LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THE DEVELOPMENT OF FAMILY MINISTRY

FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH

A Thesis Project Submitted to
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

by

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Lynchburg, Virginia

September, 2000

This dissertation, written by Daryl W. Pitts, and approved by the committee has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Ministry

THESIS PROJECT APPROVAL SHEET

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my wife, Connie, a woman in whom I have full confidence so that I lack nothing of value. She is a woman who has proven George Gilder's hypothesis regarding the civilizing process of marriage upon the American male.

This work is also dedicated to my two sons, Reagan and Morgan, the two arrows which God has granted to me, to shoot into the next generation. May I be faithful to complete the task with excellence, so that our grandchildren may be able to rise up and call us blessed.

ABSTRACT

THE DEVELOPMENT OF FAMILY MINISTRY FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH

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Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2000

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All social and cultural indications demonstrate that the American society is in desperate need. Divorce rates and addictions have multiplied both within and without the church. The local church is uniquely positioned to offer hope and healing, from a biblical perspective to those who have been beaten, bruised, and left beside the freeway of the New World Order. The local church also has the ability to provide preventative services so its members can avoid these life hazards. Based on surveys and research, this project presents a strategy to implement a comprehensive professional pastoral Christian counseling service for the local church.

Abstract length: 100 words.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades the evangelical community in the United States has been inundated with counseling and psychological information. Various counseling ministries and businesses have been born during this period. Many of these organizations have attempted to utilize secular resources (third party payers, psychiatric hospitals, etc.) in order to minister to the portion of God's church which suffers with mental health disorders.

The late 70s, 80s, and early 90s saw Christians utilizing these services with great freedom, due to having sufficient insurance coverage. This, coupled with need, gave birth to such business/ministries as Rapha Treatment Centers, New Life Treatment Centers, Minirth-Meier Clinics, Genesis Treatment Centers and the Dr. Fred Gross Clinics. These counseling alternatives filled a vast void and received much praise and support from leadership within the evangelical Christian community. People who had suffered for years were finding relief; dramatic testimonies of recovery were being shared in promotional literature and in the church. The Southern Baptist Convention officially endorsed Rapha Treatment Centers, the only non-Southern Baptist agency to ever receive official endorsement from the convention.

People were being helped, insurance companies, not tithes and offerings were paying for the services; everyone was satisfied. Then these organizations were introduced to managed care. Almost overnight 30-day length of stays were reduced to 15, then 10, then seven and finally, three. No longer did one have the luxury of time coupled with the intense environment of the hospital to produce growth in the patient.

Symptom reduction or relief was no longer criteria for remaining in the hospital; now it was only dangerousness to self or others. This writer even had a managed care reviewer tell him that a patient who was admitted suicidal only 24 hours earlier could now be

discharged because the family had removed their handguns from the premises. Patients were unhappy, referral sources were dissatisfied, and hospitals were no longer willing to pay management fees to a company that was providing fewer and fewer reimbursable patient days.

If one takes the position that these ministries filled, rather than created a need, then many people with great needs are now receiving inadequate or no treatment at all. This then begs the question of the church's responsibility for the provision of mental health services for its congregation. There are probably fewer issues that are more controversial in the evangelical community than this.

Francis Schaeffer quoted Martin Luther in his book, *No Final Conflict*:

> If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the Devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved, and to be steady on all the battle front besides, is merely flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point.[1]

The God-ordained institution of the nuclear family is one of the main attack points in this generation. The church needs to make a strong statement about family stability and provide means of instruction and training. It appears that Generation X will be responsive to a ministry like this. Glenn T. Stanton, in a research paper for Focus on the Family, made the following observation:

> More Americans are beginning to make changes in their lives that will ensure the strength of their traditional, two-parent family unit. For instance, recent reports show that members of the so-called "Generation X" (roughly, those born after 1961 and before 1976) are ordering their lives in such a way as to make sure that their marriages stay together, are postponing their two-career status for the sake of child-rearing, and

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[1]Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Complete Works* vol. 2, *No Final Conflict*, (Westchester, Illinois: Crossway Books), 122.

are seeking to spend more time with their children. Although it would be premature to draw any concrete sociological conclusion from this apparent trend, these phenomena are worth noting.

