and to adapt to the inevitable changes involved in growth and development and aging, and the losses of family members through leaving home and dying. Beavers' point is that "people must view a day's reality in the light of a conceptual and relationship system broader than themselves or their families in order to make sense of events, to accept losses of loved ones, and live with human consciousness encased in a finite aging body which must die. Without investing in such a transcendent belief system, no human exists without hopelessness and despair." He goes on to say on the positive side, "This is one of the most significant of the lessons taught by optimal families: accepting loss is related to possessing a system of transcendent values that provides hope, trust and meaning when human helplessness is overwhelming."

The point on which Beavers ends is a logical springboard to a brief discussion of the family in crisis. **Losses come. Crises occur. These are normal in the course of human life. The issue is, "How do we meet them?"**

Technically, a situational crisis (in contrast with a developmental crisis such as puberty or aging) is triggered within a person by a specific external event which is perceived by him or her to be a threat to the self, one's wholeness or integrity as a person, the level of one's adjustment, one's self-image. The perception of threat is the experience of anxiety. In this instance when one's usual methods of coping with a situation and/or reducing one's anxiety do not work, the person feels helpless, out of touch with internal and external resources, and panic or depression may be experienced. The crisis is not in the external situation, although initiated by an external event, but it is the reaction of the person which includes changes in one's feelings and/or behavior.

A crisis may occur in a single individual, or a single event may produce the reaction in a family, a neighborhood, or a whole community. Where there is a collective crisis, that is, with several people involved, each of the individuals is also in crisis. They may be feeling and acting somewhat similarly, but they may be feeling and acting in ways quite different from one another, too. We have already seen that when something affects an individual within a family profoundly, the whole family is affected. Or, when there is some profound change in the particular family system, the whole system and each individual are affected. The listing of all of the particular events and sets of circumstances which might produce crisis in the family is an exercise in futility because it might be almost anything. One of the most frequent, though, is physical separation by whatever means: death, divorce, the children leaving home, or in other forms of perceived loss.

The death of a family member usually has a shattering effect upon a family. Each individual ex-

periences a loss and the whole system is immediately and radically altered by its collective loss. Even though people of different ages and in different relationships with the deceased may respond differently from one another, everyone, even the smallest children, experience a loss. At a time then when children in a family need even greater attention from the surviving adult or adults, those adults are in such a condition of need themselves that they are capable of giving even less. This is the reason that every family at such a time needs some type of help from persons outside of their immediate circle: aunts and cousins from another city, the next door neighbor, close friends of different ages, the minister, representative persons from the church, the family doctor, et cetera. This intervention initially is in the form of mere but powerful personal presence and in some instances (such as an ordained minister) a presence symbolic of a larger community and a greater power. The role of a supporting person at that time is to allow and encourage the full expression of whatever emotions are being felt, by words and by weeping and by silence. It is next to allow and encourage the discussion of the event of the death, the manner of death, the sets of circumstances surrounding the death. It is further to allow and encourage the discussing of the relationship between the surviving person and persons and the deceased. It is to give attention to children when adults in the family are not fully capable of doing so. It is to assist where possible the adults in the family to pay attention to the needs of the children. Finally, it is to help the family reassign both affectional and functional roles in the family. Recognizing that the reaction of grief continues over many, many months and even longer than a year, the helping person's role is to continue to maintain some type of contact over an extended period of time.

In families, needs may obviously be met on an individual basis, person by person, but they are much more effectively met when this individual approach is coupled with assisting whole families together, helping them help one another. In the long run, no individual ministry will be as useful as that ministry to the whole family which enables the family to meet one another's needs within the family system that is designed for precisely that.

Divorce is also a physical change in a family which produces loss for every member of the family and in which the feelings are often very intense and complex. This too is grief, a particular crisis for the family. We need to remember that the relationship in which there are strong elements of fear, guilt and hostility, in which these emotions are expressed in a variety of destructive ways, such as withdrawal, overdependency, violent arguments, hurting behavior, is still a close emotional relationship. The loss of the other person, even though there may at times be genuine relief, is also still a loss. The internal dynamics of loss are the same whether it is the loss of a person by death, divorce or other form of separation. Loss by divorce is on the increase in our country, currently having reached the rate of approximately five divorces per thousand population. Therefore, it reflects both some amount of social disorganization and personal pain and occasionally handicap and which calls for the attention of all of us to be focused on both preventive and remedial efforts.

The goal of these efforts is both to attempt to minimize the negative effects of the social disorganization and of the individual distress and perhaps disability, as well as to maximize the possibilities for personal growth, which are also potential in marital disruption.

There are at least three major times of crisis: when the persons first begin to talk seriously about and plan for divorce, the time when they physically separate, and the time when the divorce is final. Obviously, there may be other crises during this whole process, which usually takes one to three years to go through. In fact, persons going through divorce very often seem to go through the process of the different stages of dying, as given by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross.

How the church and its ministry assist persons and families in divorce (remember I am not talking now about how we try to help them reconstitute their marriage, but how we minister to them in their *divorce*) is deeply affected by our own feelings and theology of divorce. I believe that the way in which we minister, or fail to minister, is more dependent on our own personal feelings, since our feelings and theology are not always together, if you hadn't noticed. Do we take the initiative to step into the life of the shattered family, the person or persons, including the children, in redemptive healing ways? I don't remember Jesus pulling away from His spiritually and emotionally and socially healing opportunities with the woman taken in adultery, the woman at the well, Zaccheus, and others.

Can we tolerate the strong feelings of anger and guilt and failure and depression, and sometimes periods of glee that the persons often feel, and feeling, must then express? Can we assist that expression? It is somehow both like dying and like grief, even though it may also be like freedom and relief. A person who at one time existed for me no longer exists for me. A person who at one time was a part of my life is no longer a part of my life, except that no person is ever immediately free of any important relationship whether by death or divorce, even if there has been an anticipatory grief process.

Yet there are some differences about the external situations which lead to a death on the one hand and a divorce on the other, and some differences in the external situations which follow a death and a divorce, and therefore some necessarily different behaviors and some different intensities of feelings. One difference is that divorce is clearly intended by one or both of the people and a death, except by suicide, is not. Another difference is that after a death the person is dead and buried, and after a divorce the other person is alive and visible. Another major difference is in the social attitude of persons, with both personal desire and social form leading people to go to a family where the grief is because of a death, while there is the tendency to withdraw from persons in divorce. Did you ever hear of a church group taking food over to the man and to the woman who just separated from each other? How many ministers make calls to the people involved the evening of the day during which the final court decision was handed down? These are individuals and families in crisis, and as human beings they need and deserve the ministry of the church.

Just as most individuals can solve their own problems

if assisted to recognize and express their feelings and make some connections between certain events and their reactions to them, so can most families. The forms of ministry to families in crisis will take into consideration the family as a system, the characteristics of the healthy family, and the procedures of marriage and family counseling. We can redirect our focus from individuals to relationships. We can be alert and see how the people within the family respond to each other. We can comment on what we see or ask them about it in such a way that they may understand something of what is going on in themselves and between one another. We can assist their communication with each other, especially their expression of their feelings to one another. We can model and help them with the accurate communication of empathy. It is especially important to help adults give cognitive and emotional input to children. This is unfortunately overlooked by many otherwise good parents, especially at times of crisis, such as death, illness, divorce, etc. We tend to overprotect children in terms of both information and emotional expression. Children have a need for the truth. The fantasies which they can develop to fill in the gaps created by an absence of information can often be more terrifying than the reality itself. We teach children that emotions are the gifts of God, not something to be repressed but rather to be expressed appropriately, by expressing our own feelings spontaneously and appropriately with them.

What I am suggesting in this whole paper is the adaptation of the concepts and procedures of family systems theory and marriage and family counseling to our crisis ministry to families. We minister to the system and help it become more effective in its reason for being. The procedures referred to will enable the family to grow as a unit and therefore contribute to the self-esteem, self-image, self-confidence, and actual interpersonal competence of all of its members.

This type of functioning on behalf of the alleviation of suffering in crisis and for the health and wholeness of persons and families is inherent in the coming into being of the church. The New Testament seemed to portray both in its memory of the life of Jesus and in its revelation of its own present life a conviction that such a ministry is in harmony with and supportive of the proclamation of the Kingdom of God and a part of the caring for one another that was to be characteristic of the life of the Kingdom.

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FULFILLMENT IN MARRIAGE

David Edens

It is with a great deal of personal pleasure and gratification to speak with you this afternoon. Welton Gaddy invited me to address the national seminar three

years ago. The theme for that seminar was priorities. He asked me to critique Marabel Morgan's *The Total Woman*. I was as happy to do that as Marabel would have been with a new roll of Saran Wrap. But I had a prior commitment on that date to a recreational trip with my wife and children. What to do? With mixed feelings, I declined the prestigious invitation and went with my family. I have probably been guilty of undue pride in having declined the invitation, but our family had a great time together!

And now, after three years, you afforded me another opportunity to address you and also an opportunity for marriage and family fulfillment. Virginia, my good wife of thirty years, is here and her parents, my in-laws who are not out-laws, are with us. We have been sharing some Florida sunshine for the past few days. Virginia contributed uniquely to the concepts in this presentation and through the years has certainly enriched and fulfilled my life.

Fulfillment in Marriage is the topic. This is an empty, meaningless, barren phrase for thirty-seven percent of all first marriages and fifty percent of all second marriages, for these marriages end in divorce today. And at times this is a questionable phrase in all of our marriages.

It also raises questions today for some singles. Listen to Oriana Fallaci, a never married, articulate writer:

I never have been a domestic animal. I never have seen myself locked up in the small cosmos of the family. The profession of wife always has filled me with horror. I did not want to play the wife. I wanted to write, to travel, to know the world, to use the miracle of having been born.

And as if this weren't enough, I couldn't stand the idea of giving up my name to take the name of a man. To give it up, why? To annul myself like that, why? I was mine. . . .

Nobody, I mean nobody—under no circumstances and on no continent—ever has been able to convince me that I am wrong to consider marriage as a prison where the first prisoner is the woman. . . .

In cohabiting with a man, half your time is lost in consoling him, encouraging him, serving him, protecting him as a capricious and spoiled child.

If you are younger than he is or even if you are of the same age and have the same training, he doesn't ask you to be his companion. He asks you to be his nurse, his secretary, his servant—that is, the mother he gave up while becoming a man.

He never forgets his mother, loved or hated as she was by him. He never forgets having been a baby to whom all was permitted . . . and served. And even if you work twice as hard as he does, even if you have responsibilities far larger than his, he expects you to prepare his coffee, his food, to give his underwear to the laundry or to wash it, to take care of the house, of the friends, of the infinitesimal problems of life, to stand his bad humor without his standing yours.

If the man is very rich and his mother has been replaced by an official housekeeper or a maid, he asks you to be his toy. And with this toy he plays immaturely, cruelly.¹

Companionship

These words contain some realism. But I contend that marriage may be the last stronghold for meaningful male-female intimacy in today's impersonal world, and I know of no other institution, with all its shortcomings, for the socialization of the child.

I am aware that children are hard on marriage. Babies lower a couple's satisfaction with marriage. They are not an unmixed blessing. And the dishes, diapers, and dirty little babies can do you damage.

A young couple was working through their monthly bills. The husband wrote the last check to the obstetrician for delivering their new baby. He heaved a sigh of relief and said, "This is the only thing in the house that's paid for, and it leaks."

Two men were talking at work. One said to the other, "Did you wake up grouchy this morning?" The other said, "No, I just let her sleep."

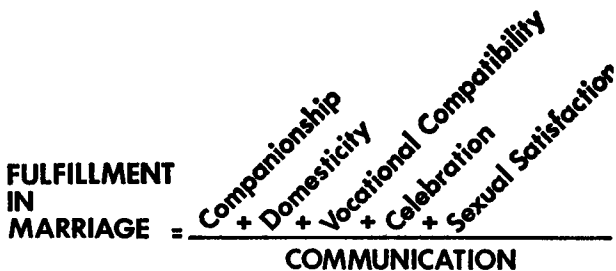
Failure to clarify our perceptions of each other can distort even the best of relationships. And how we view the role and function of each other affects the degree of fulfillment in the marriage.

The poet W. H. Auden once remarked that any marriage, happy or unhappy, is infinitely more interesting and significant than any romance, however passionate. It may be true that marriage—in all its variations—is more interesting.

"Marriage," as one timeworn witticism has it, "is not a word, but a sentence." Like jokes about any sensitive topic, those about marriage reflect our ambivalence about it and enable us to laugh at our problems. Obviously, marriage is not one thing but many. And couples define it for themselves.

How can we understand something as varied as marriage and the roles we play in it? The purpose of this presentation is to explore the facets that make a marriage meaningful.

Probably the complicated interaction of marriage cannot be reduced to a formula, but here is my suggestion for consideration:



Other factors may be added to the numerator, but most persons would agree that the bottom line, the denominator, is communication. The essence of communication involves two processes—listening to and speaking out. The wisdom of knowing when and how to listen and to speak is an art.

Let's consider the factors in the formula.

"Why marry?" is a question I hear rather frequently in a college setting and the students' response is usually something like: "With the divorce rate so high, it seems marriage is not working, and really, I don't want to give up my freedom."

We may wonder if marriage—the pairing of two human beings in some institutional way—represents an instinctive or psychologically necessary way of life even for people who reject other institutions. Over the past ten years, Virginia and I visited several communes in New Mexico, the mecca of communal living. Recently, we observed three distinct phenomena: as a movement the numbers seem to be dwindling; the members are very mobile; and interestingly enough, more couples seem to be monogamous—not all legally married but paired off in fairly significant relationships. Is the sentiment in Genesis still valid, "It is not good that the man should be alone." (Gen. 2:18)? Nine out of ten people in our society marry at least once. And most of those who divorce are remarried within three years. So the institution of marriage is accepted by most people today. Some people do not like the partner they got on the first go around, but they are not down on marriage as such.

The last sentence in Merle Shain's book *Some Men Are More Perfect Than Others* states: "It's true that there are fewer reasons to marry than there were in our parents' day, but the most important one remains the same. It is still awfully nice to have someone to curl around in the night."² This is certainly not a logical reason for marriage, but most of our intimate decisions are the results of emotional impulses, not logical conclusions.

Forty-three million adults in the United States live alone. Being single isn't a sign of shame or a badge of failure.

On a flight from Denver to Santa Fe, I sat by a woman in her thirties. She had on an engagement ring. I inquired about it. She responded, "I'm getting married in January." I asked, "Do you love him?" To my surprise she said, "Not really." I asked, "Why are you marrying him?" She said, "I'm short, not too attractive and I'm thirty-two." What will be the quality of life for each partner in this marriage? All persons should have a clear, unfettered choice about whether or not to marry without facing disapproval if they choose singlehood as a way of life.

And heretical though it may seem to a paired world, there are many healthy, well-adjusted singles who do not want to get married—ever. They have found that it is indeed okay to be single. And for some it is more than okay; it is a superior way of life.³

Companionship usually ranks very high as a preference leading people into marriage and seems to be an important ingredient in most marriages. With increased leisure time and early mandatory retirement, companionship becomes even more significant. The objective of companionship between couples is a rather new experience. That couples like as well as love one another, enjoy each other's company is a realistic concern in today's marriage. Companionship cannot be

taken for granted. It, like other vital components in marriage, does not just naturally happen. We plan, provide, and make it happen.

How much togetherness does a couple need? Some wives are smothered when the husband's big toe touches them in bed at night; others seem to need constant verbal and physical stroking. Persons bring their own background and cultural exposure to the marriage. A wife might prefer opera while the husband prefers Grand Ole Opry. I think I could like opera if it weren't for the music! But occasionally supporting one another's cultural preference has a way of saying, "I care for you and I want to be with you."

As a marriage therapist I hear rather frequently, "He doesn't relate to me all day, but expects us to jump in bed at night and sex will cure all." Many times extra-marital sex is not for sex itself but for attention, affection, appreciation, ego stroking; in short, it is a substitute for the companionship missing in the marriage.

Each person in the marital relationship will have inherently different needs, abilities, interests, attitudes, expectations and personality characteristics. Each person is a unique individual with a unique background, frame of reference, and response pattern. Certainly many of these factors will be similar or the partners would not have attracted each other. However, different expectations will be present in the marital relation, and they will be a source of some conflict.

Couples must share their basic values and key activities, but this does not prevent them from going their separate ways at other times. Happy are those who find it possible to maintain a flexible bond between two growing personalities. For them, marriage is a liberating force and a creative achievement. Marriage is not a reform school.

Domesticity

There are twenty-five million full-time homemakers in this country, and it is safe to say that many of the millions are home by choice. "Homemaker" is not necessarily a dirty word.

Be it ever so jumbled there's no place like home. Home should be a place where you can scratch where you itch; where you can slump. But for many persons, a man's home is his hassle.

Robert Frost said, "Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in." Home ought to be redemptive. Sometimes we see people spending more and more money on their homes and less and less time in them. Has home become a domestic cloverleaf where members pass each other on their separate ways? Is nothing much done there except eating an occasional meal and sleeping?

The home can be a source of real satisfaction if persons are not overburdened with the mortgage payment or spend all their waking hours in maintenance and upkeep. House busy-work can be a dodge for real communication and a source of irritation if the attitude is "a place for everything and everything in its place." And as one husband said, "that includes me." Another

husband said his wife was so organized that one night he went to the bathroom and when he got back his bed was made. Now that is compulsive housekeeping!

We have tremendous memory systems. We can file things away for weeks. A man wonders why his wife is not responsive to him sexually. But he has failed to fix the leaking faucet. She can't turn the water off, but she can turn him off. Some wives expect the husband to spend every moment when he is at home in home maintenance. Everything must have balance. If the wife is working eight to five inside or outside the home, certainly the domestic chores should be shared after five o'clock.

Beginning trouble spots in a marriage relationship are likely to be found in the daily nitty-gritty of maintaining a household. Those little things associated with house, yard, and cars become big hassles for many couples—who does what around the house; who fails to carry his or her share of the load. This is where the real power struggle is in many marriages. Children are often caught up in the hostility engendered around basic household chores and they can be used or manipulated by their parents. And if husbands and wives do not understand their domestic roles, they can manipulate each other.

Vocational Compatibility

Man does not live by bread (money) alone, but the lack of sufficient money, or its improper use, can mean deprivations, indignities, and conflict for the person as well as loss of opportunities for his children. Sufficient money can bring adequate health care, easy access to the material necessities and comforts of life, the benefits of education, travel, and the arts.

Money is a vital force in nearly every facet of a couple's life. More waking hours are engaged with the earning of money than with doing anything else, and the couple's entire life style is tied to the pattern of spending it. For most of us, there is always too much month at the end of our money.

Someone has said, "Incompatibility is when a man loses his income and the wife loses her patibility." The American system of "Buy it now—pay later" makes financial trouble a frequent occurrence in many marriages. One woman said, "I don't like my husband, but I like what he provides for us."

The importance of money and one's preoccupation with it is reflected in the many adages on the subject:

"Money is like a sixth sense without which you cannot make the most of the other five" (Somerset Maugham)

"It's a kind of spiritual snobbery that makes people think they can be happy without money" (Albert Camus)

"Wine maketh merry but money answereth all things" (Ecclesiastes 10:19)

"There are three faithful friends—an old wife, an old dog, and ready money" (Benjamin Franklin)

And, finally, as Ogden Nash put it:
"Certainly there are lots of things in life that money won't buy, but it's very funny—
Have you ever tried to buy them without money?"⁴

There are times when money isn't just money. Rather, it is a symbol for other realities. Money in its healthiest sense is simply a medium of exchange. It has a specific value capable of purchasing a specific object or service. That is all. Unfortunately, money can and does develop other meanings.

About fifty percent of all married women are gainfully employed outside the home today. Power struggles can easily develop over schedules, use of the extra income, or reasons for the wife's employment.

My data for the last three years from 327 Stephens College females indicates that for seventy percent of them, the ideal life is to be married with children and have a full time job or career outside the home at some time before or after the children come.

Celebration

Dry rot can very easily set into a marriage, and the monotony of monogamy can stifle even the best of relationships. Celebration can incorporate the established seasonal occasions or national and religious holidays, birthdays, anniversaries and also the surprise-unexpected outings, flowers, gifts for no reason at all. Many of us are slaves to the routine and need a break. It doesn't have to be a ski trip to Vail or a cruise to the Bahamas; it may be any activity or inactivity that is mutually enriching.

The anticipation of certain family activities may bring more joy than the actual event, but this is a part of the celebration process. Most of our pleasant childhood memories center around festive family activities.

If we are too busy to play, then we are too busy. We've heard, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." All play and no work makes Jack useless. There must be a balance between our work and our recreation. "Workaholics" have difficulty reassessing their activity schedule to allow for meaningful family celebration. All of us have 168 hours a week to do what needs to be done. Not all families celebrate in the same way, but ritual or celebration through the years has given stability to the on-going significance of family interaction. Most families that play together, stay together. Let it not be said, "Busy man, you've had a little day."

Many of us are squatters and lookers. This is the age of "squat and look." Our future generations may be born with eyes as large as grapefruits and brains as small as an English pea. Spectatoritis has set in. Research studies have revealed that seventy-six percent of our total leisure time is spent passively watching others perform. Only twenty-four percent of our leisure is occupied in actual participation. It is better to walk or jog a mile for exercise than to sit before television watching a title event.

Good health is related to good recreation. Uncontrolled aggressions within us are major causes of mental illness. Adequate play and celebration are means of channeling off excess aggression.

Boredom keeps many marriages from functioning at their maximum. We occasionally need exhilarating experiences to push us out of the routine of everyday

living. For most people the weekends are made for celebration. Some families gain strength from services of worship and religious activities. They rediscover their "worship" and renew their commitment to what is most important to them. Others avoid any organized activities over the weekend as if in protest of the heavy, compulsory responsibilities during the week.

Let's celebrate life! A minister's wife asked of her husband, "Why can't you spend some time with the family without acting as though you're stealing time away from the Lord's work?"

And a young child said, "You're no Daddy, you're just a going away man."

What kind of a God would create persons male and female, place love in their hearts, call them into holy matrimony, and then begrudge the couple the time it takes to keep their love alive and growing?

Sexual Satisfaction

Man does not live by bed alone, but he or she usually sleeps somewhere every night. Sex is usually a vital part of the totality of a couple's existence. The amount of time a couple spends in sexual activity may vary from couple to couple. The need for sexual relations is highly variable. A partner's interest may be more intense at certain times during the month and at different ages in life.

Attitudes of kindness, consideration, and tenderness many times are the prerequisites for sexual response. There has been a marked tendency among Americans to put kindness, consideration, and tenderness at the center of marriage. *Redbook* reported in July 1976 that eight out of ten of the 75,000 women they surveyed rated love more important than any other consideration in their marriage. It is astonishing that in this era of the obligatory orgasm, most respondents ranked sex fourth on their list of marital essentials. A couple's sexual satisfaction is important, certainly, these 75,000 women say, but it's not so critical as the love between husband and wife and their mutual "respect" and "friendship" (which are often taken as components or expressions of "love"). Over all, these women ranked sex as only slightly more important than "opportunities to be alone" and "making compromises."

A February 1978 *Redbook* study of 40,000 men, the largest survey ever taken on male sexuality, revealed that the qualities in a woman that appeal to most men are not such standard macho fare as large breasts and a small mind. On the contrary, most men are turned on by women who are intelligent, self-confident and have a sense of humor, and—most of all—by women who love them.

The study further revealed that marriage does not automatically bring the death of romance—or of sexual satisfaction. Almost six married men in ten say that their sex life has improved since the honeymoon; only two in ten think their sex life has deteriorated.

All of this seems to say that you must touch a person's mind before you touch his or her body if you want participation of the whole person in the sexual act.

David Mace has pointed out that the entire time

occupied in sexual intercourse by the average married couple adds up to the equivalent of about one weekend in a year. Even though that's a rather mechanical way of looking at it, it does remind us that during all the rest of the time the couple is interacting at other levels—companionship, domestic, vocational, celebration.

In terms of time, sex takes up a small part of life—but it is very important when it doesn't work out. Although sex is perfectly natural it is not always naturally perfect. Human beings, unlike animals, are not born with instinctive knowledge of how to mate. Most human sexual activity must be learned by trial and error or else not learned at all. Some attitudes and behavior about sex have to be unlearned. It may not be just lack of sex education; it may be negative sex education that has to be overcome. If there is a sexual problem, it is usually emotional or psychological. It is rarely physical; the plumbing almost always works.

Unfortunately, in this age of sex clinics and the ever-present sex manuals, there has been an over-emphasis on performance and lack of concern for human interaction. As Merle Shain puts it, "Orgasms really have very little to do with making love, and men who require their women to respond with a *petit mal* seizure that can be picked up on the Richter scale are not making love but asking for reassurance."⁵ Not even the perfect orgasm or ejaculation is any guarantee of interpersonal closeness.

The passion of the orgasm is only a small part of the sexual experience. Love, caressing, intimacy, touching, and kissing are also important ingredients. Today more and more men and women are concentrating on expert technique rather than shared affection in their sexual relations, and turning the sexual act into an increasingly hollow performance.

Sexual breakdown often is related to a general absence of marital intimacy. Its crisis symptom may be infidelity—which most of the time is not so much a search for sex as it is for emotional intimacy. A couple who can face that fact, and do something about it, have a good chance not only to survive the unfaithfulness but to grow closer.

In marriage, we need to explore our sexual relationship and create a satisfying intimacy. Most of us agree that marriage provides the ultimate freedom for sexual expression—an opportunity for experimentation, a permission for the adventure of variety. If it is mutually satisfying, hang from the chandelier if you wish!

But remember that sexual fulfillment is not merely a matter of inches, or minutes, or gymnastic display; it is one part of a complete emotional and psychic relationship all parts of which are mutually supportive and interdependent. Together all parts add up to fulfillment in marriage.

Communication

Communication is the bottom line. After an extensive four-year research project, the Family Service Association of America reached the conclusion that ineffective communication is the principle cause of marital failure.

You have seen the bumper sticker "Honk if you love Jesus." I saw one "Tithe if you love Jesus, anybody can honk." We do a lot of honking in marriage and the family.

And some of us don't honk. We are silent. We stew in our juice. I counseled a couple who were having difficulty managing their hostility. I talked first with the husband. And for some reason he rubbed me the wrong way. My clinical training is supposed to prevent that, but it didn't. I then talked with his wife, asking, "How do you handle your hostility toward your husband?" She said, "Well, when he leaves in the morning, I swish his tooth brush in the toilet bowl."

There ought to be a better way to live besides honking and silent hostility. One of the most important factors in successful communication is the management of hostility—active or passive. Hostility is a perfectly normal emotion. Everyone is hostile occasionally. The Bible says, "Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger" (Eph. 4:26, RSV). The sin is not in the anger but in the failure to handle it. What is anger? It is a powerful feeling that grips us under certain circumstances—usually when we are hurt or frustrated. A whole series of bodily changes take place: the heartbeat accelerates, our muscles become tense, anticoagulants in the blood diminish, adrenalin-like substances pour into the bloodstream. These changes can mean our survival in a crisis situation.

What do you do with your anger? This is one of the questions I usually ask people with whom I counsel. This is a vitally important question. Many women say, "I cry a lot." And some use crying manipulatively. If at first you don't succeed, cry, cry again. But most of the time when we cry, we are angry. The way we handle our anger, to a large degree, determines our personal happiness, our family happiness, and our happiness at work. It may even determine whether or not we have a family or a job at all.

People handle their anger in various ways. First, is the person called the "powder keg." This person has great difficulty keeping any anger inside. The frustration tolerance is low—the fuse is short. Periodically, this person blasts off, exploding over the countryside in the form of vile words, wild accusations, and sometimes even physical violence. Burns from this blast heal slowly and often the scars never disappear.

The second type of person might be called the "crock pot." These persons simmer and stew, but they never express their anger. Often they sulk and pout and never get much of their anger out. If you ask this person what is wrong, he will often say that there is absolutely nothing wrong. But after he doesn't speak for a day or so, one gets the idea that perhaps something is "eating on him."

The third type of person has been suggested by Wallace Denton. He calls this "the Big Joker." This husband keeps everyone at the party in stitches with his puns and "cute" remarks—that is, everyone except his wife. You see, this person handles his hostility through little jibes. At a party, only she is aware of the subtle meaning behind his jibes for she flinches at the barbs which are in them. "What's wrong? Can't you take a

joke?" Or, "I wasn't talking about you." Sarcasm is dirty fighting.

Perhaps there is a fourth way of handling one's anger and this is simply the person who is hardly aware of experiencing any anger at all. He or she rarely gets angry. But this same person often wonders why he or she has so many headaches, or digestive upsets, or ulcers, or perhaps even depressions. You see, all of these may be expressions of inadequate ways of handling one's anger. And when a deeply depressed person comes into my office, I immediately begin to wonder what kind of frustration and hostility this person is swallowing. We can swallow a lot more anger than we can digest. This indigestion gives us a "stomach ache" which we call depression. Depression is the thawing out of frozen rage and must be dealt with. An end result of unrelieved depression is suicide.

Some Principles of Constructive Quarreling

The degree of fulfillment in marriage is closely related to the ability of the partners to communicate, to understand each other. This is no guarantee of marital success but there cannot be much success without it. Without communication, intimacy fades, the couple drifts apart, and walls of hurt and misunderstanding build. Sometimes the two feel as if they are no longer on the same team or even playing the same game. When communication fails and intimacy dies, a couple can quarrel over almost anything—dirty socks on the floor, late meals, or even a look.

Marital quarreling is inevitable. This is the consensus of marriage therapists Wallace Denton, David Mace, George Bach. These writers have contributed greatly to my own understanding in this area and I recommend them to you.

The following are ground rules or principles for having a constructive quarrel with your partner. They can help you have the marriage you want.

* Timing is essential. The author of Ecclesiastes said there is a time for all things. Perhaps this is also true of husband-wife quarrels. At a particular moment a situation may be "too hot to handle." Under these circumstances, wisdom may very well indicate the need for waiting until the next day after the situation has cooled some; when one partner can approach the other and say, "Could we talk about what happened last night?"

* Don't gunnysack. One of the most frequent mistakes couples make is they never stick to one issue. They drag out every issue from the past and end up by resolving none of them. Avoid this overkill. Why drop an atomic bomb on a mud hut? Some people are injustice collectors. They wait until they have a gunnysack full and then dump the whole load on the unsuspecting partner.

* Let each other know where you are vulnerable. Each of us has certain sensitive areas. To strike these areas serves no constructive purpose. A wife likes to think she is attractive. If a wife is sensitive about being fifteen pounds overweight, then for her husband to call her a big, fat slob who makes me sick is unfair. A husband likes to think he's masculine. If in the next

argument his wife calls him a little scrawny runt who can't do a thing, she's hit below the belt. This is fighting dirty.

* Don't hit and run away. Some partners fight a "guerrilla war" type battle. That is, one of them moves in for a sudden attack and by the time the other one groups forces, the attacker has vent venom and pleads off saying, "let's drop it."

* After exhausting an issue, let it drop. Some people never let anything drop. One of the important rules of quarreling is avoiding direct or indirect references to a situation once it is resolved.

* Don't ask questions you already know the answer to. These questions usually contain some underlying hostility. "Did you fill the car with gas?" "Did you clean your room?" And that classic, "What have you done all day?"

* Consider compromise. In the complicated marriage relationship, compromise is not a dirty word. One dictionary definition states "something mid-way between different things, or combining certain of their qualities." In making many decisions, couples have to meet in the middle. Your partner's view of an issue may be just as real as yours, even though you may differ. There are few totally objective issues.

* Be a forgiving person. Forgiveness is a necessary part of all human relationships. Without forgiveness, the past never becomes the past, but is as real and painful today as it was when it happened years ago. The six most difficult words in the English language are, "I am wrong, I am sorry." Forgiveness is both a grace and a gift. Forgiveness wears blue jeans for it has a lot of work to do.

The realization that a certain amount of conflict is a normal part of any intimate loving relationship can take the pressure off. It helps remove the need to somehow set a twenty-four hour, perfect example. It helps identify the partners as humans, too. We help others more when we can somehow touch their humanity with ours.

If you and your partner can apply these principles, you will have more constructive marital squabbles. And you will find that your arguments don't have to be a source of major depression, but can instead be a real benefit to the valuable relationship you wish to keep.

Responsive Reading

Pastor: The family is the place where love holds things together. The family is persons who care.

People: It's people with power and purpose, joy and peace.

Pastor: The church is that kind of family, too!

People: The family of God is a caring family.

Pastor: Love holds it together.

People: The worshiping, serving congregation is truly a "Kingdom people."

Pastor: Turn our houses into homes so they will not be just third rate hotels where we simply eat and sleep.

People: Join our family circles and make them rings of love.

Pastor: Anchor our family ties firmly so they may hold during storms of adversity.

People: Instead of trying to keep up with the neighbors next door, help us to live in gracious dignity.

Pastor: Help family members mature in independence, yet know how to live for each other.

People: Bless the mothers whose ideals are hard to live with and help them care without smothering their children.

Pastor: Bless the fathers and give them warm affections and understanding rather than the pride and blind love of a doting parent.

Together: Bless our homes we pray. Keep them safe by night and day.

Footnotes

¹ *The Columbia Daily Tribune*, 15 February 1979, p. 24.

² Shain, Merle, *Some Men Are More Perfect Than Others* (New York: Bantam Books, 1973), p. 128.

³ Edwards, Marie and Hoover, Eleanor, *The Challenge of Being Single* (New York: Signet, 1974), p. 12.

⁴ Saxton, Lloyd, *The Individual, Marriage, and the Family*, 3d ed., (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Co.), p. 474.

⁵ Shain, p. 27.

HELP FOR FAMILIES: A PANEL

Ministering to Families in the Local Church

Kenneth Chafin

Thank you, Harry. I thought for a minute there that he was only introducing me and it was sort of wonderful to hear. I am delighted to be here. The last time I was with the Christian Life Commission was in Jackson, Mississippi, and I got in a lot of trouble there because someone reported accurately what I said about the renewal movement. Several years ago I got in trouble when I was supplying for Bruce McKeever over an aside I made about the DAR. The next year as he invited me back, he wrote a letter and said, "If you'll send me a list of the noble institutions in the community that you are going to vilify, I'll sort of prepare the defense for you." Foy was a little more secure in the invitation. He just let me come without warning. I'm going to be a little limited in what I say because two staff members from South Main who work with adults and are responsible for the overwhelming majority of our family ministries are sitting out here, as well as one of our deacons and his wife, so it will temper some of my illustrations a little bit.

Let me tell you where I'm coming from. I have a very profound appreciation for all of the allies of the family in our society, but it is my firm conviction that the church has more potential for helping the family than any other institution in society except the family itself. And I also believe that an awful lot can be done by one congregation whose interest, awareness, and commitment will focus on help for the family. So that in a discussion, if we get in a fight, you'll know where I'm coming from about my family, my parents divorced when I was a teenager. My father died three years ago. My mother, who is seventy, is at my home tonight.