Baron's recently reported that there is a reversing of a decades-long trend, young women are opting out of the job market and staying home. The article is based on the findings of Richard Hokenson who is chief economist at Donaldson, Lufkin, & Jenrette, and a demographer by training. Hokenson calls this trend a demographic sea change where the traditional one-paycheck family is now the fastest-growing household unit.[2]

Certainly this development is a great opportunity for the local church. The local church is uniquely positioned by God to harvest these souls. Some within Generation X have discovered the emptiness of materialism and hedonism, and have returned to the anchor of the family.

This generation has had little or no training or models of a biblical functional family. If a local church has the vision and methods to reach and teach, it will find a willing and hungry audience. The church must be more pro-active in helping people mature and avoid irresponsible choices which lead to the devastating consequences of divorce, broken homes, and relationships.

Statement of the Problem and Limitations

The purpose of this project was originally to develop a family and recovery ministry for the local church by determining the family and recovery needs of the Thomas Road congregation, and designing programs to meet those needs. These programs were divided into three categories: programs of prevention, programs of equipping, and programs of recovery.

This project is not designed to meet all the mental health needs of the congregation. There will not be a program for the chronically mentally ill, those acute cases in need of

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[2]Glenn T. Stanton, *Twice as Strong: The Undeniable Advantages of Raising Children in a Traditional Two-Parent Family* (Colorado Springs, CO: Focus on the Family, 1995), 4.

in-patient care, the geriatric population, or the mentally retarded. Additionally, it would be feasible for a church to design an intensive outpatient psychiatric program, or a partial hospital psychiatric program, but this project will not address those issues.

It became clear that this three-pronged attack of the issue would be too cumbersome, and not fit the limitations of a dissertation project. The decision was then made to limit the research to programs of prevention. The programs of recovery could be a topic for a future dissertation. Additionally, programs of intervention, confrontation and church discipline are used to help facilitate recovery so those will also be deleted and placed in a future dissertation. These interventions are designed for those who can benefit from biblical, cognitive-behavioral programs.

Biblical/Theological Basis

Some contend that counseling is a waste of time. They view the time given to this enterprise as wasted due to the experience of counselees not following up on the "advice" given. They also note that "counseling as we know it was not at the core of the New Testament Church."[3]

Others question the efficacy of pastoral counseling, stating the impossibility of effective pastoral counseling. "Further, I think the reasons for my counseling failures are inherent in the pastoral situation and are essentially unavoidable."[4] Krebs notes that the major difficulties in this situation are transference, role confusion, misplaced priorities, and the promise of cheap growth.[5] One could also argue that these difficulties could be present in many different counseling situations. In fact, the difficulty with transference is

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[3]J. G. Swank, "Counseling is a waste of time," *Christianity Today* (1977): 27.

[4]Richard L. Krebs, "Why Pastors Should Not Be Counselors," *The Journal of Pastoral Care* 34(1980): 229.

[5]Ibid., 231. space

possible in any counseling situation unless the therapist is content to be a nameless, faceless wall of reflection. This is not to minimize the importance and danger of transference, particularly for those who would counsel within the church. "Transference can change a simple hug in the mind of the minister to a seductive advance in the mind of the recipient."[6] Miller and Atkinson view clergy counseling as an inherent conflict of interest. These authors, as well as Montgomery and DeBell, believe that it is impossible to have objectivity in pastoral counseling. "The fact that ministers counsel within an ecclesial setting, a complex network of relationships where many people know each other and see their pastor in non-counseling situations, influences what happens in counseling significantly."[7] These authors also believe that method of payment (salary derived from tithes and offerings) impinges upon the ability to deliver effective therapy. This may be true, but are not all therapists, in one way or another, dependent upon their clients for payment and their livelihood?