Yesterday she and I planted some fruit trees together. She was all worn out from pointing to where I should dig the holes, and I was all worn out from being supervised. Barbara's parents are both living, retired, and in their early seventies, and only recently spent several days with them. Barbara and I have been married twenty-five years this July. Our Nancy is twenty-two and will go to law school in August. Troy is seventeen, has discovered the girls and Corvettes at the same time. Ellen is fifteen and just the delight of our life.

I've organized this presentation around some feelings that I have. First, the church will not do what it ought to to help the family unless it represents the highest priority of the pastor and the members of the staff. For me, at fifty-three, it will be the focus of my ministry for the rest of this decade. I've been asked a number of times during the past year as I've done stories with secular media, how do you explain your interest in the family? And so I'd like to give you the background of it. I guess the thing that really pushed it was working over the past six years as the lead off speaker for our seminar for formerly married. We have had more than 2,500 persons in these who have been casualties of a marriage that failed. And seeing what the failure of a marriage did to them caused me to back off and say, "Anything that can wipe you out like this has got to be more important than our society is suggesting." So I sort of began backing into it.

Having three children approaching marriageable age has done a lot to force me and Barbara to think about attitudes in our society that are being picked up almost uncritically by our children and what we want for our children in marriage, how much is involved in their having a good marriage and a healthy family. I think also feeling the fallout and the shockwaves of the divorces of people in my own age group and of my own lifestyle has made Barbara and me feel very, very vulnerable. You know, we've lived with a lot of these simple little truisms, but when a Baptist deacon who has been married thirty or forty years, who has been faithful in every aspect of the church, he and his wife break up, it sends shock waves around everyone and it panics people because it makes us feel that you cannot take anything for granted; that you are vulnerable. It makes you go back and ask yourself about these relationships. I think, also, of a heightened awareness of the very natural effect that a number of emphases in our society which, though not sinister in makeup, have unbelievable effects upon marriage.

The whole urbanizing process, which tends to fragment and make people be naive about community and the relationship of groups or raised women's awareness, which I think has needed to be coming for a long, long time but so many men are still in the Old Testament with the mentality of Abraham that with women all seeing themselves essentially differently than their mothers did, I think it's got a lot of potential for some tensions. I've also been motivated by a sense of anger about current attitudes about relationships in society that go almost unchallenged but which, if taken seriously, lay almost a frontal attack on the basic nature of what it means to have a marriage relationship. And then, of course, my growing awareness of,

beginning in August, my eighth year at South Main. So I have watched some magnificent people at work, and I have seen the enormous potential that a congregation has for undergirding marriage and for strengthening the family. In many, many ways the articulating of the ideals, legitimizing the process of relationship, the stages in building a network of support, in ministries at the crisis times, I've seen the church restoring people to relationship; and I've seen what a number of congregations can join hands and do. We have in the Union Baptist Association, which is the Houston Association, a center for counselling which was set up with people who are mature Christians with professional training who work in the context of referrals from churches and who are aware of the role that the congregation can have as support in therapy. So all of these things have focused me on the family.

My feeling is to move with all deliberate speed and to call for some pretty radical changes. One is that our highly individualistic theology is going to have to give way to more of an understanding of community, both in our understanding of the nature of the church and understanding of people in systems. This means that our theological seminaries are going to have to look at what they are doing. I don't see much being done to help the families of people who are in the process of preparing for church leadership. So if all they do is to copy what they see in their professors, who by and large are moonlighting to make a living, and to copy how they are treated as families, we're already in trouble. But I think also, in understanding the church's mission, I do not see the church's mission being focused on ministry to persons as much so that even a thing as exciting as the church growth movement very often is not people centered but church growth centered. The curriculum has too much Greek and Hebrew in it and is too light in all understanding of healthy relationships. The average student gets in and out of seminary, does well, doesn't have the foggiest notion of how to get along with people or how to deal with crises or problems and this is true not only in staff relationships, it's true in family relationships. I think our boards and agencies will have to adjust to the fact that the world is not divided up into program statements but into families and probably be a little more sensitive to this although it would be a strain.

I think the big thing, and I'd like to see us focus on this for a little bit, I think we will have to develop a hermeneutic with the Baptist Faith and Message throwing their weight around again. Most of our people are going to go in a different direction than this, but we are going to have to develop a hermeneutic which will allow us to soften our traditionally, very legalistic understanding of what we think the Bible teaches on divorce by putting it in the context of the redemptive theme of the Bible. We're not compassionate enough, we're not consistent enough, and it's my feeling that we are not correct in our understanding of the teaching of the Bible. But this has got to be dealt with or we are in trouble.

I did the Cornerstone Lectures out at Hardin Simmons University this spring and in one of the coffee dialogues afterwards, I got hit with just a classic example, and these are bright young people, of the fact that Baptists have not yet put our understanding of divorce in the

context of forgiveness and beginning again. They even came at me with passages like where Paul didn't want a woman to teach if there was a man there. So I said, "Do you have any problem laying aside Peter's understanding of the provincial nature of the gospel?" "No, he was wrong." I said, "What makes it so hard then for you to turn loose of some of Paul's teachings where his relationship with Jesus Christ had not yet touched him?" You see, you come up against the fact that the average Baptist has got two perfect people in the New Testament, one named Jesus and one named Paul. We draw an awful lot of our scriptures from Paul and ignore an awful lot of the spirit of Jesus.

The church must, I think, state its goals positively to help build good marriages and healthy relationships. I would like to see us go a different direction than the medical community has gone because, and I think this is one of the crises that counselling faces, it is modeled after the medical community. You doctors will have to forgive me, but I'm willing to argue, medicine is not as geared to health as to illnesses; and if you're not careful, one of the reasons so many people are nervous about things that you plan for the family is that they think you only plan something for the family that is about to fall apart. They never see this coming as a part of growth, and so at South Main we think this is true even when we are working what's called the "ambulance at the bottom of the hill."

When we're doing the Beginning Again Seminar for formerly marrieds where everybody in the room has been married and are now divorced and they are in different states of bleeding, the first thing we do is articulate in the context of what we are doing, what the ideals of relationship is. So that we feel that there is a positive, affirming note even when you are dealing with people who have failed. And the majority of the things we do at South Main, although we've gotten a great deal more attention by helping people who have gone through divorces, have been not so much problem solving but growth and development oriented. Let me just give you some of these, and I told Linda Jones and Larry Link they could just stand up and bow all during this section of the talk, because they are the ones who are doing this. Friday night I have all of the highschool seniors in our church coming to my house to eat supper. I am going to discuss the idea of: "Don't Louse Up Your Marriage While You Are Single." I'm going to discuss the idea of evaluating attitudes in society and beginning to build the kind of relationship even in dating to make for healthy relationships when you get married. And then, beginning Sunday for a month of Sundays, they are going to be dealing with this thing as a part of our church program. We will start on Wednesday night, May 2nd, about our fifteenth preparation for successful marriage seminar. These run five Wednesday nights, 7:30 to 9:30, two hours, with sort of a coffee break in the middle. We don't advertise these for people who are engaged and haven't decided what kind of silverware to pick out. We don't do much good with those people because those people by and large are locked in; they are closed, and it would be disastrous for them to discover that they didn't know what marriage was after they had already ordered the invitations. But the first one we did we had 165 people, and we are now getting three and four years later,

people who had their own understanding of the nature of relationships changed in these seminars.

The majority of our activities are around nurturing young marriages: the marriage checkups; the marriage enrichment retreats Larry Link initiated this spring; a three-year program of marriage enrichment that is designed to touch practically every young couple in our congregation in a very meaningful way, starting the second series just in a couple of weeks; our family affair dinner series. A hundred young couples, age 35 and under, in our church sponsor, in the spring and in the fall, several series, they eat dinner together. They have someone speak on some particular aspect of marriage and the family; intimacy or stress or in-laws or finances, or something like that; ask questions; and then around dessert and coffee, they discuss how what they have learned relates to their marriage. We have a host of helps in parenting with sessions and retreats for couples and for single parent units, parent dedication day in the Sunday School is a classic role of parenting. A lot of things are being done to affirm the family in all of its forms.

You may not like this, but of course Foshee is going to love it, the best overall continuous support group for families in the church is called Sunday School. There's nothing in the world that can build a better web for strengthening in relationships than a loving compassionate, sensitive, aware adult Sunday School class. Some of the fantastic ministries that I see to the family in an ongoing way come from that. I think that the pulpit can play a major role in affirming the ideals, in evaluating the alternatives and encouraging the family. The book that Harry mentioned, *Is There A Family in the House* basically grew out of a series that I began preaching between Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day in 1977. I think that if the church deals with family in terms of health, this will free the church then to deal without intimidation with persons and families who have fallen short of the ideal.

Last, the church needs to bring the resources of her gospel, her fellowship to bear on the family in their brokenness. The Good News is that God came to you in failure, brings love, forgiveness and restoration of relationship. I think the healing power of an accepting, forgiving, loving fellowship is one of the most wonderful things in all the world. There's enough to do to keep us all busy. I would like to see some of you with good minds and good training working in classrooms to begin to do some polemics relating to attitudes in society which are destructive to relationships which go almost unchecked. I'd like to see some of you do more practical help in thinking how we can counteract the effects say of living in an urban society in the time it takes in the traffic and the impact of the media and the fragmentation.

One of the things our church is getting ready to do just as soon as we get the circuits unloaded a little bit is to begin turning back to the family its legitimate role. By and large we've done what the government says. The government said, "We'll handle this, the school will handle this, and the church will handle this." We are convinced that there is no way that the church can do religious education of children, but there is a way

that the church might be able to train parents to do the religious education of their own children. Maybe, if the churches begin turning back to the family in a relationship that is really the responsibility of the family, maybe the government and the school would get the same idea.

A Judge's Perspective on Family Life

Oswin Chrisman

Could I ask you to please rise? Would you raise your right hand? Do you promise to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you, God? Answer, "I do." You may be seated.

Outside of giving you a stretch, I'm trying to be very serious. I'm pleased to be here. It's my opportunity to speak for just a few moments in an environment that any judge or any lawyer would crave and cherish for a lifetime. I have witnessed this meeting this week and particularly in one of the sessions this morning, I wished for the right of cross examination, but it was not there. (And, oh, on Sunday morning, Dr. Douglas Watterson, my former pastor, the right of cross-examination would be fun, wouldn't it? I was in a church one time where actually a fellow on the back row got up and challenged the pastor, and he almost fainted—and so did the other folks.)

I wish for just a moment that I could create for you the drama of the courtroom. It's fabulous. Actually what it is all about is simply recreating an event or a happening some time in the past, bringing it before the judge or the jury, a matter of an automobile accident or a deceptive trade practice or a criminal act; it's bringing a single event or a series of events to the court room. But in the field of family law, it likely is bringing before the judge or the jury a series of events that might encompass the life of a marriage. In struggling for a picture, I bring to you a picture of the operating room of a busy hospital. The surgeon is dressed, scrubbed, and ready; the nurses are busy with their various assignments; the anesthesia is completed. The surgeon steps up efficiently in a very busy manner. The courtroom is like that. But in the family court, in the divorce, in the custody fight, what is happening is that a family is being rent in two without the benefit of pain killing drugs. I have witnessed that time after time after time. I took the appointment to family court from a very docile probate court because Foy Valentine and his group taught me that I had an obligation to try to work out my Christian responsibility in line with what little talent I had. That was in 1973. I was the fourth domestic relations judge in Dallas county. Since that time, three more have been created; and we are still behind. A tidal wave was coming. Over a hundred cases a week were filed in my court; and that was multiplied through the several other courts. Would you believe that we established an efficiency of disposing of over a hundred cases a week? Can you imagine a two or a three minute divorce with all that is at stake for those people? And that operating room, the faces of those children, the faces of the spouses. Why in heaven's name would a family bring themselves to a courtroom to settle their problems?

Well, my naive approach was not to last, I was not long in being taken aback. The very first week I was compelled to hear a divorce action between a Baptist deacon and his wife whose family-splitting problem had blown up on a pulpit committee trip. Through my court, one little family court in these United States, have come my governor, my state senator, and others. During my time as a family court judge, the church which I attended witnessed church staff domestic problems. Trying to count it up this afternoon, I believe I can accurately say that in my own personal family, a Christian family, all professing Christians, there have been seven divorces. I'm a little vague there because I can't remember whether one cousin has tried it three or four times. Now, the courtroom is simply the laboratory of all these lives, our lives. There is a Catholic theology related to the family which is clearly visible. There is the role of the Jewish family which is clearly visible. There is a very strong Latter Day Saint or Mormon witness which may be observed. As a matter of fact, in two Mormon divorces that I've had I've literally had to quiet down the elder who was there to speak on one side or the other having determined who in his opinion was right and trying to tell the judge not only who was right and who was wrong but also how to divide the property. But my friends, speaking in our Baptist family, as a family court judge I saw no theology for the evangelical Christian. As a matter of fact, again relying on my memory of what I estimate to be twenty thousand cases that I heard in family court, I can count only ten cases where the minister was visible.

The law presumes in most states at this time that fault will not be a factor in the divorce. In our state, with the passage of what we call the family code, fault was removed in the hopes that it would de-escalate the emotion in the courtroom. By and large that has been a failure because the fault and the emotion that arose from the fault has basically been transferred from blame or fault to the control of the children, or the custody, or the conservatorship, or the division of the property.

By and large, what I have seen of the counseling programs that are available to people are largely wasted at the court level. Let me try to explain that. Our statutes required counseling with the new family code. The lawyers had to certify that counseling had been made available. We tried that for two years and with the meeting of the next legislature, that statute was remanded, making it merely permissible for the court to order counseling. Basically, the die is cast by the time the families are ready to declare themselves and come to court. The courtroom itself is the enactment of the drama, the tearing of the sheet, the rendering separate of the parties. I've often wondered who wins in a divorce action in the courts. The parties do not win. At best, one gets fifty to sixty percent of the property. The children do not win.

I made it a practice when I was a family court judge to talk to every child involved in a divorce action in my court. I have yet to talk with a child who, given their "druthers," would not put their mother and father back together in whatever hellish existence that might have been, and that includes violence and abuse. Do

you have any concept of how much violence and abuse is visible to the court? Are you aware of the fact that domestic squabble police calls account for about twenty percent of the police reports? But in that twenty percent even the law enforcement officers have an eighty percent ratio of injury. More policemen or law enforcement officers are killed in a domestic squabble trying to get between the husband and the wife or the parent and the child or the child and the parent than in any other single endeavor? No wonder we back away from the problem. It is a perplexing, difficult, almost impossible job for the court or for the jury to bring that emotion and bring the set of facts into a sterile courtroom environment and make an appropriate decision. There are no winners in a divorce action. Now that's not to say that some people cannot be helped by divorce. I am not a theologian; but I know some people who are living proof that they required a divorce. I'll let the theologians explain that or how God's will could include that, but sometimes divorce is an appropriate answer. What is inappropriate is the attitude of those who claim to be Christian around that divorce situation, who fail to respond to the needs. What David Switzer said this afternoon about crisis intervention would never be more important than it is in this particular situation. At no place are we as staff supported church members weaker than at the point of helping the divorced; and this is the situation for the whole voluntary sector. A strategy to help the people in court is very important.

It was my opportunity and privilege to serve five years in the probate courts of our state. That basically is handling wills and trusts, and I had to peer across the bench at widows, women who for fifty or sixty years had lived in a kind of utopian paradise with a good and a caring manager of their properties. But he would be taken away for one reason or another; and there she would be, lonesome, depressed, and frightened, never having understood the system, because the system, at least in my state, presumed she was not capable, something called coverture. That has now been removed, thank God, but there are women still in our communities, in our churches, who are going to face life alone by divorce or by death who still have no understanding of how to make it on their own. If responsibility in that situation could be transferred to the pastor, or to the lawyer, or to the banker, or to someone else responsible, it would be a happy situation. But the likelihood is that trust will not exist with this frightened person and that the beauty parlor operator or the lady next door in the same situation with different facts, or the cousin, or some other uninformed friend, or worse, someone with malice to steal all they have will come along and become the strength for that person. I'd like to take some folks who are such advocates for going backwards with women's rights and let them help those widows. The problem is that society now has extremes going both ways. In the courtroom, however, the extremes are stripped away. We are down to the essence of human tragedy. From the court's standpoint, the judge is not God even though people rise when the robe walks in the room to pay courtesy and honor. But I know that under that robe is an ordinary human being. Oh, I've had the national press, a book written about one case, a movie made of

it; and yet all the way through the fallacy of the human being is there. If you do nothing else related to a family court, love the people, be there, sit with the children whose parents are divorcing, give them your number to call, respond when the mother or father is drunk and beating on them, help parents look for the runaway child, find them, and love them. That's one thing the court can't do for you. And it's the one thing Christians do best.

Denominational Resources for Family Life

Joseph W. Hinkle

How can a church best minister to its families? That is a very perplexing question for ministers who deal daily with families with enormous problems. It is also a perplexing question for denominational leaders who work at developing materials and programs for churches to use.

The old stock answer that everything a church does should strengthen its members, and thus its families, is not enough. There is now a growing consciousness among ministers and laypersons alike that special ministries must be provided to meet the needs of families. Likewise there is a growing awareness among convention agencies of the readiness of churches to set a high priority on strengthening family life. Many pastors, ministers of education, and congregations are convinced that they must begin family ministry immediately. A major effort always begins with a sense of urgency. That sense of urgency is that we must **HELP THE FAMILY!**

But where do we start? The church does not have a family ministry program organization. It does not have a standard curriculum, nor a regular meeting time for family ministry.

Family ministry begins with a sensitive pastor who discovers tremendous tension and stress among the families of his congregation. He also discovers that families are different. They come in a wide range of sizes, ages, backgrounds, and lifestyles. There are the traditional types where both parents are living at home with the children, and the husband alone works outside the home. But there is the growing number where both parents work outside the home. In many homes a mother is struggling to hold the single parent family together. Our pastor friend also discovers that families experience varying degrees of health, stability, and fulfillment. This sensitive pastor has just discovered needs!

He begins feeling stirrings deep within his soul. He must be touched by the Spirit of God to get started. He begins to evaluate the approach of the church to ministry. He is drawn to some fundamental conclusions. One, he must focus on strengthening families of the church. Second, he must involve church leaders in this effort, because the task is much too great for him alone.

There begins to be a noticeable change in the kind of preaching the congregation is hearing. He is less judgmental. He speaks out of deeper love and compassion, concern and encouragement, redemption and hope. The spirit of his voice is empathetic as he speaks

to the needs of the congregation. He finds books like *Is There A Family In The House* (Kenneth Chafin, Word, 1978) and *Families With Purpose* (William Pinson, Broadman Press, 1978) exceedingly helpful.

He soon gathers enough personal and emotional courage to share his new found concerns with the deacons. Over a short period of time most of them join him in his concern. They decide to do something! So they organize themselves into family ministry teams. They assign groups of families to each deacon for his responsibility as an undershepherd. The pastor trains the deacons in simple, but effective ways of ministering to families. They find and use the deacon family ministry materials. They distribute *Home Life* magazine and selected copies of the Family Enrichment Series books as appropriate.

Several fruitful months pass. The church likes what is happening and wants to do more. But how? The pastor and church council talk at length about the needs of the congregation and their desire to do more. They look for resources. The pastor discovers, to his amazement and surprise, that help is available. He learns there is a family ministry consultant at the state convention office who will gladly come to his association and church and help get a program started.

While browsing at the book store the pastor finds a new book entitled, *How To Minister To Families In Your Church* (Joseph Hinkle and Melva Cook, Broadman Press, 1978). From that he leads the church council to plan a family ministry program for the entire year. They begin their program with a family life conference to celebrate Christian Home Week. They use the Family Enrichment Series of books on preparation for marriage as resources for their teachers and participants. It turns out to be a real celebration of Christ in the family for the church.

In June the adult Sunday School department sponsors a family retreat on Friday night and Saturday until noon. They find a sample family life retreat outline in the *Church Recreation* magazine.

By now they find additional family ministry resources for doing projects. In July they organize Church Training groups to study the new equipping center modules entitled *Making Good Marriages Better* and *Discipline In the Christian Home*. After these groups complete their study, they organize two new groups to study the same modules. There is enough interest among the membership that these modules are taught four times in one year.

Soon it is the traditional time for the fall revival. And so they decide to have a family life revival. Many families go out into the community and enlist other families to come to the revival with them. Family worship, witness, sharing, and communication themes draw family units closer together than ever before. Many of the children within families are saved. New families come into the church on a variety of decisions. A spirit of renewal permeates the entire fellowship.

The pastor realizes, however, that all of family ministry can not take place at the church building. The

family itself must be responsible for strengthening itself in the privacy of the home. So he leads the church to provide a copy of *Home Life* magazine for every family, *Mature Living*, for the elderly, and *Christian Single* for single parents and others. Everyone is encouraged to have family and personal devotions daily.

The church media center sponsors a family reading program. The director of the media center secures a wide variety of helpful books and pamphlets. Many of the members read and secure study course credit for their efforts. And those family members who participate are strengthened.

How does a church minister to its families? Someone cares. Resources are discovered, plans are made, concerned leaders are enlisted and trained, and projects are conducted. That is only the beginning of how a church helps families.

Public Policy and the Family

Charles Petty

It pleases me a great deal to be here. I am pleased for several reasons. I guess most of all it is said that a friend is someone who lights up your face. And seeing a number of you causes a good deal of good feelings to come through me. A lot of you have meant a great deal to me in the past and I am extremely pleased to be among kindred souls tonight. In fact, sitting at this table is a former professor, a former Sunday School teacher, a former colleague, a former consultant. Now I say all that to say that many people share the responsibility for what I am about to say and therefore I am not totally responsible.

I am pleased to be here because, as was said in the introduction and as many of you know, I have spent a great deal of my ministry in the area of family relationships. I did write my doctoral dissertation on divorce. Presently I make about two hundred speeches a year on family; in fact, during the two or three weeks before and after this seminar, I will have conducted family life conferences in North Carolina, Maryland, Ohio, Mississippi, and Tennessee. This past semester I taught a course on sexuality at one of our Baptist schools in North Carolina. I've been a visiting professor at Southeastern Seminary in the area of family relationships. Thus, any conference which deals with family is a friend of mine.

My parents divorced when I was six years of age. I know what that means. My mother discovered she had cancer shortly after that and died three years later. I know what that means. I know what it means to be a step child, to have a step mother, a step brother, a step sister. A few years later, my father and younger brother were killed. I know what it means to be an orphan. I lived by myself when I was fifteen for a year. Later then I moved in with an aunt and uncle and I know what it means to be a foster child. I also know what it means to be married for sixteen years to a woman who is both liberated and submissive. And boy, that's the best of both worlds. In fact, you are not biblical if you're not both, but we'll deal with that on another occasion. I have two sons who are the light of my life,

who bring me unspeakable joy and pain, usually within five minutes of each other.

One thing I did learn from my professor, Dr. Chafin, was to speak from notes scribbled on the back of a napkin; in fact, where I was reared, Dr. Ashcraft, in that section of Arkansas, notes were a sure sign of quenching the Spirit. A manuscript was ranked liberalism at best but more likely blasphemy. However, Foy Valentine said to me, "Manuscript it." So contrary to my basic nature, I have done that. And since I've done it, I might as well use it. My first inclination is to go with the sugar stick or a very glamorous topic. Making a panel come alive is tough enough but impossible with a title like "Help For Families: A Panel." Why couldn't I have been assigned a topic such as: "Guess Who Committed Adultery at the Sheraton Twin Towers Last Night"; or "The Relationship Between Pimples and Masturbation"; or "Children Are Like Pancakes: Throw Away the First Batch"; or "Why Ministers Sleep in Pajamas and a Necktie." Now those topics create bated breaths and put you on the edge of your chair waiting for someone to give a testimony. Well, "Help For Families: A Panel."

A few months ago I would have said that churches could help families by doing three things: (1) provide pre-marital and pre-parent education; (2) provide marriage and family enrichment; and (3) provide help during family and marriage crises. Under the first grouping, one could talk about pre-marital counselling, post-wedding ceremony counselling, seminars for youth on marriage, conferences for expectant parents, etc. The second area, enrichment, lends itself to marriage and family life conferences, retreats, revivals, workshops, seminars, clubs for singles, senior adults and better homes, first baby groups, observance of special days and weeks, banquets, etc. The third area usually deals with brokenness and trauma, separation and divorce, death, illness, unemployment, child abuse, drug abuse, moral indiscretion, crime, discovery of homosexuality, retardation, etc. This framework has been and will continue to be the skeleton on which I put flesh. However, I have prepared a brand new speech for this occasion. This decision was made after reviewing a tentative program, looking at the personalities, seeing the direction I assumed most people would be going. I choose to speak to an area which will probably, in my estimation, have the greatest influence upon family than any other topic presented during this seminar.

Eleven years ago I half left the ministry when I began working for Texas Baptists. Six months ago I completely left the ministry and am now considered an employee of state government. Don't ever knock your housing allowance. Incidentally, I am discovering that it's easy to work for the taxpayers after you have worked for the tithers. I joined Governor Jim Hunt's staff six months ago, and about thirty percent of his staff is under my supervision. At this point his administration has two hallmarks, volunteerism and raising a new generation. Both of these concerns fall within my job description. I took this job contrary to the advice of most of my friends. The Book of Job has new meaning for me. The major consideration had to do with stewardship of skills and witness. Where could

I have the greatest impact in general and family in particular? No governor has ever asked me much of anything, much less to sit up close to him. The governor is quite powerful and can have enormous influence upon the lives of its citizens. Unfortunately, Southern Baptists have not taken their faith into Caesar's Palace, the chambers of Congress, or city and county halls. Having worked for eleven years for organizations which promoted Christian citizenship, I conclude that we haven't seen Southern Baptists or Christians of any stripe exert very much collective influence upon government. I am totally committed to the local church and have every intention of working again within the Baptist structure. Floyd Craig and I both want you to know that in either two years or six years we're going to need jobs. He sends his greetings, incidentally, to a number of you. And we have resumes.

The following statement that I am about to make is not designed or intended to depreciate the role or value of the average Baptist church, but I firmly believe that unless Baptists are willing to get involved in the political process, they should forget about having much impact upon improving the quality of families and family ministries. I repeat, unless Baptists are willing to get involved in the political process, they should forget about ever having much impact upon improving the quality of families and family ministries. That statement is based on three realities. The first is that it is state governments which make and enforce marriage and family laws. They decide who gets married, when, and to whom. They decide how marriages end, the care and provision of children, responsibilities husbands and wives, parents and children have to one another. Every facet of life including family is radically affected and altered by legislation. Over three thousand bills will be introduced in the North Carolina general assembly this session. Many of those bills will profoundly, radically have an impact upon families. One law can do or undo what it has taken years for us to achieve. Not to be involved in the process is to mirror rather than alter; it is to conform to the law of the land rather than to transform the law. Regrettably, Baptists seem content to play the "ain't it awful" game rather than trying to make the process reflect a Judeo-Christian ethic. A word of caution—I am not talking about forcing a narrow sectarian value system upon society. Separation of church and state is an important concern.

A second reality is that government has the resources to do ministry. One state's budget, North Carolina, is two and one half times greater than the total income of all thirty-five thousand Southern Baptist churches. Its income is thirty times greater than the cooperative program receipts of all the state conventions combined. North Carolina spends about two billion dollars per year just on children. Two billion dollars. Add the other forty-nine state budgets together plus the Federal budget and there are billions upon billions upon billions of dollars to do family ministry. The average church can't convince the budget committee to appropriate \$500 for a family life conference. Ask a church to support one needy family or the wife of their pastor who has just died and see what kind of reaction you get. It is ironic that we can spend millions of dollars on bricks and mortar but only pennies on relationships. Outside of a few large rich churches, there is virtually

no money available for family ministries. Remember almost twenty-eight thousand of our churches have less than five hundred members, and in addition, only a few Southern Baptist Churches, conventions, boards, agencies, and commissions have staff members assigned family concerns. Conversely, government has tens upon tens of thousands of employees who are family life specialists. They are located in every nook and cranny of the state. Let me put it into focus with this analogy. If Southern Baptist retirement facilities run at capacity, approximately 3,700 can be cared for; approximately 2,900 children can be served in our children's homes. Who has the resources to care for the family needs of 220,000,000 people? Government.

A third reality is that not only government has the capacity to deal with every dimension of family needs. Government's umbrella is large and in theory encompasses everyone. Government relates to the economy, the sick, the dying, the physically and mentally disadvantaged, the criminal, the educational process, the unemployed, the underemployed, migrants, welfare, Medicaid, Medicare, social security, minorities, foster care, child abuse, senior adults, sex education, abortion, Equal Rights Amendment, and the list goes on. My premise is that many facets impact on family structures and the church cannot or will not address itself to all of these facets. Thus churches must involve themselves in the process which does touch all of life. Our go-it-alone attitude automatically builds in failure in achieving help for families. Too often we are confronted by this complexity; we salve our consciences by asking the Sunday School Board and state conventions to hire a few people as family life specialists. We declare Christian Home Week in May, which many churches, if not most, ignore. We distribute flowers on Mother's Day but precious little information about how to be a parent. We announce the birth and death of our members, the birth and death of their marriages, but provide no practical help on how to be a responsible husband, wife, mother and father. We cross our fingers and send our teenage children out as cannon fodder in a distorted sexual world. And if we provide so little family help to our own members, woe be to those outside our membership. There is no room for them at our table. The truth is if you aren't a card carrying Southern Baptist, then don't expect much family ministry from our churches. Southern Baptists have been good talkers of the word. I question how good of doers we have been. We speak with the tongues of men and angels but minister with arthritic hands. We don't turn back after putting our hands to the plow. We just never put them on it.

It is imperative that you hear this closing statement. The church must never, never stop proclaiming the saving grace of God through his son. It must never cease to teach God's way of living life. The church must equip its members with a faith which is usable beyond the walls of the church. You could not have T. B. Maston as a teacher and ever depreciate the importance, no, necessity, of undergirding your ethics with biblical theology. I am not calling for an exodus out of the church. I am not claiming that government is the solution to family concerns. What I am calling is for Baptists to take Romans 13 seriously. What I am calling for has well been stated by a former state WMU direc-

tor. She said, "Let's find a way to do Christian ministry and get the government to pay for it." If government is supposed to serve the governed, then let us ask it to serve our families. Let us hire experts to work the system. Do we have not because we ask not? Do we have not because we have asked the wrong institution? Perhaps we can help families the most by helping government be what it was ordained by God to be. Without the leveling influence of the Judeo-Christian ethic, government cannot achieve and maintain quality family relationships and ministries. Without utilizing the resources and processes of government, Southern Baptists will continue to put band-aids on cancers, following Pied Pipers who offer simplistic solutions, printing family life materials which are stored under pulpits, conducting family life programs which few attend, and lamenting that we can't go home again to Walton's mountain.

The Family and Moral Development

Herman Williams

The theme "Help for Families" is appropriate to the rapid social change that we are now experiencing. This theme itself, however, raises an important question: "Help for families to do what?" Should the nuclear family which has characterized recent generations be preserved, or should other forms of family life emerge? Should the extended family structure of other cultures, which once flourished on American soil, be revived? Should new forms of family life appropriate to the 20th and 21st Century be encouraged? These are but a few of the questions that are raised by the title of this seminar.

All of us recognize that we are passing through a period of rapid social change. But, if the church is attempting to conserve the nuclear family of recent American tradition, is this an attempt to preserve a tradition that is obsolete in the brave new world of 1984?

Many of the issues concerning the change in family structure can be debated. These debates are heard not only in seminars such as this, but throughout American society. On the subject which I have been assigned, however, there is no room for debate. The family is the basic unit of moral development. The moral values of individuals and, ultimately, of society are shaped around the primary interpersonal relationships that occur within the family. The primacy of the family in the development of moral values is not only attested to by the ancient scriptures of the Judeo-Christian religions, but it has been confirmed by the careful research of scholars as well as by the facts of history. Whether we like it or not, the moral growth of human beings is influenced more by the family than by any other institution of society.

The experience of Watergate should have destroyed the American belief that formal education is the answer to every social problem. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, American society has turned increasingly to formal educational experiences as the solution to every social concern. From the physical education, health education, and character education

movements of the early part of this century to the massive educational programs of the Great Society in more recent times, Americans have believed that formal educational programs were the ultimate answers to every social ill. But the persons who perpetrated Watergate were graduates of the greatest, most prestigious of educational institutions and participants in the most learned of professions. Formal education cannot solve all of the problems of society because many of these problems are ultimately moral problems and not technological, or informational, or managerial.

If the family is central to the moral development of human beings, and if the family is threatened by the rapid social change that is now being experienced, then how can the Christian Church help to preserve the vital family functions and maintain the moral values that are consistent with its faith? I would like to suggest very briefly that there are at least five major things that the church can do:

1. The church can recognize that it is a part of the problem, and at least partially responsible for the breakdown in family structures that is now being experienced. The history of this change in family structure cannot be discussed in these few moments but, instead of helping the family meet the challenges of changing society, the church has been one of the social institutions that has taken over from the family the vital functions that once gave it meaning and purpose. In addition to recognizing its own culpability in the crisis of family life now confronting our culture in this last portion of the Twentieth Century, the church can take some positive steps which will help maintain the strength of family life and provide the setting for the moral education that can take place only within the family.
2. The second thing that can be done by the church is to recognize that the family has a central role in moral development and that the church has an important but secondary and helping role. In order to accomplish this change, however, the church will have to alter radically its present practices of education and of organization. The contemporary church primarily sees the family as an institution that serves the church and provides the personnel and the participation for its own programs of education, mission, finances, and evangelism. A recognition of the family as the primary institution of moral growth may require more radical change than the church is prepared to initiate.
3. The third thing that the church can do to help the family fulfill its role is for the church to protect the time demands that it places upon its faithful adherents during that brief period of life in which parents are involved in child-bearing and in child-rearing. The pressures for active involvement in the programs and organizations of churches often fall most heavily upon persons who are parents of young children. One of the things the church must do if it is to help parents fulfill their moral development and socialization functions is to be very cautious about the

demands for time and for involvement that are placed upon parents when these activities do not help these parents fulfill their parental tasks.

4. The fourth step that can be taken by churches to aid families is for the church to become very serious about its own educational responsibilities in helping to prepare persons for the role of parenthood. The means by which persons learned parenthood skills in previous generations are not working in the rapidly changing society of which we are now a part. In addition to this lack of preparation for parenthood, the demands placed upon parents in this generation are greater and are more difficult to accomplish than in any previous generation. Since the church is still an active participant in the wedding ceremonies of many of its participants, it has a natural entree toward helping solve the problem of preparation for parenthood.
5. Fifth, and finally, I suggest that the church needs to provide guidance and practical help for parents to help them meet the challenges of the moral development of their own children. Providing this guidance and this help, however, will involve the church in a more difficult and demanding educational task than it has ever before undertaken.

If the church becomes serious about helping the family with the moral development of its children, it will become involved in a revolution that influences every facet of the life of the church. Guiding the moral development of persons is one area in which good intentions are often not sufficient. In response to the changes taking place in family life, new programs, retreats, mass meetings, and encounter groups concerning various aspects of family have already begun to appear. All of these programs have been developed with the best of intentions, but none of them has been carefully evaluated by the rigors of scientific research. Some of these mass meetings concerning the family produce, I suspect, the exact opposite effect from that for which they were intended.