One other possible problem not addressed in the literature is whether counseling can cloud exegesis. Is it possible that the pastoral counselor could become so enmeshed in a case that he would lose objectivity when dividing the Word of truth? This possible loss of objectivity is dangerous not only to the pastoral counselor and counselee, but also for the entire congregation. The pastor's main function is to care for the flock by teaching and preaching, and applying truth from the Word of God.

The presence of these and other potential problems are not necessarily proof that the church has no obligation for providing counseling services. It would seem imperative to

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[6]Paul B. Macke, "Boundaries in Ministerial Relationships," *Human Development* 14 (1993): 24.

[7]Marilyn J. Montgomery and Camille DeBell, "Dual Relationships and Pastoral Counseling: Asset or Liability?" *Counseling and Values* 42 (October 1997): 33.

answer two questions: 1) can these problems be adequately addressed; and more importantly, 2) is the church obligated to care for its members with mental health needs?

Many have argued that starting a counseling ministry is detrimental to the church, by only causing problems. It is true that creating an environment of openness and acceptance can lead to the acknowledgment of problems. "Actually, when Christians begin to experience true acceptance and deep fellowship with the Lord and with each other, long and deeply hidden problems often begin to surface."[8]

One could ask if having a counseling ministry causes problems or merely gives a venue to destroy denial and address problems. Those who desire peace at any price must recognize the damage incurred by this philosophy. "A diseased theological message is sent when a church or its ministerial staff is pastorally pleasant but practically closed to hearing a person's hurts."[9] King Solomon noted that a clean barn was not always a desirable thing. Prov. 14:4 NIV says, "Where there are no oxen, the manger is empty, but from the strength of an ox comes an abundant harvest."[10] Anyone who has spent time on a farm knows that smelly substance can be spread on fields, to enrich the soil, for a bountiful harvest.

Many of the issues cited as reasons for the church to avoid counseling can be mitigated through the use of simple preventative strategies. Maintaining the highest level of professionalism is the best preventative strategy of all. One must evaluate every relationship for a double bind or duality.

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[8]Philip A. Coyle, "Establishing a Family Life and Counseling Ministry in the Church," *The Theological Educator* 55 (1997): 89.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Prov. 14:4 NIV (NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION)

Of course one cannot do this and be the "Lone Ranger" at the same time. This necessitates that one work with others, and have a high degree of accountability. For those in a solo practice, they must have a consultative relationship with a colleague who can challenge them to face issues of counter-transference, misplaced priorities, role confusion and desires for a quick fix.

The counselor can also avoid many problems by maintaining self-awareness and a healthy personal life. The use of these and other strategies can mitigate against misconduct and the problems of counseling within the church, but the question still must be answered—is the church obligated to meet the mental health needs of its congregants?

The Church's Obligation

It is evident that regardless of the church's obligation, the integration of faith and counseling is desired by many. "Pastoral counseling has now become a major provider of mental health services in this country, accounting for over three million hours of treatment annually in both institutional and private settings, offering individual, group, marital and family therapy."[11] Additionally, this same summary reports that a 1992 Gallup poll survey results indicate that 66 percent prefer a professional counselor who represents spiritual values and beliefs, and 81 percent preferred to have their own values and beliefs integrated into the counseling process. Not only Gallup, but a study by the Joint Commission on Mental Health has recognized this phenomena. "The survey found that when people perceive themselves as having a personal problem, 42 percent of them would consult a clergy person, whereas only 29 percent would consult a non-psychiatric physician and only 31 percent would consult a mental health professional."[12] Many within the secular

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[11]American Association of Pastoral Counselors, *Executive Summary* (website) available from: http://www.metanoia.org/aapc; Internet; accessed 1 October 1999.

[12]Montgomery and DeBell, "Dual Relationships," 29.

psychiatric community recognize and even appreciate the work of clergy in the arena of mental health.[13]

The church must provide mental health services because those services are intrinsically linked with the church's disciple-making mandate.[14] Intimately related to the task of disciple-making is the ministry of teaching and restoration.[15] The word translated *restore* (katartigo) was used to describe the mending of nets and setting of bones. It is abundantly clear that the church is made up of broken people who are in need of mending.[16] Christian counseling is one of the methods chosen by God, to be used in this mending process.