Only careful painstaking research will enable the church to develop organizations, structures, and educational curriculum that will aid families in the moral development of their children. This scientific research, which requires all programs to withstand the rigors of careful evaluation and examines the best intentions with the spotlight of scientific evidence, is one means of humbly praying "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

To approach the problem of helping families with the moral development of their children will require more courage and more dedication than is often seen in our churches.

To do less is to invite disaster.

LOVE, ANGER, AND INTIMACY

David Mace

I am going to begin by making an outrageous statement. Here it is—"What I shall say in this session

will be the most important material presented at this entire conference."

I can imagine your response—"What arrogance! Who does this man think he is, to follow a galaxy of star speakers such as we have listened to—including the First Lady in the Land—and to insist that *his* speech is the most important!"

Please notice that I didn't say that. The fact that I happen to be speaking to you doesn't really matter. It is *what I am going to say* that matters. It is my *message* that is of supreme importance. So let me waste no further time, but go ahead and say it.

I have spent most of my professional life—a period of now forty-five years—working for better marriages and better families, in a total of sixty-one countries of the world. I have been in at the early beginning of marriage and family counseling. I have tried to study the family closely, and to keep up with the literature in the field.

Now, in my later years, I have come to see that much of what I have been doing and thinking has been secondary and peripheral. I have become deeply convinced that we have been ignoring the vital, central reality about the business of living together in families. We have made tremendous efforts to *improve the social environment of the family*, and I hope we shall continue to do so. We have made great advances in *identifying the areas in which families manifest functional dislocation*, and I am very happy about that deeper understanding. We have vastly *improved our skills in offering help to families in serious trouble*, and trained hundreds of thousands of professionals to use these skills.

However, I believe that behind all these studies and efforts there is something vital and essential that we have missed. Let me try to spell it out, very simply, under four headings:

1. When a marriage ends in divorce, or a family breaks down, the failure always takes place *from the inside*.

2. The generally supposed causes of marital trouble—difficulties with sex, money, in-laws, and child raising—are *not the real causes*. These are only the *arenas* in which the inner failure of the relationship is outwardly demonstrated.

3. The inner failure of a close relationship takes place always for the same reason—*because the persons involved have been unable to achieve mutual love and intimacy*.

4. The failure to achieve love and intimacy is almost always due to *the inability of the persons concerned to deal creatively with anger*.

Let me make two other statements that may well surprise you:

1. Marriage and family living generates, in normal people, more anger than they experience in any other social situation in which they habitually find themselves.

2. The overwhelming majority of family members know of only two ways of dealing with anger—to vent it, or to suppress it. Both of these methods are destructive of love and intimacy. There is a third method, but most members of families don't even know

that it exists, so of course they are quite unable to make use of it.

If you have followed me so far, you will realize that I am now in serious trouble. I have opened up a subject of vast importance; but in the short time at my disposal I can't possibly do justice to it.

Never mind, let me do what I can, and let the chips fall where they may. This is all very new material, which can't be fitted into any of our existing frames of reference; so the chances are great that I shall be misunderstood. But I must take that risk, because what I have to say is vital not only to our culture in general, but even more vital to practicing Christians in our culture.

To simplify our discussion, I shall from now on confine my attention to *marriage*—but let me make it clear that what I have to say applies equally, with minor modifications, to all other family relationships.

What are two married people trying to do? Outwardly, they are creating a new unit of human society. The social obligations of marriage are clearly stated in the wedding services of most churches. They are to beget children, to keep sex under reasonable control, and to foster man/woman companionship. The last of these three has, throughout most of Christian history, been given little attention. Today, in the judgment of most people, it has moved up to first place. The primary goal of modern marriage, whether we approve of it or not, is to achieve a close relationship of love and intimacy.

We could talk for a long time about what love really means. But it will serve my purpose better if I focus on intimacy, which is the manifestation of real love, and also the test of its validity. A simple definition of intimacy is "shared privacy." Most of us live in a big, complex world where multitudes of people interact on very superficial and often competitive levels; but this doesn't meet our inner needs, so we have to find refuge in a smaller, private world where we can take off our masks, be honest and open about who we really are, and have a chance to become fully known and deeply loved. I would go so far as to say that *no person can achieve a full sense of his identity until he has established an interpersonal relationship in which he is "fully known and deeply loved."* This need not be marriage—but for most of us, marriage is the best way to achieve it—and deep down, this is the dream we all have of what we want marriage to do for us.

However, intimacy, like every other pearl of great price, has to be paid for. And the price of intimacy is clear and simple. It is that, in this vital and private relationship, we must take down all our defenses, and make ourselves totally vulnerable. No married couple really know what marriage at its best can mean until they have done that with each other. Then, and only then, love flows like a healing stream, cleansing and refreshing their personal lives and their jointly shared life.

After a lifetime of seeing the inside of people's marriages, including my own, I would have to say reluctantly that most marriages never reach this goal. All strive for it, but few find it. Why is this?

The answer—you guessed it!—is because anger

blocks the way. Let me now try to explain how this happens.

We need to consider briefly just what anger is, and the role it plays in our lives. I can only touch on this very superficially.

Most of the literature about anger is based on widely accepted psychological and sociological theories about hostility and aggression. I prefer to begin with a *physiological approach*. I see anger as a complex series of body changes triggered off by a sudden awareness of danger. This reaction to stress can be regarded as our survival kit, shared in some measure with all living creatures, and handed down to us during the long process of biological evolution.

All of us live, to some extent, in danger. At any moment an unforeseen catastrophe could overtake us. If this happened, the way in which we responded might decide whether or not we survived. In such a situation, we would need two vital resources—first, an immediate surge of energy; and second, the necessary control of our actions to use that energy to good purpose.

The first need is met by the onset of anger. The way in which our bodies provide "instant energy" is an amazing process. As soon as a warning is received, with remarkable speed, a complex series of bodily changes takes place. The heartbeat speeds up, blood pressure rises, muscles become tense, adrenalin-like substances pour out into the blood stream, and anti-coagulants are withdrawn. These and other changes make us ready for either fight or flight—the two classical ways of responding to an attack.

How is the alarm signal given? Awareness of danger can be activated in a number of ways, through our five senses. It is hardly possible, however, that the first alarm could be dealt with by our reasoning, conscious minds—there just wouldn't be time to analyze the nature of the stimulus and to decide whether or not it was one which called for an anger reaction. In any case, the simpler creatures from whom we inherited this alarm system don't *have* analytical, reasoning minds. So it is logical to conclude that, despite the teaching of some modern cults, we do not make ourselves angry, and are not responsible for being in a state of anger.

This is important. Many people feel ashamed and guilty about being angry, and try to deny their own feelings. I believe that anger is a natural, healthy emotional state, and should be accepted as such. Rightly used, anger could save our lives. Short of that, it can provide the motivation for personal and social action that could change all our lives for the better. Let us therefore affirm our anger, and be thankful for it.

However, once the anger is there, it must be rightly used. If you are confronted by someone who has designs on your life, you must fight, and you had better use all your cunning and skill so that you have a good chance of winning. Or, if the best course seems to be to run for it, you had better run in the right direction, so that you don't land in a dead end or find your escape cut off by an accomplice of your attacker.

So you are not responsible for your anger being there—that is beyond the scope of your conscious mind; but

you *are* responsible for what you *do* with the anger, as soon as you are consciously aware of it. In other words, you are capable of *controlling* your anger, so that you may use it effectively. As the Bible so well puts it—"Be angry, and sin not." Being angry is not sinful—but misusing anger can be sinful.

By this time you may be saying—"What's all this talk about danger and survival, about a crisis in which your life is threatened? Surely we are not talking about life-and-death issues? We know that some married couples lose control and batter each other; but we are thinking of responsible Christian husbands and wives."

What we must understand is that, in marriage, people live very close to each other, and share their lives deeply. Yet as individuals they have differences of opinions—quite strong differences. And because of their closeness and dependence on each other, these differences easily become disagreements, and the disagreements in turn produce anger. Wanting to have your own way, and then being thwarted by your marriage partner, develops frustration, and frustration is as much a state of crisis as fear is. We all know about the difficulty of doing heart transplants, because the body's defense system responds by trying to destroy the transplanted organ, treating it as an invader. Similarly, the body's defense system will equally respond with anger to a disagreement with a person who is otherwise deeply loved. The body has no power to judge the seriousness or otherwise of the situation—it simply responds with a surge of energy to any incident that heightens emotional tension.

When you experience a surge of anger, you have a choice of three ways in which you can deal with it:

The first is to *vent* it, in the form of physical action. This is the most natural response, because one of the physiological conditions that anger brings about is muscular tension, and by *using* the muscles, as in fighting or running, the tension is somewhat relieved. What this means is that you begin to *expend* the energy supply your body has provided. However, when people speak about "getting rid of their anger by venting it," this is not really accurate; because drawing on the energy supply is actually a message to your body to keep the anger coming.

Another way of dealing with anger is to *suppress* it. Because we have the power to control how anger is used, we may choose not to use it at all. There are life situations where this is obviously the sensible thing to do. If your boss bawls you out, and you have a strong urge to respond by punching his nose, your superior wisdom tells you that this might lead to a chain of very inconvenient consequences, and you had better not do it.

This capacity to take no action is also part of our biological inheritance. Many smaller creatures, in a danger situation, respond neither by fight nor by flight—they *freeze*. They may "play dead" in the hope that no attack will be made. And we also have the capacity to respond to anger by suppressing action altogether.

What happens when we do this? Does it "go away"? It does in time, because the body has no wish to remain in a state of internal crisis, and it welcomes a signal to return to a relaxed condition. However, if the stimulus

that caused the anger is still there, it isn't easy to turn off the head of steam. What occurs, when this happens again and again, is that the body establishes a state of continuing low-key tension—a kind of slow, simmering anger that never entirely goes away. We often call this resentment. It is a very unhealthy state to be in, and it lies at the root of many psychosomatic illnesses.

This "bottling up" of anger is particularly harmful in the marriage relationship. Anger and love are in fact mutually exclusive emotions. When you are angry you can't be loving, especially toward the source of your anger. However, when a fight takes place, the couple may expend some of their anger on each other, make up, and be warm and affectionate again. Many marriages work on that yo-yo principle.

However, when anger is bottled up and becomes resentment, there is a continuing state of hostility between the two people, and this is all the more difficult to deal with if it is not openly acknowledged. It forces these people to keep at a distance from each other, because there is no "making up" experience. As a marriage counselor, over a period of many years, I have noticed that couples who habitually suppress their anger toward each other become incapable of tenderness. The inner core of love between them withers away; and although they may go through the motions of being affectionate, it is not genuine. This is the tragic price they pay. Many counselors believe that even if venting anger is not appropriate in a loving relationship, bottling it up is even worse.

What then are couples to do? If venting anger is damaging to love and intimacy, and suppressing anger is even more damaging, they seem to be confronted by a choice of two evils. Large numbers of husbands and wives live most of their lives in this predicament.

Fortunately, there is a way out, although it is known to very few couples; and these few seem to have stumbled on it by some lucky chance. This is just not good enough. Even in the marriage enrichment movement, I have encountered well-meaning couples who talk about learning the art of marital fighting, or of suppressing their negative feelings toward each other.

In my own marriage, our discovery that our anger could be dissolved came about almost by accident. We had found the other two approaches quite unsatisfactory, and we were looking for a better solution. I need not recount a long and discouraging process. It will be enough to describe the solution that finally emerged. It took the form of what we call a three-step system, which we mutually adopted by making appropriate contracts with each other.

The first step was to recognize openly that anger, in marriage as anywhere else, is a healthy emotion, and that it is not in our power to prevent it. We therefore freely gave each other the right to be angry with each other, without any judgments or penalties. However, we agreed that when one of us *did* get angry with the other, we would communicate this as soon as possible. We recognize that it should be as acceptable to say "I am feeling angry" as to say "I am feeling sad" or "I am feeling hungry." All these are bodily states which a caring partner should be able to understand.

However, we drew a clear line between acknowledging anger and venting anger. This enabled us to take our second step, which was a commitment on both sides that we would never again *attack* each other, because we took the view that this was entirely inappropriate between two people who were trying to establish a loving and intimate relationship.

The assurance that there would be no attack made it unnecessary for the other partner to go on the defensive and to develop retaliatory anger. Instead, we tried to develop a compassionate concern, rather than a sense of hostility, toward the angry partner; and to communicate our desire to understand how and why the state of anger had arisen.

The third step developed naturally from this. Acknowledging anger, and promising not to vent it, doesn't take away the negative emotions. The anger is still there, and it will not be healthily cleared up until the stimulus that caused it has been faced, understood, and removed.

In order to do this, we had to accept the fact that the state of anger in one partner, evoked by the other, is an integral part of our total relationship, and that *we both have an equal responsibility to clear it up*. I know that this directly challenges the frequent assertion that my anger is mine alone, and that I must be responsible for dealing with it. We found that this simply does not work in an intimate relationship. Only when we clearly saw that anger, on either side, is a barrier between us, which must be removed by *both of us acting together*, did we find the answer. If you have made me angry, I cannot clear up the situation completely without your active sharing in the process. I readily admit that it isn't practicable to clear up anger toward more distant people in this way; although I think we would be creating a wonderful world if this could actually be done. However, in an intimate relationship, I am convinced that unless it *is* done, the relationship will inevitably be damaged, and if this continues to happen, the damage will be progressive. This underlines my conviction that the failure to deal realistically with every anger situation as it arises is the major cause of failure in modern marriages.

What do I mean by "dealing realistically with an anger situation"? We must remember that anger is not a primary, but a secondary emotion. It is the body's response to another kind of stimulus that usually takes the form of fear or frustration. Anger is a spontaneous response to a situation in which my sense of security is threatened, my self-esteem damaged, my feelings hurt. In such a situation, the last thing I really want is to get into a fight. My real need is to be understood, loved, and supported. As someone once said of teen-agers, the time when they need love most is the time when they seem most unlovable.

The approach is therefore—"I find myself getting angry with you. But you know I am pledged not to attack you, which would only make you angry, too, and alienate us both. What I need is your help to get behind my anger to what is really causing it, so that we can do something about it together." The response to this is—"I don't like you being angry with me, but I don't blame you for it. And since I know you are not going

to attack me, I needn't put up my defenses and get angry with you in turn. I appreciate your invitation to help you get through to the underlying cause of your anger, because I care about our relationship, and it should help both of us to find out what is really happening to us."

Of course this must be followed up by a session in which the situation which produced the anger is carefully examined. And this must be done in an atmosphere of openness and honesty, with all the relevant facts and feelings shared. If the anger is still too hot to handle, it may be necessary to wait. But postponement must not become evasion. Every anger situation must be worked through as soon as possible. If this is not done, each new situation will gather up previously unsettled ones, and build up to a level of tension in which anger is likely to be so intense that it gets out of control.

What in fact happens when anger situations in marriage are faced together in this way? Years of experience have shown my wife and myself clearly that careful examination always reveals one of two situations. Either it turns out that my anger was based on misinterpretation of your words or deeds; in which case we must improve our communication system so that I am less likely in the future to misinterpret your behavior, or on the other hand it turns out that you pushed me beyond the limits of my tolerance at that particular time, in which case we must find a way to improve your understanding of my sensitivity to your words and actions, and at the same time help me to widen the limits of my tolerance to sensitive issues that I have to learn to live with. In other words, the anger situation has been used to promote a growth experience for both of us.

I cannot deny that this is a complex process, and it is simply not likely, as I have already said, to be stumbled upon accidentally by any but a few exceptionally fortunate couples. I am also aware that some couples are not even seeking a relationship of loving intimacy, and therefore would not be motivated to pay the price that has to be paid for it. I have to admit also that the initial task of changing over to this new approach from a fighting pattern or a suppressing pattern is a major undertaking, because you have to begin with a formidable backlog of unresolved conflicts. I can only say, however, that when a marriage is finally freed of the damage that anger can do to it, either by violent upheaval or by slow corrosion, it is like passing through a sound barrier into a new atmosphere of ongoing growth and creative love which has to be experienced to be believed. This is what we call "dissolving" anger, using it creatively; and I am speaking from actual experience.

Let me conclude with three further comments:

1. I believe that the creative handling of anger is the key, and the only key, to the achievement of genuine and lasting love and intimacy in a close relationship. All other methods of dealing with interpersonal conflict, which arises inevitably in close relationships, are superficial solutions, and leave the roots of conflict undisturbed, so that they are likely to reappear later. Love and intimacy in their full meaning are simply not

attainable in a relationship in which conflict is avoided and anger suppressed. The inevitable anger developed in a love relationship must be used positively as raw material for ongoing growth. The onset of anger is very like a squeaking noise in the motor of your automobile. Use it as a warning, and deal with the cause of the trouble, and the performance of your car will be improved. Ignore it, and the car's performance will sooner or later deteriorate.

2. I believe that this is a vital message for Christians, because Christianity alone, among the world's religions, puts the central emphasis on love—the love of God revealed in the life of love that Jesus lived, and the promise that this divine love can bring forth a corresponding quality of love in our hearts and our homes. We constantly give lip-service to these concepts; but we simply do not teach Christian families in practical terms how it can be done; so many of them suffer from frustration, guilt and shame because they know well that their family life is not reflecting their Christian beliefs, but all their efforts to do better seem to be ineffective.

3. Finally, I have to make it clear that what I have been saying applies primarily to the companionship marriage and the companionship family. In the traditional (that is, the hierarchical one) marriage, anger caused little trouble as long as it didn't lead to extreme violence. It was considered entirely appropriate for a husband to be angry with his wife. Indeed, if he stamped and bellowed he was supposed to be exhibiting his masculine strength and showing that he was the master in his own home. The wife, on the other hand, was not expected to show anger, but to behave with the yielding sweetness and the passive acquiescence which were considered to be the feminine virtues. By this ingenious arrangement, open conflict in marriage was neatly avoided. Of course it didn't always work; and in any case, *it made loving intimacy completely impossible.*

There is no evidence that I have ever encountered that a woman confronted with a corresponding stimulus, generates less anger than a man does. The acquiescence of those traditional wives was entirely the result of social conditioning, which led to the repression of the wife's normal and healthy anger.

The advent of the companionship marriage has given husbands and wives equal opportunities to express their feelings, and this has resulted in marital conflict on a hitherto unprecedented scale. There are some who feel that the Christian answer is to go back to the traditional marriage. I do not share this view. The full, rich quality of love in a marriage cannot be released until we respond to the great commandment of Jesus to love your neighbor as you love yourself. We don't yet live in a world where we can very easily treat the people next door in this Christian spirit. But after all, who is the nearest of all your neighbors? Surely it is the person with whom you have entered, by the most solemn vows, into a life deeply shared. That, for me, represents the clear and central and final Christian message about marriage, in response to words to which Jesus Himself gave the seal of final authority, and which we call the "Great Commandment." It seems tragic to me that we should go on structuring marriage so that it falls short of the fullness of relational love and intimacy, simply

because we cannot deal with the inevitable anger that develops in a close relationship, by transforming it into a means of mutual growth.

Anger will inevitably develop in Christian families as in all others. This does not mean that it is to be treated as shameful or wicked. It is a vital part of our biological heritage. Venting it, or suppressing it, are both ineffective ways of dealing with it. There is, however, a more excellent way—to heed the message it is trying to make us hear, and respond by dealing with the situation that has caused the anger, and using it constructively as a means of continuing growth toward our goals of love and intimacy.

I believe that this is a vital message for all families in our world today—and especially for Christian families. Everything else we do to try to help families is, by comparison, scratching the surface. Only by going right to the inner core of our intimate relationships, and learning how to resolve what I call the love-anger cycle, shall we release the power to make family living warm, loving, and tender. And when we can do this for families, they should be able to do just about everything else for themselves.

AUTHORITY AND SUBMISSION IN MARRIAGE

John C. Howell

One of the hottest issues confronting many Christians in their understanding of Christian marriage is the relationship between authority, equality and submission in marital relationships. Advocates of the totally submissive woman, on one hand, have emphasized female submission to male authority as the only possible interpretation of the biblical teachings concerning patterns of relationship in Christian marriage. Defenders of female/male equality, on the other hand, react strongly to the idea that female submission is appropriate or healthy in contemporary Christian marriage styles.

It is my purpose in this paper to explore the concepts of authority, equality and submission from a biblical-theological perspective with application to contemporary marriage patterns. My hope is that this discussion may help couples accept the freedom and responsibility for developing the style of marriage which best meets their particular needs and which is consistent with a biblical understanding of human relationships. The question of authority will command our attention first.

Authority in the New Testament

The ultimate authority of God over all human relationships is basic to the Old and New Testaments alike. Jesus expressed this fact concisely when he declared, "Seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness" (Matt. 6:33). The "kingdom" in this sense is the rule or will of God in an individual's life. Our difficulty, however, is determining what God's will is for each of us in the complex living relationships of contemporary life. How is authority mediated to us? Let me propose three developmental answers to this question.

First, *the Lordship of Jesus Christ is supreme authority for the Christian.* Jesus' declaration to the disciples after the resurrection that "all authority is given to me in heaven and earth" (Matt. 28:19) is interpreted to

mean that authority in all things affecting human life is invested in the Christ as Lord. In the Gospels the symbol of Christ's sovereignty is pictured in terms of the Kingdom of God. Paul, while using the Kingdom concept a dozen times in his letters, appealed to the Gentile understanding of authority in his description of Christ as "Lord." L. H. Marshall, in his book *The Challenge of New Testament Ethics*, points out that "Paul reaches exactly the same goal as Jesus, namely the establishment of the rule of God in the heart though he travels by a somewhat different route."¹

Two particular passages may be used to illustrate Paul's emphasis on the Lordship of Christ. The great Christological statement in Philippians 2:5-11 concludes with the ringing affirmation that "Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." In Romans 14:1-12 there is a clearly stated declaration of the relationship between the Lordship of Christ and personal accountability for determining and living in God's will for oneself. Even though believers may have different beliefs about appropriate actions as Christians, Paul maintains that each person must be fully convinced in his own mind about his own behavior because each one will give account of himself to God.

Response to the ultimate sovereignty of Christ cannot be abdicated to any other person, whether parent, husband, wife, minister, or church, in spiritual or social relationships. Each believer must be willing to respect the conscience of another Christian, but he or she cannot yield authority over personal convictions to the conscience of another. Christ must always be Lord of all.

In the second place, *the biblical revelation is authoritative as a guide to understanding how the Lordship of Christ is to be actualized in our own society.* The truth expressed in Second Timothy that "all scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness" (3:16) is accepted as encompassing the New Testament revelation as well as the Old Covenant to which it originally referred.

Baptists have prided themselves on being a people of the Book because of their belief in the divine inspiration of the Scriptures as a guide to life. In our own day, however, the struggle between different groups in our fellowship over the nature of inspiration and the appropriate methods for interpreting the Bible has created division and mistrust. It appears to me that Dr. W. T. Connor, respected professor of theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary for many years, still speaks helpfully to our understanding of the Bible in his book *Revelation and God* written over forty years ago.

Connor emphasizes the importance of the Bible as the revelation of Christ's Lordship in his affirmation that "the authority of the Bible is the authority of Christ. . . . The Bible is the medium through which his will is made known to us. As the revelation of the mind and will of Christ, the Bible is authoritative."² Such revelation could come only through the inspiration of God's Spirit active in the lives of the writers of the biblical message.

However, Connor insists that the Bible must be interpreted in relation to the historical and social situation in which the books were first written. God had to work through particular people, in particular times, and with different thought processes about life. "This means," says Connor, "that in interpreting the Bible we must keep in mind the fact that it is the record of a revelation historically mediated and conditioned." Consequently, the biblical interpreter must know not only the historical background of the Bible but must "be able to separate between form and substance in interpreting the Scriptures."³ Form often reflects the historical and cultural patterns of an ancient culture or local problems whereas substance is the basic principle for life that abides within the form and is transferable to many other cultural settings. Connor declares that "the mistake of identifying the substance with the form is often made by people who insist on a literal interpretation and application of all biblical teaching."⁴ His own conviction is that "we must go back to the Bible itself and in the light of Christian history and our own experience of redemption interpret that for ourselves. Every generation of Christians must do this in view of its own special problems of thought."⁵

Thus Connor points us to the authority of the Bible as revelation of Christ's Lordship in all of life but reminds us that the interpretation of God's will for our own generation is dependent on recognizing cultural factors in the Bible and in our own day that influence one's understanding of that revelation. To study God's revelation in this way requires personal dependence on the leadership of the Holy Spirit as well as historical knowledge.

Our third principle, therefore, is that *the Holy Spirit intercedes with our spirit to help us understand the meaning of the biblical revelation for our own time.* John's record of Jesus' teachings in the fourth gospel provides us with an introduction to the work of the Holy Spirit as teacher. Jesus speaks of the Spirit as the Counselor who "will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (14:26) because he is the "Spirit of truth" (15:26). The developmental nature of Christian truth is implied in Jesus' declaration, "I have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come" (17:12-13).

Some would limit this interpretive function of the Holy Spirit primarily to his work in salvation but the book of Acts and Paul's letters demonstrate the work of the Spirit in ethical decision making as well. For example, in Colossians, Paul shares with the believers his prayer that they "may be filled with the knowledge of his [God's] will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, to lead a life worthy of the Lord" (1:9-10). Spiritual wisdom is actually wisdom imparted by the Holy Spirit which helps Christians to exercise discrimination in their choices so as to fulfill God's will for their lives. This is an ethical choice rather than a religious one and the Holy Spirit is active in it.

Elisabeth Elliott is well known for her writings about

missionary work among the Auca Indians of Ecuador. You will recall that her husband was killed by the Indians yet she returned with her three-year-old child to live among the Aucas in hope of leading them to Christ. For the first year after her return she was unable to communicate with the Indians because of difficulty in learning their language. During that year she wrestled with the meaning of Christian commitment in a land totally divorced from the cultural evidences of Christian faith which our own society identifies as essential to conversion. In an incisive little book entitled *The Liberty of Obedience*, Elisabeth Elliott reflects on the fact that Christians who have all the answers, who see things as all black or all white, may possibly become so rigid in commitment to the rules that they may never discover the liberty of obedience and thus remain bound to a perpetual immaturity.

In the concluding chapter of her book, she contrasts rule learning with mature discernment in decision making. Believing that God wants His followers to be sons rather than menial servants, she declares that it is more difficult to train sons than servants. God gave commandments to His sons, but there was need in addition for interpretation, for understanding and for discernment. This came through the continued presence of His Spirit for "they could not henceforth dispense with the voice of His Spirit and the discipline of His instruction." As sons and daughters of God in our present age who strive for maturity, Elliott maintains that questions of ethical conduct "must be answered by life itself—the life of the individual in his direct, responsible relationship to God. This is dynamic, never a static, thing." ⁶

The late William Barclay of Scotland was also concerned for those who resist the adventure of growing toward maturity under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. "There is warning," he says, "to the arrogance which believes it has grasped the whole truth, and that there is nothing left to learn. There is warning to the rigidity which makes of dogma a letter." ⁷ Barclay affirms the "glorious adventure of following the guidance of the Holy Spirit" in which truth is dynamic and alive rather than static. To understand and live in the interpretive leadership of the Holy Spirit is to know, as Paul has said so well, that "our sufficiency is from God, who has qualified us to be ministers of a new covenant, not in a written code but in the Spirit; for the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor. 3:6).

In concluding this discussion of authority in the New Testament, we affirm that the Christian life is to be lived in responsive obedience to the Lordship of Christ as revealed to us through biblical principles applied to life under the interpretive ministry of the Holy Spirit. It will be necessary to examine the application of this understanding of authority to Christian personal relationships but first I want to consider briefly how the New Testament world interpreted authority in social relationships.

Authority in Social Relationships

Early Christians had to deal with authority in four basic social institutions: state, slavery, church and home. Since most of their social environment was either

Jewish or pagan, varying answers are given to the question of response to these authorities. Generally the New Testament attitudes toward social authority were dependent upon whether or not the supreme authority of Christ was being compromised by obedience to other religious and state authorities or customs. In this very limited section of the paper let us reflect on the source of authority in each of these social institutions.

In the state authority was expressed through power. The power to arrest, to punish and to kill is clearly illustrated in the lives of Jesus and His followers as recorded by New Testament writers. The right to tax is affirmed in Jesus' answer to the Pharisees and Herodians when they asked whether it was lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not (Mark 12:13-17). The right to punish evil is recognized in Paul's declaration that Christians must be submissive to state regulation since God has given the state authority to use the sword of punishment (Rom. 13:1-7). Even the trial experience of Jesus before Pilate centered on the question of authority. Pilate declared to Jesus, "Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?" The Lord's answer pointed to a higher authority when He said, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given from above" (John 19:10-11). Christians were instructed to respect the authority of the state in its normal and legal control of society. State authority was to be resisted, however, when the state took upon itself the sovereignty which belongs only to God (Rev. 13:1-18).

In the institution of slavery, authority was expressed through ownership of the slave. Old Testament teachings about master-slave relationships limited the power of the slave-owner to capriciously take a slave's life but authority over the slave was justified on the basis of ownership. In the New Testament, ownership also granted authority to the slave-master even though stronger warnings against mistreatment were addressed to Christian masters (Eph. 6:9; Col. 4:1). Christian slaves were to be submissive to their masters and were to work diligently as an expression of their commitment to Christ (Eph. 6:5-8; Col. 3:22-25; Titus 2:9-10).

Paul's letter to Philemon describes Onesimus, the runaway slave, as a brother in Christ because of his conversion, but there is no denial of Philemon's ownership unless Philemon personally decided to release him from bondage. Onesimus became more than a slave in faith, but he remained a slave in social reality.

In the church, authority was expressed through service. The introduction to this startlingly new way of defining authority was given in Jesus' response to a controversy among his own disciples about who would be given places of authority in the Kingdom. The Lord said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave; even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:25-28). Throughout the remainder of the New Testament, especially in the letters of Paul, service for Christ is the key to responsible leadership in the church. For example, the Christians in Thessalonica were encouraged "to

respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly because of their work" (II Thess. 5:12-13).

In the home, authority was expressed through responsible headship. Law and custom in the biblical world gave the husband authority over his wife because of his purchase rights in the marriage contract made with her father at the time of the wedding. This was true in Hebrew tradition as well as in most of the Gentile world in which the gospel was beginning to bear fruit by winning both men and women to faith in Christ. As the Lordship of Christ became supreme in the lives of male and female converts, new tensions arose in marriage with regard to patterns of husband/wife relationships. The biblical writers were required, therefore, to give explicit guidance concerning marital relationships in Christian marriages as well as in marriages involving a believer and a non-believer (Cf. I Cor. 7 and I Pet. 3). Paul gave particular emphasis to the theme of responsible headship as illustrative of the husband's *agape* love for his wife. Attention will be given later in this paper to an interpretation of the Pauline use of headship in the marriage relationship. At this point it is sufficient to point out that male authority in marriage was assumed in a society based upon the legal and social responsibility of women to some man such as father or husband.

Having examined authority patterns in the major social institutions, let us now return to our consideration of the implications growing out of Christ's new interpretation of authority.

A New Definition of Authority in Christian Relationships

The controversy among the disciples concerning the desire of James and John to be elevated to positions of authority in the Kingdom is recorded slightly differently in the three synoptic gospels. Matthew records the request to Jesus as coming from the mother of James and John, Mark records it as a direct request from the two brothers, and Luke sets it in the context of a dispute among the disciples as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest (Matt. 20:20-28; Mark 10:3-45; Luke 22:24-27). However, each gospel writer captures Jesus' emphasis on a new interpretation of authority in Christian relationships.

The new authority rejects control by dominance. After describing the exercise of authority based on power and position, Jesus declared, "It shall not be so among you." Lording it over one another was not to be a part of the new understanding of their relationship. Instead, believers were to submit themselves or be subject to one another out of their reverence for Christ. To the Philippians Paul said, "Do nothing from selfishness or conceit but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus" (2:4-5).

The new authority is based on servanthood. The model for this kind of authority is portrayed in the life of Christ Himself. Jesus pointed out to the disciples that the ones who would have authority in the Kingdom would be those who were the servants of others just as

He, the Son of Man, "came not to be served but to serve" (Matt. 20:28). This theme is echoed throughout the gospels and is central to the understanding of Christ's life interpreted by the rest of the New Testament. In Philippians, Paul declared that Christ's elevation to Lordship was based upon His life of servanthood, even to the death of the cross.

The theme of discovering selfhood and authority through self-giving is fundamental to the cross-ethic of the New Testament. When Christians live in intimate relationships in the church and the home, authority in these relations is based upon one's willingness to give oneself to others rather than upon a model of military or governmental hierarchy of authority. Luke's report of Jesus' discussion with his disciples puts it clearly when he says, "let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves" (22:26). The great apostle Paul interpreted his own life of leadership in the churches in terms of servanthood (Cf. Acts 20:17-31; I Thess. 2:3-12). To the Ephesians he said, "I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power" (3:7, New International Version).

The new authority is expressed through love. The close connection which exists between servanthood and love is stated beautifully in Paul's words: "For you were called to freedom, brethren, only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another" (Gal. 5:13). Servanthood is the dominant characteristic of authority in personal relationships; love is the supreme virtue of its expression. It is only through the eyes and heart of love that the leadership of God's Spirit can effectively guide one in understanding and living the new life in relationships that God intends for His people. Phillips has interpreted this truth well in his translation of Paul's word to the Corinthians, "For whatever a man may know, he still has a lot to learn; but if he loves God, he is opening his whole life to the Spirit of God" (I Cor. 8:1). In the same letter, Paul describes the many gifts and functions of leadership in the church but concludes that the most excellent way of service is love. Without love all other acts of self-giving are incomplete and inadequate (13:1-3). Therefore believers are to "make love your aim" (14:1).

We have presented a perspective on authority which differs from the commonly accepted belief that authority in the church and in the home is dependent upon male superiority or dominance. Instead it is dependent upon the responsive faith of women and men to the Lordship of Christ as mediated through Scripture and the Holy Spirit. It is patterned upon the example of Christ's own life and death for others. Implicit in this perspective is a belief in the essential equality of all believers to one another in God's love and service. Therefore we must now consider the basis for this assumption that there is equality in persons in God's redemptive purpose for human life.

Since men and women are equally sinners and equally invited to become Christians by faith in Christ, it must follow that men and women achieve equal personhood in Jesus Christ. Support for this affirmation can be found in the life and teachings of Jesus as well as in the letters of the Apostle Paul.

Equality in the Ministry of Jesus

As we read the gospel accounts of Jesus' ministry and teachings, we discover some startling illustrations of His acceptance of persons on the basis of equality.

Jesus made no distinction between male and female in His ministry to their needs. He responded as readily to the particular needs of the woman at the well in Samaria (John 4:7-42) as He did to needs of Zaccheus, the tax collector, in Jericho (Luke 19:2-10). He offered His forgiveness as freely to the woman caught in the act of adultery (John 8:1-11) as He did to the paralytic brought to Him by four friends (Mark 2:1-12). Female and male alike were restored to wholeness in His love and grace.

Jesus broke the cultural traditions defining male/female roles in public. The two most dramatic illustrations of His refusal to be bound by the dominant cultural norms of His day are recorded in John 4:4-42 and John 12:2-3.