This net-mending process is outlined in I Thess.: "And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone."[17] The reader should notice that three different instructions are given for three different types of people, and one general direction for everyone.

Paul's first instruction was to warn the idle (or unruly, KJV). The word *warn* is "nouthesia." Dr. Jay Adams speaks of this word and its implication for a particular type of biblical counseling.

> There is a New Testament Greek word for counseling (not the only one). It is a comprehensive term that takes in most of what is said under additional terms. The word is nouthesia. . . it contains three elements: change through confrontation out of concern. It presupposes, first, that there are sinful patterns and activities in the life of the counselee that God wants changed; secondly, that this change will be brought about through a verbal confrontation of the counselee with the Scriptures as the

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[13]Norman A. Clemens, Richard B. Corradi, and Marvin Wasman, "The Parish Clergy as a Mental Health Resource," *Journal of Religion and Health* 17 (1978): 228.

[14]Matt. 28:1-20 NIV

[15]Eccl. 12:9, Gal. 6:1 NIV

[16]I Cor. 1:26-31 NIV

[17]I Thess. 5:14 NIV

counselor ministers them in the power of the Holy Spirit; and thirdly, that this confrontation is done in a loving, caring, familial manner for the benefit of the counselee. [18]

The force of Paul's words is undeniable. He recognizes that "the heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure, who can understand it?"[19] Man, even redeemed man, is fallen and prone to sin. He must have a divine, unchanging benchmark from which he can ascertain his responsibility, experience true grief and conviction, discover the joy of forgiveness, and make a straight path to responsible behavior. None of this is possible without a counselor who cares enough to confront, and has the courage to follow through with that care.

It is important to note that there are three types of people addressed in I Thess. 5:14. The Christian is to confront the unruly, but also to "encourage the timid." The counseling method chosen for the first group of people would be totally destructive for this second group. The timid or those feeble of soul require encouragement. Paul uses the Greek term, "parakaleo," or to come alongside of. This is the therapist's responsibility in these cases, to come alongside of for the purpose of exhortation, encouragement, and instruction. These personalities require a gentle hand whereas the unruly require a strong hand.

It should be noted that these are instructions for dealing with certain personality types, not necessarily a particular diagnosis. It is easy to visualize how a particular diagnosis, of say, chemical dependency, could be experienced by either type of personality. Treatment options should be chosen based on the highest probability of success of the given personality type.

The final category addressed in this section is helping or supporting the weak. Who is the weak person? Many have indicated that it may be someone ensnared by life-

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[18]Jay E. Adams, *Ready to Restore* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981) 9.

[19]Jer. 17:9 NIV

dominating sins, or one who suffers from chronic mental illness. These people require help and support. Those who are enslaved by life-dominating sins and disorders are to be consoled, yet encouraged and admonished in such a way that they utilize the power of God to bring about their deliverance.

The final instruction is to be patient. The Christian counselor must exhibit patience and not anger with the unruly. The Christian counselor must exhibit patience and not frustration with the timid. The Christian counselor must model patience and not exasperation with the weak. What better venue than the local church for this modeling to take place?

The church has an obligation because Christians need counseling. Douglass identifies that Christians need counseling: 1) because they are human, 2) because they are sinners, and 3) because they are to grow.[20]

Christians need counseling because they are human and humans require maintenance. "Estimates indicate that as many as 40 to 60 percent of all presenting physical complaints, as reported by family physicians, are based in psychosomatic problems."[21] Certainly this suffering, which may be amenable to Christian psychotherapy, must be of great concern to the evangelical church.

Christians also need counseling because they are sinners. At the completion of the final decade of this millennium, it is evident that the church is little different than the world. The church seems to have taken off its armor and replaced it with camouflage. All of the maladies which inflict society at large--divorce, broken homes, absent fathers, violent crime, illegitimate births (or parents), suicide, etc., also are found in the pews.

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[20]Marvin E. Douglass, "Do Christians Need Counseling?" *The Theological Educator* 55 (1997): 77.