The first reference is to the experience of Jesus with the woman at the well in Samaria. In the biblical account, Jesus came to the well while journeying and asked a woman to give Him a drink of water. This sounds so simple to our modern ears, but in Jesus' day the implications were tremendous. Jewett points to the strangeness of the event when he remarks that "this woman was not only a woman, not only a sinful woman, but a sinful Samaritan woman!"⁸ Jewish custom forbade speaking to a woman in public when unacquainted and definitely forbade any public contact between Jews and half-breed Samaritans. Yet Jesus was not bound by the custom of His neighbors. He broke through their restrictiveness to accept this sinful Samaritan woman as a person of worth and in so doing gave her a new identity as a person.

In John 12:2-3 Jesus is in the home of Mary and Martha. During the course of the evening meal, Mary broke open a container of scented ointment to anoint the feet of Jesus. She then wiped His feet with her long hair. Once again we must remember the customs of the day in order to understand the significance of this event. In the first place, an unmarried woman was forbidden to touch the body of a male. Secondly, to let down her hair in public was a highly immodest act. But when she was rebuked by the men present at the supper, Jesus honored her tribute to Him as fitting and acceptable.

These are but two examples of Jesus' refusal to allow cultural barriers to reduce women from persons to objects. If we follow His example as well as His teachings we can never allow the cultural expectations of the New Testament world to blind us to the fundamental personhood of both male and female.

Jesus invited both women and men to follow Him. The invitation to discipleship came to men and women. In the New English Bible translation of Matthew 16:24-26, the translators have captured well the idea of the new personhood in Christ that comes through discipleship. Jesus said, "If anyone wishes to be a follower of mine, he must leave self behind; he must take up his cross and come with me. Whoever cares for his own safety is lost; but if a man will let himself be lost for my sake, he will find his true self." "Man" in

this passage refers to human beings or persons, not males as distinct from females.

We are well aware of the many men who responded to this call to discipleship and new selfhood. Sometimes we forget that women also heard it and responded. Matthew tells us that many women were at the cross "who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him" (27:55).

The authors of *All We're Meant To Be* provide a fitting summary to this brief treatment of Jesus' attitude toward women and culture. "He treated women not primarily as females but as human beings. Without sentimentality, condescension, or undemanding indulgence, He accepted them as persons in a way that moved them to repentance and love."⁹

Equality in the Teachings of Paul

Many of the interpreters who agree that Jesus exemplified an attitude of acceptance of women which honored their personhood believe that Paul is the culprit in making women second-class citizens of the kingdom. In our brief treatment of his teachings we will not be able to wrestle with all of the arguments that his letters have caused, but we will present a perspective in which to study Paul's statements concerning women.

Paul's interpretation of the gospel declares the equality of men and women in redemption. There is only one gospel for all—the message of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. While writing to the Corinthians, Paul declared, "For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (I Cor. 2:2). He rebuked the Galatians for "turning to another gospel" but quickly added, "not that there is another gospel" (1:6-7). The one gospel is directed toward women in the same way that it is toward men. This is why Paul in Philippi could go out to the place of prayer by the riverside to sit down and speak about Jesus to the women gathered there (Acts 16:13). It was in response to this message by Paul that Lydia, the first convert in Europe, was converted and baptized (16:14-15).

The fifth chapter of Romans contains one of Paul's most powerful discussions of the full impact of the gospel. In it he points out that Christ's death demonstrates the love of God for human beings who rejected God's will and became enemies of grace. Through the acceptance of that love hostility was overcome by reconciliation and a new life was begun. All of this happened to overcome the sin problem initiated by "one man's trespass." In Christ, "one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men" (5:18). As we read the passage, we must understand that the Greek term translated "man" or "men" is the word for human being or individual, not the word for male. "All men" is like the "Adam" of Genesis 5:2 which is translated Man.

Similarly, both men and women become God's "workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). Salvation by grace through faith is the one and only way to fulfill God's righteousness—for male and female.

The most precise statement of this equality, however, is recorded in Paul's letter to the Galatians. In his argument for the authenticity of the gospel as a fulfillment of God's revelation through the law given to Israel, Paul declares that "in Christ you are all sons of God, through faith" (3:26); that is, all have the status which sons enjoy as inheritors of the father's estate. Because in their baptism they "have put on Christ" as the essence of personhood, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (3:28). The phrase dealing with male and female literally reads, "there is not male and female."

Certainly Paul is not arguing for the obliteration or denial of the evident differences in male and female as physical/emotional/spiritual persons. In other passages he explicitly encourages the proper recognition of such differences. But Paul does affirm without qualification the fact that male and female come equally to Christ and equally put on Christ in their affirmation of faith and subsequent baptism. As female and male they can say with Paul, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). There can be no clearer affirmation of the equal worth of male/female as persons than this.

Paul's letters commend the contributions of men and women to the work of Christ through the churches. As one reads the epistles Paul wrote to the various churches, there is ample evidence of the significant service given by women to the ministry of the churches.

Lydia, converted at the riverside in Philippi, opened her home as a place to begin a young church (Acts 16:15). Priscilla and her husband Acquila were companions of Paul in his secular work as well as the work of the gospel (Acts 18:1-4; Rom. 16:3-4). In addition they instructed Apollos, the Alexandrian convert who preached so mightily from the scriptures, in the fuller understanding of the gospel (Acts 18:24-26).

Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchrea, is commended by Paul as one who has been "a helper of many and myself as well" (Rom. 16:1-2). The word translated "helper" suggests one who has helped others with her resources but also one who has a place of authority over other people.

Paul also salutes Tryphaena and Tryphosa, two women in the church, and Persis as workers in the Lord (Rom. 16:12). This word has the interesting meaning of laboring with wearisome effort as teachers in promoting and declaring the gospel. Evidently, men and women shared equally in their task. This fact is also suggested by Paul's word concerning Euodia and Synteché who "worked hard with me to spread the gospel" (Phil. 4:3 TEV).

Paul's concern for the church's reputation dominates His counsel to women in the young congregations. The passages of Paul's letters which we have considered thus far have emphasized the equality of personhood between men and women in the gospel. However, in his epistles there are several passages which convey an entirely different message about women.

These passages are all directed toward the relationship of woman, to the church, and the family. Since we will be examining the family situation later, let us now consider Paul's responses to women in the church. How do his instructions to women square with the equality of persons emphasized in conversion and new life?

First of all, the fundamental freedom of the gospel must be acknowledged. In the third chapter of Second Corinthians, Paul contrasts life under law in the old covenant and life in the Spirit in the new covenant. He maintains that he is a minister "of a new covenant, not in a written code but in the Spirit; for a written code kills, but the Spirit gives life" (3:6). Furthermore, "the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (3:17). This freedom delivers one from depending on codes of behavior as the means of salvation. It is the freedom promised by Jesus when He told the Jews, "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free . . . if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:32, 36).

The Galatian letter is often described as Paul's gospel of freedom because in it he attacks the legalism of Judaism and proclaims the true freedom found in Christ. He declares "for freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (5:1). The life of freedom is life in the Holy Spirit. But how does that freedom come to us? It comes as the free gift of God the Father to men and women who become His children by faith. Christ came to "redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying 'Abba! Father!'" (4:5-6). James Stewart, noted Scottish theologian, reminds us that "the keynote of the life of adoption is freedom."¹⁰ As children of God, we live life in relationship to our Father's will made known to us by the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, freedom is to be exercised responsibly. It has always been easy to think of freedom in the gospel as some kind of anarchy in society. If I am free, then I can do whatever I please! But this violently contradicts Paul's understanding of responsible freedom in which the motivation for behavior is the effect of choice on other people.

To the Galatians he said, "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another" (5:13).

To the Corinthians he declared, "'All things are lawful,' but not all things are helpful. 'All things are lawful,' but not all things build up. Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor" (I Cor. 10:23-24). He was free to do all things as long as all was done to the glory of God and as a witness to an unbelieving world (10:31-33). Responsibility for the consequences of practicing one's freedom in social life must always be considered in determining appropriate behavior. Only in this way can one demonstrate that he or she is a bond-servant of the Lord Jesus Christ (I Cor. 6:12-14) and a child of the Father (Rom. 8:12-17). This basic principle is fundamental to Paul's instructions concerning church worship and service for men and women. At

this point, however, we are more concerned with the passages relating to women and their responsible freedom because of the tensions in that area.

Thus our third principle is that women in worship and service must not flaunt or misuse their freedom. The public reputation of the young churches was at stake and Paul would not countenance behavior at worship which would cause the church to suffer a bad reputation. This was not a denial of freedom but an affirmation of responsible freedom.

Paul's writings must always be read against this backdrop of concern for the reputation of the church and its witness to lost people. To be respectful of others "is good, and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (II Tim. 2:3-4).

Now we must examine the relationship of this equality to the New Testament emphasis on submission as one of the expected demonstrations of Christian faith in human relationships. Are equality and submission complementary concepts or are they in serious opposition to each other? To deal with this question is the challenge of this section.

The Meaning of Submission

Most of the New Testament references to submission use the Greek word *hupotasso* which can be translated as subjecting oneself or being subjected or being subordinate to a person or persons in authority. The term originally had a military usage in defining the authority levels between ranks and in some of the New Testament usages this idea is quite prominent.

There is another meaning given to *hupotasso* which introduces a distinctly Christian element into the concept of submission. In one of the widely accepted lexicons of the Greek-English languages, *hupotasso* is defined as "submission in the sense of voluntary yielding in love" with specific reference to its usage in the letters of Paul and Peter.¹¹ Submission is the yieldedness given by one person to another on the basis of voluntary choice because of loving relationships. Paul encourages this kind of self-giving in his command for mutual submission in Ephesians 5:21.

The Application of Mutual Submission

Many of the books describing male/female relationships for Christians place great stress upon the need of the wife to be submissive to her husband. In the light of our discussion thus far, there is ample evidence that the submission which we have called "voluntary yieldedness in love" is essential to *all* relationships in the family just as it is in other social relationships of Christians. Such submission is therefore a *mutually reciprocal* relationship.

To emphasize submission for the wife and ignore it for the husband is to do an injustice to Paul's instructions in Ephesians 5:21. Many New Testament interpreters agree with Lehman Strauss when he points out that "submission in the home is not something enjoined upon the woman only; it is a mutual relationship."¹²

Mutual Submissiveness in Christian Reverence

The instructions Paul gives for social relationships

in Ephesians 5:21-6:9 is called "A Table of Household Duties" by New Testament interpreters. Similar instructions are included in Colossians 3:18-4:1 and First Peter 2:13-3:7 but it is in Ephesians that mutual subordination is explicitly set forth as the basis for these duties. In each of the passages, however, the basic motivation for obedience to these instructions is the Christian's response to Christ.

Peter says, "Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution" (I Peter 2:13). In the Colossian letter, Paul introduces the Table of Household Duties by affirming, "and whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus" (3:17). But Paul's word in Ephesians is even stronger than either of these. Christians are to subordinate themselves to one another "in the fear of Christ." The Greek word *phobos* is translated "reverence" in the RSV, TEV, and NEB. In the Living Bible it is translated as "honor."

On the basis of this submission to Christ, believers are to "be subject to one another." Some interpreters insist on the idea of "submission" or "surrender" as the proper meaning of this phrase while others prefer the idea of "subordination." This may seem like an argument over such small differences that it does not have any meaning for you. However, in our English language there is a different connotation given to submission than to subordination. The dictionary describes submission as "surrender of person and power to the control of another" whereas subordination is to place in rank or order of position. The participle "submitting yourselves to one another" does demand personal yielding to the claims of relationship but it is not given at the expense of personhood.

Markus Barth, noted son of the famous Karl Barth, has written an excellent and detailed commentary on Ephesians in which he argues for subordination as the appropriate meaning of this verse. His conclusion is that "the participles or imperatives calling for subordination may well contain an appeal to free and responsible agents that can only be heeded voluntarily, but never by the elimination or breaking of the human will, not to speak of servile submissiveness."¹³ His position is complementary to our discussion of yieldedness as a voluntary act which respects the personhood of the individuals in the family or the church.

The demand for mutuality in self-giving is a dramatically new teaching about social relationships. Women, slaves, and citizens were always expected to be subordinate or submissive to superior persons but to expect men to accept women on equal terms of self-giving or slave-owners to accept slaves was like a streak of lightning in a blue sky! It is for this reason that vs. 21 must be interpreted as a prelude to all that is included in 5:22-6:9. Barth insists that "the unique message of Ephesians is silenced whenever the dominant position of vs. 21 over the *Haustafel* (Table of Household Duties) and the peculiarly startling content of this verse are neglected."¹⁴

How, then, is this subordination or yieldedness to be understood since Paul maintains that it is one of the distinguishing marks of the Spirit-filled life?

In his *Ephesians and Colossians in the Greek New Testament*, Kenneth Wuest interprets *hupotasso* in

Ephesians 5:21 as "the opposite of self-assertion, the opposite of an independent, autocratic spirit. It is the desire to get along with one another, being satisfied with less than one's due, a sweet reasonableness of attitude."¹⁵ S. Curtis Vaughan of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary amplifies this definition when he says that it "denotes that attitude of reciprocal deference that becomes and marks out those who are filled with the Spirit. It is opposed to rudeness, haughtiness, selfish preference for one's own opinions, and stubborn insistence on one's own rights."¹⁶

If one compares these definitions of submission with Paul's description of love in First Corinthians 13:4-7, the similarities are obvious. Therefore we affirm again that submission in Ephesians 5:21 can very appropriately be translated as "voluntary yieldedness in love." Such yieldedness is to be expressed by each family member toward the other—not just by the wife to her husband. To yield one's life to the other in such mutual submission is the appropriate way of expressing a Christian understanding of authority, equality and submission.

Footnotes

¹ L. H. Marshall, *The Challenge of New Testament Ethics* (London: MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1950), p. 248.

² W. T. Connor, *Revelation and God* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1936), p. 96.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁶ Elisabeth Elliott, *The Liberty of Obedience*, (Waco: Word Books, 1978), p. 63.

⁷ William Barclay, *The Promise of the Spirit* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), p. 40.

⁸ Paul K. Jewett, *Man as Male and Female* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975), p. 24.

⁹ Letha Scanzoni and Nancy Hardesty, *All We're Meant To Be: A Biblical Approach to Women's Liberation* (Waco: Word Books, 1975), p. 56.

¹⁰ James S. Stewart, *A Man in Christ* (New York: Harper and Bros., n.d.), p. 254.

¹¹ William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (4th Ed. Rev., Cambridge: University Press, 1957), p. 855.

¹² Lehman Strauss, *Devotional Studies in Galatians and Ephesians* (New York: Loizeaux Bros., 1957), p. 205.

¹³ Markus Barth, *Ephesians: Introduction, Translation and Commentary on Chapters 4-6* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1974), p. 609.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 610.

¹⁵ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Ephesians and Colossians in the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953), p. 128.

¹⁶ S. Curtis Vaughan, *The Letter to the Ephesians* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1963), p. 113.

SUMMARY AND EVALUATION

W. David Sapp

Once again we have nearly completed this marathon of speeches and dialogue. Now we pause for a few minutes of reflection on what has transpired. Of course, my reflection is no substitute for your own, and immediate reflection is no substitute for the perspective which comes with time. But reflection and evaluation are important disciplines without which the words of these days will never become incarnate.

We have come here because we really believe, along with Mrs. Carter, that our own families and the families to whom we minister deeply need help. We have heard the anguish of persons wounded by family crises, and we have seen the far-reaching effects of dysfunctional families. We have stood beside persons who have been subtly persecuted by a society which has branded them "abnormal" because they do not fit into our narrowly drawn definition of "family." In response, we have tried in these days to provide help for hurting families and for perplexed ministers who want to help more effectively. And we have tried to stimulate the kind of thinking and action which will result in more vital and effective help for families in the future.

In the process, we have affirmed our confidence in family. Family, at least by my definition, is the highest kind of human interrelatedness, and it grows out of obedience to the second great commandment: "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Any other kind of family is only a collection of people. Family, like love, is more an event than an organization. And our presence, our words, and our behavior here testify to the fact that it is, for those of us in the Christian community, an important event indeed. It is an event which we would like to strengthen and undergird and share. If *anyone* at all outside our gathering hears that message, it will be a highly significant result of our meeting.

We have also re-surfaced some old solutions to family problems. Our fascination with new insights and our proclivity to adventure often lure us to forget the great insights of the past, even the recent past. Here we have sought to conserve a few of them as they relate to family. Logan Wright has reminded us that to be modern about families, we must be a little old-fashioned. David Edens has called us to a renewal of emphasis on some basic marriage skills. And interestingly, it was a pollster, George Gallup, who reminded us religionists of the importance of traditional religious activities in the home.

But, it is never enough to conserve the past; and so many of our speakers have sought to bring us new help—new ways of understanding of how we deal with anger in intimate relationships. Sarah Frances Anders has nudged us toward a more inclusive and realistic and Christian definition of family—one which is broad enough to include the unmarried. And John Howell has directed us toward a new and more profound understanding of the troubling issues of authority and submission. Harvey Cox and Phyllis Schlafly, have tried to bring us—and each other!—to new understandings of the role of women in modern families.

There is at least one other thing we have done here, and it is not unimportant: We have sounded the call of "Help!" for families. Ultimately, we are all limited in how much help for families we can provide. But we *can* call for the help of other minds, other hands, other hearts. And most importantly, we can call for God's help for families, without which all our efforts amount to nothing. He loves families, too—so much so that He created one for Himself and made us all a part of it.