[21]Ibid.

Christians also need counseling because they are responsible to grow. "Christians need professional therapy or counseling when the learning process of Christian development is halted or stunted by significant, unresolved emotional traumas."[22]

According to Eph. 4:11-16, one of the objectives of the church is to equip the saints for service. This equipping cannot occur without the putting-off and putting-on dynamic which is outlined in Col. 3 and Eph. 4:17-32. One will notice that Paul makes some very specific statements regarding life change. "In the process of exhortation the area of life where transformation (dehabituation and rehabituation) is to take place must be spelled out."[23] The Christian counselor's role is similar to the role which Paul described for himself in Col. 1:28 NIV: "We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present every one perfect in Christ."

This of course runs counter to much of the prevailing thought in modern psychotherapy. Ellis, for example, would be highly critical of labeling any behavior as sin.

> I contend that giving anyone a sense of sin, guilt, or self-blame is the worst possible way to help him be an emotionally sound and adequately socialized individual. . . .The concept of sin is the direct and indirect cause of virtually all neurotic disturbance. The sooner psychotherapists forthrightly begin to attack it the better their patients will be.[24]

For Christian growth to occur one must be aware of the destructiveness of sin. It is the counselor's duty to label behavior not only as functional and dysfunctional, but also as God-honoring or sinful.

Since counseling is needed for growth, the Christian counselor must view this relationship as covenantal rather than contractual.

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[22]Ibid., 84.

[23]Howard E. Dial, "The Pulpit Teaching Ministry as Preventive Counseling," *The Journal of Pastoral Practice (1978): 167.*

[24]Ibid., 169.

Contractors dart in and out of a client/patient's world of need, shoring up their own lives through the transaction of selling their services, guarding their own interests and carefully specifying the precise amount of time and service for sale, but covenantors maintain fidelity to the entire situation, not just eliminating the presenting problem, but standing with the person over the long haul."[25]

The Christian counselor must be aware that he is in partnership with God in a type of transformational soul care. The client must bring honesty and a desire to work; the counselor brings skills and training, but God brings healing. Certainly the local church is the logical place for this action to occur. "In stark contrast, a central tenet of transformational soul care is that the church is the ultimate location for completion of the transformational process, the terminus of the healing process."[26] "Christian soul care . . . involves caring for the whole person, reflecting the convictions of the Christian community, and embodying biblically-based values--in the counselor's character and in his or her methods."[27]

It is clear that the church has both obligation and opportunity for providing mental health care for its congregants, but how should it attempt to provide these services? To answer that question, one must focus on two areas--the people and the programs.

The People

If the local church is to fulfill its obligation and begin a counseling ministry, nothing will be more important than the proper screening of the person or people who are to provide these services. But how shall a church judge the competence of the prospective

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[25]Kirk E. Farnsworth and Michael W. Regier, "A Vision for the Future: Redeeming Psychology and Business, Managing Managed Care, and Partnering with the Church," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 25 (1997): 158.

[26]Ibid., 160.

[27]Gary R. Collins, "What in the World is Soul Care?" *Christian Counseling Today* 4 (1996): 12.

candidate? Is education alone a sufficient criteria? What of personality or temperament? Should he be ordained? What type of educational training? Theological? Psychological? Graduate school? Seminary? Should he meet the requirements of a pastor as outlined in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1?

It would seem obvious that one who would establish a church counseling ministry should have superior academic training in counseling and psychology. Knowledge of human development and learning, group process, theories of personality, the integration of psychology and theology, counselor ethics, crisis counseling, marriage and family counseling, ethnicity, human sexuality, child and adolescent counseling, career and guidance counseling, psychopathology, psychopharmacology, substance abuse, counseling techniques and a good counseling practicum or internship would all be prerequisite for the person fulfilling this role.

Yet academic training in the psychological arena alone is grossly insufficient for this person. This training alone could lead one to lean toward a humanistic view and as F. Power has noted, humanistic psychology has become a "religion unto itself."[28]

In accepting this type of training alone, one is in danger of accepting a counselor who is Christian rather than a Christian counselor. The former is one with adequate academic and clinical training who is personally born again. The latter is all of the above, but also one who aggressively integrates conservative evangelical theology into his practice of counseling and psychotherapy.