Of course, there are things we have *not* done at this seminar, and as always the things we have not done far

outnumber the things we *have* done. We have not talked about aging members of families or said as much as we ought about public policy related to the family or a host of other important issues. These issues demand treatment, and the church must continue to give attention to them in the months and years ahead. It is the hope of the Christian Life Commission that this seminar will encourage many of you to provide some much-needed leadership in these areas.

Distance will help us to evaluate these days more effectively. Today we have only a few initial impressions which are yet to be fully refined in the fire of conversations with friends and adversaries. How, then, can we evaluate this seminar now? Well, we already know that some speakers spoke directly to us while others missed us. Some helped us a great deal; others only a little. But evaluating speakers is only a small part of evaluating this seminar. The larger question is, "Have we provided help for families?" That is, after all, what we set out to do. The answer will appear in time. It will appear in our ministries—and in our own families.

And *that* is what this seminar is all about. "Help for Families" does not often happen in bannered ballrooms. It happens in churches and homes and counselling sessions and pulpits and legislative halls and board rooms and, yes Judge Chrisman, in court rooms. It happens everywhere that love finds its way into action. It may even happen in the place where you serve. But it is up to you. These days of talking about help for families are about to end. The days of providing help for families are before us.

FAMILY: LABORATORY FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

Jimmy R. Allen

Thank you Foy Valentine and friends of the Christian Life Commission and of families. I'm delighted to be here.

I'm at that stage in the Convention presidency where everybody is asking, "How are you doing?" and "How is the Southern Baptist Convention going?" and "How are you feeling?" and I always say, "I've never felt better in my life; we've never done better in my knowledge; we're just doing fine."

You have to put that in the context of the background though. Down in Hope, Arkansas, where I was born (out a little past Hope) there's a community called Providence. Now on the farm next to us there is a guy named Ned Ferguson who never did figure out that you are supposed to get tractors. He still uses mules; and he goes to town about once every six months. They built an expressway down through Arkansas. Ned decided to go to town; and he got old Vic and old Blue out hitched to his wagon; and they pulled up on that expressway and just got on there good when a big truck came roaring down from Little Rock on its way to Dallas and just hit him. Old Vic went one way and Blue went the other way and Ned ended up under the wagon with a broken leg. Finally, at the

hospital, the lawyer from town came out to see him and said, "You know, Ned, that company ought to pay you something." He said, "I can get some money?" The lawyer said, "Yes, sir, I'm going to take you to court." So they did and they brought down this high powered lawyer out of Dallas. He had Ned up on the stand and he said, "Now, Ned, answer me yes or no, when the policeman came to that wreck, didn't you say to him that you never felt better in your life? Tell me yes or no." And the lawyer said, "Now wait a minute, judge, Ned never has been to court in his life but he does know how to talk; just let him tell the story." So they allowed him freedom and he said, "Well, I decided to go to town; I hadn't been there in about eight months. I hooked up old Vic and Old Blue and we just pulled up on the road—they got this new concrete road out there—and I pulled up on it and this truck came roaring down and it hit me and Vic went one way and Blue went the other and I was under the wagon and I looked up and here came this man with this light going and he pulled up and got out of his car. He hitched up his pistols and he walked around and he said, "What's wrong with that mule?" Somebody said, "He's got a broken leg." And then pow! he shot him. And he then walked over to my horse and said, "What's wrong with that horse?" And somebody said, "He's got a broken leg," and he shot him. Then he walked over to me and he said, "How are you feeling?" And I said, "I never felt better in my life."

There's a whole lot of context you have to deal with on how you're feeling at any particular time. I'm feeling good about Southern Baptists. I feel a moving of the Spirit of God that's breaking loose in different ways and different places. I'm feeling good about the kind of Bold Mission Thrust in which we have been involved and which has caught the imagination increasingly of different folks at different levels of our leadership. And I'm feeling good about the possibility of our Convention in Houston. I hope you will be praying for it that it will be a time of meaning for us as Christians, as Southern Baptist Christians.

I hope you will be present in Houston and that you will be voting in Houston. There are always divisive elements at work among us and I hope you will decide to come to Houston and not make this meeting a substitute for your trip to the Convention. I hope when you come that you won't play golf; that you will be at the meetings and will be not in the halls but in the place voting because some very real decisions are going to be made about whether the directions that we are moving in at this time are going to be accelerated and continued or not.

I'm glad that Southern Baptists are becoming increasingly sensitive to the hurting needs of families and of persons in all kinds of quandaries in a changing society. You represent this concern in our Southern Baptist life. You must permeate Southern Baptist life as the salt and the light within the body, within the family, if we continue to be God's instrument in our world. This constitutes an urgent call and challenge. I hope you take it seriously. I find it frustrating to gather in rooms with so much insight and so much knowledge and talk about systems "out there" instead of penetrating the rooms with insight, with knowledge,

with compassion, with sensitivity. I come to talk to you about the challenge of, "Family: Laboratory for Christian Living."

I appreciate my colleague in graduate school, John Howell, for exegeting the passage for me. It saves a lot of preaching time. We need to see the flow of the Ephesian letter. We often times pick up a subject as if the letters of the New Testament are written with subjects clearly defined. We lift those subjects out to talk about them. We do that often with the Ephesian instruction about the family. The flow of the Ephesian letter, as John so beautifully exegeted for us, is especially seen in the participles, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18). And the flow of that says that there is in the Spirit-filled life, in the awareness of God in our lives, an opportunity for the family to be the laboratory of the Spirit-filled life, to be the laboratory for Christian living. We ought to take seriously the challenge of that laboratory in our own lives. We are to see the husband love his wife as Christ loved the church and the wife submitting to the husband as to the Lord. The parents are to lead the children in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Children are to honor their parents in the Lord. In the interaction of the family there is a laboratory for the demonstration or the testing out of the validity of our Christian witness.

Everybody knows the family is changing. What we don't know is what the ultimate results of all these changes are going to be. You have heard this week from people who are most knowledgeable in the field of family. I have been envious of you (in an unoffensive way) as I've looked at the opportunity you have had to dialogue and discuss with people who are thoughtful and informed and well-read in the field of family. The complexities of the revolution through which we are going are many. The need is great for us to have the insights to shape family life for the future. You have had an unusual opportunity in relationship with each other to look at marriage and parenting and the challenge to the family idea in our society. We have to face up to these challenges if we are going to be the people of God for our kind of world. The most doleful sounds are being heard from the doom-sayers of our society about an inevitable and irreversible decay of our culture, an erosion of strength in our society, a final collapse because of the deterioration of family life. Yet, on the other hand, there are voices of optimism who look at that very same flow of change, the same kind of structural, relational change in the family and come away with a sense of hope. They cite an awareness that we are rediscovering the importance of personhood in family relationships. Youth may reject parental instructions, but parental attitudes still determine the basic agenda for youth response and decision making. Youth deal with the ideas and the ideals of their parents, whether they accept or reject a particular one. Marriage may fail but persons often grow out of that failure. They receive forgiveness from God and redirect their lives into constructive change.

A combination of a kaleidoscope of different opinions, social earthquakes recording high velocity changes on the seismographs of our nation, nostalgia for yesterday making us want to hold on to a society existing

only in our memories, and a clear rejection of the biblical revelation about family in an increasingly secular society, all work to create the most exciting challenge for Christians since the first century.

As I see it, the family life of our day constitutes the challenge that Christians knew as they entered the Greco-Roman world with passion and abandon for the kingdom of God. The world in which the gospel was born was a world of deterioration in family living, of cyclical remarriage and redivorce, of approval of homosexual lifestyles without questioning the moral aspect of those lifestyles. Into that kind of world that rejected the concept of family so familiar to the Hebrews, the gospel of Jesus Christ was launched with the passion of a handful of folks with the breath of God in their spirit and the gleam of the kingdom in their eyes. They moved with a passion that claimed the territory for God.

In claiming that territory, they conquered with the kind of family life reflected in Ephesians, the fifth chapter. They moved to call the society to the idealism of monogamous marriage and the response of parents to children and children to parents under the leadership of God and in submission to the will of God. We are now engaged in a similar battle. It is a battle in which we must have the same resources, the same dependence on the Spirit of God as we translate those eternal principles by contemporary application to families and to marriages, both those in which we participate and those which we nurture in the fellowship of our churches.

The key words in Ephesians, the fifth chapter, are found in the flow of the eighteenth verse which talks about being filled with the Spirit and the nineteenth verse which talks about celebrating the living Christ's presence. The tenth verse also talks about "proving what is acceptable" to God. Let's see the family as the laboratory for testing and demonstrating the Christian faith.

The basic testing place of the values of our faith really come through to us in the intimate relationships of family. We talk about the spiritual and mystical experiences which change the desires, direction, and destiny of the human life. Those preachments sound good as we give them but there is always an accusation by cynics and skeptics that we overpromise and underproduce. In the atmosphere of family there is an acid test of whether or not the Spirit of God actually does bring to us resources for change within our spirits and our lives. The test is not in increased ritual of religion. The test is not in increased activity in church. The test is whether we are different. Does something happen to create a higher degree of sensitivity to the people who are around us? Is there a greater degree of love, an openness of communication, a sense of mutuality, and a sense of response to need? Is there hilarity and rejoicing? Is there pleasure in giving each other pleasure? Whether or not that happens is really revealed not in community life, in vocations, and in rituals so much as it is in the circle of the family. The family is the acid test of the Christian experience.

Family is also a test for our society. We are at a

time in this society which demands a demonstration of the ideals of monogamous marriage, which shows that this is the path of fulfillment. We live in a world in which people are hungry for fulfillment, hungry for experience. In his little book, *Turning East*, Harvey Cox, points out that we are living in a world of the New Gluttony. It is a gluttony not for possessions but for experience. People are always trying to match or top some other person's experience. We are willing to ingest anything which will give us new experience. In the New Gluttony society, there must be a demonstration that the experience of marriage within the covenant, as God has revealed his intention, is a fulfilling kind of experience. It is at that level that we are a laboratory for demonstration. We can call people toward the basic ideas God has revealed in his word. We can live empowered by Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. In desperation our society is looking for substitutes for family. We want to do something about moral education and character building. We are experimenting to discover how in a world of rising crime, eroding commitments, and vanishing values we can find ways to get through to increasingly difficult age groups like adolescents. It is difficult in this society to find ways for constructive living. We are reaching out all the time. Lawrence Kohlberg of Harvard is working with the whole idea of the Just Community. It is a democratic model for pulling together adolescents and helping them develop some sense of moral decision making. Stages of moral education are delineated. It makes a poor substitute for the family, God's basic plan for building moral character. God's basic plan from the very beginning has been to call a man and a woman and a family together and start showing Himself in that family. He builds that understanding of Himself so that family provides the atmosphere for moral education. He thus creates the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

God intended from the beginning for the family to be the base for evangelism and for missions. I am reminded of Myrtle Barbara Ware's little book. She was a marvelous Christian woman. She wrote a little book called *Missions In The Home*. Though she died early, she left a real impact of insight about the fact that God really does intend for the family to be the basic educational atmosphere in which moral values are sifted out and filled in. In this atmosphere, attitudes and vocations are discovered and callings of God are discerned. God basically intends that. Our society, with increasing numbers of families that fail to function is reaching out for substitutes. Yet we have not found a working substitute for family. Kindergarten movements, day care centers, moral education efforts, character education in public schools are all inadequate answers. God's original plan is the family.

As we look at the family as laboratory, I want us to see it as a laboratory for our own discovery. It seems to me that problem-plagued families and hurting wounds with which we deal often rob pastors-counselors and therapists of the joy of God's gift of family living. I am impressed with Henry Nouwen's book *The Wounded Healer*. His word about marriage is that of experiencing the concept of the wounded

healer. Jesus as the bridegroom with the church as the bride demonstrates that oneness which God brings into this partnership. The aloneness or alienation which is the pain of our society is healed not just by togetherness but also in understanding and respect for the place of aloneness. We can respect the validity of the journey of each partner. There's a joy in mutuality of respect. Psychic distance sometimes is a creative necessity for spiritual nurture. At the same time appreciation and respect creates much needed joy in the laboratory of the Christian family.

We then discover the grace of God in the midst of struggle. There are many struggling folks out there by themselves. We as Christians struggle to be responsible for dealing with the strength and weaknesses of each marriage partner. Understanding, love, tenderness, and support are essential. This is especially true when there is emotional illness within a family, as we have experienced in ours. The burden of parenting children in a troubled society provides lessons in the strength and grace of God. These can be discovered in no other way except in the crucibles of fires in that kind of struggle.

The laboratory of the Christian family teaches understanding that the grace of God is made perfect in weakness. We can sense his presence sensitizing us. We notice signal systems of distress. Often we become equipped not through lectures or seminars but through struggles in our own personal journeys.

The family then becomes a laboratory in which we discover joy and grace. God gives us a sense of his presence in the midst of that struggle. We also discover the guidance of God in a pagan world. We have a responsibility to live up to what we have called ourselves and to defend what we understand to be truth. We Christians are more and more a minority in our world. We have never had a Christian nation. It has always been a nation needing a witness by Christians. It must be penetrated by Christians as salt and light. This is more true than ever.

We must mark the battle lines and stand there with courage, clarity, compassion, and consistency. We must reclaim the values of God in family living. There are some challenges that you and I need to face as Southern Baptist Christians. One of them is the challenge to accelerate help for strengthening families.

I am delighted with the response to this conference. I can remember in the sixties when we called conferences on family life and a small number of folks would show up to explore family experience and needs. I remember listening to David Mace tell of his early days when they didn't even believe in England he ought to be doing this family ministry. Our attitudinal changes have been marked in the last several years. I'm delighted that there is an increasing consciousness of family challenge throughout our society. Southern Baptist Christians especially have reached forward. We are moving in accelerated ways to understanding challenges and needs. However there is a great gap between this conference and the church at the crossroads or the average Southern Baptist congregation. I am mortified at how far behind we are in strengthening families at the grass roots of our

denominational lives. Those of us who are blessed in ministering in large churches with specialized staff are not really aware of the fact that the vast majority of Southern Baptist churches are churches of two hundred and three hundred members. The hurts of families are just as poignant and real as they are in the places where some help is available.

You're challenged to get into the system with all of your might to accelerate everything we can do to strengthen the availability of resources to the churches. Awareness of family need and family challenge ought to mean that we refuse to dabble at the edges. We must move to the very main stream of Southern Baptist life with problems and resources discussed this week. An acceleration of available resources is absolutely essential. The fact is that we have enough resources in Southern Baptist life to change the whole picture almost overnight if we were of one mind about it.

I am thankful for the leadership of the Christian Life Commission, always at the cutting edge in the family field. I am thankful for the Sunday School Board and how they have been moving with acceleration. However, there must be a climate of absolute urgency created by the opinion makers before the decision makers can implement programs in the way God really wants. Thousands need to be working at it. We must create a climate of opinion for the traditional family in public policy. I was glad to hear David Sapp confess that we haven't dealt with it well enough here. We certainly haven't dealt with it well enough as a Southern Baptist constituency. We have not made our case well before the bar of the opinion of the American public and American policy makers. The plight of the family and the need for the traditional family to be undergirded is a strong case to be made in our society. We have an absolute, essential mandate to do that. While decisions are being made, public policy is being made by inertia and inaction. We are needing to come with intelligent action. Public policy must reflect basic value systems which are at the tap root of our national well-being.

We have to do something about the media and what it's doing to our families. We have to do it with a great deal more effectiveness than we have managed to muster up till now. I was interested in reading in the little book, *The Daniel Dilemma*, a statement by Arthur Taylor. He was the author of the abortive "family hour" effort at CBS. He finally lost his job as president of CBS. In his lament over the whole process, he says, "They won." Referring to the Hollywood community, he says that the values of America are being shaped on the West Coast. What they really want is to see their own morals justified. We're talking about a hundred people in Los Angeles. A hundred people make the difference—the directors, the writers,

the producers. They have been so successful that the networks haven't had the guts to try other people. We are in the hands of a hundred people who live in the tinsel of Hollywood and use our media to justify their morals for our children and our families. Why? Because the folks who know better and care deeply have not found the handles to do something to correct that kind of activity in our society. The greatest moral teaching medium ever developed by humankind is out of reasonable moral control. We have a responsibility to be active in the making of public policy about media, about tax money, about governmental programs. We have a responsibility to do that in the name of family. We have a responsibility to state our case with clarity and to stand on it whether others agree or not.

We must be clearly committed to our Christian family life standards. Elton Trueblood has done it when he talks about the case for monogamous marriage in an increasingly pagan society. He says, "We have three responsibilities: we have the responsibility to be realistic and not to deny the extent of the problem on all sides, to state it realistically. We have to realize that responsibility. We have the responsibility to state it with clarity with an understanding that there are moral standards that we believe in, chastity and a life of self control, that we believe in that as a matter of principle. And we have the responsibility to practice it in our own family, to exhibit the nonconformity in such a way as to demonstrate a standard and those become our responsibilities in the laboratory of the family. And then we have that responsibility to move with a kind of alacrity in our day by day living, to call on the spiritual resources of God for a spiritual reawakening in our land."

I don't believe, as I move among decision makers these days that we are going to find any easy answers to the dilemmas of our society. They are complex. I surely don't believe that we are going to make it without a revival within the basic American character. That comes out of what we have come to call spiritual awakening. Unless the spirit of God chooses to move, unless we cooperate with him by claiming access to God's power in the basic attitudes of our lives and the lives of the people around us, then we are in trouble with patchwork efforts to try to help fragmenting families. The basic challenge is for us to believe His word enough to live it. We have missed a word in the Great Commission. We understand going and teaching and baptizing. The missed word is the word *torein*, to observe. The word "to observe" means not to watch but to live out in practical experience all the things that Christ has taught us. It's on that basis that the "Lo, I am with you always" promise comes true. We need both: determination to live it and dependence on the One who has the power.



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