It must be understood that this is more than mere tokenism. It is not merely the acquisition of specific proof texts to support a secular psychological theory. It is the immersion of the counselor and his practice in the Word of God and theology which

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[28]F. Clark Power, "The Distinctiveness of Pastoral Counseling," *Counseling and Values* 34 (1990): 77.

becomes the benchmark and foundation for the counseling ministry. Adams offers a

scathing and proper critique of the token type of integration:

> In considering the human personality, the plight into which it has been plunged by sin and what God has done about it in Christ, it is truly remarkable that any Christian thinker or writer can begin at any other point--or turn to any other primary source than the biblical data that reveal acres of facts about anthropology. The problem is the very bulk. Yet it is not only common, but has been the rule (with few noticeable exceptions) to find lengthy theoretical discussions of human nature, personality, behavior, etc., by writers who are Christians that rely upon almost any other source than the Scriptures, and use the Bible (if at all) only in a token, superficial or illustrative manner. The Scriptures, when used, rarely provide the true base for the theories that are propounded, rather they are used (or, I should say, misused) to support humanistic views that not only totally disregard these very same Scriptures, but are hostile to them. [29]

This writer's personal experience has borne out the truth of these statements as a

former employee of Rapha Treatment Centers, one of the pioneers of inpatient psychiatric

and substance abuse treatment from a biblical, Christian perspective. From the very

beginning, Rapha had a firm commitment to be "distinctively Christian and clinically

professional" and from the beginning, Rapha had difficulties finding the appropriate

personnel to fulfill this mission. They interviewed many counselors who were Christian

with superior clinical training, but who were found wanting in their biblical and theological

understanding. Conversely, they also had many applicants from a pastoral background,

with biblical and theological understanding, but who lacked any significant clinical

understanding, training or experience. In the early phases of the company this problem was

so severe that it slowed expansion and caused significant didactic portions of the program

to be facilitated by videotape, rather than in person.

It is evident that the person must have a sound biblical and theological foundation for

success as a Christian counselor. Holling argues that ordination is the key to uniqueness

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[29]Jay E. Adams, *More Than Redemption* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), 96.

and "the person who is ordained commits himself or herself to becoming a conscious representative not only of the Gospel, but of the church of the Gospel as well."[30]

This, of course, begs the question of whether one would be required to meet the criteria of I Tim. 3 and Tit. 1 for ordination to this type of ministry. If that were so, then only those who meet the standards of pastor or deacon would qualify. Among other things this would disqualify women and anyone who has been divorced.

This writer believes that the person should hold many of these qualifications, but need not rise to those ultimate standards to qualify for this position. This person should have expertise in theological interpretation and have accountability to the local church.[31] He should have a good understanding of the doctrines of God, Scriptures, Anthropology, Soteriology, Sanctification, Justification, Reconciliation, Propitiation, Regeneration, Ecclesiology and Eschatology. "This person should have a strong foundation in theological and biblical studies, show commitment to personal spiritual growth, and possess a pastoral heart."[32]

Coyle also shares four guidelines for assessing counselor suitability: 1) counselors must not use their role to further their own interests; 2) counselors must respect the right to privacy; 3) counselors must not use any professional identifications, certifications or educational backgrounds which could mislead the counselee; and 4) counselors must seek to continue their professional development and stay current in knowledge and counseling skills.[33]

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[30]David W. Holling, "Pastoral Psychotherapy: Is It Unique?" *Counseling and Values* 34 (1990): 99.

[31]Ibid., 99.

[32]Coyle, "Establishing a Family Life," 91.

[33]Ibid.

This type of person must have a firm commitment to reality for himself and the client. "Often in these circumstances, the pastor is the object of inappropriate and unrealistic expectations, which he himself may share."[34] There is no room in this endeavor for magical thinking or rejection of responsibility, camouflaged as faith or reliance upon God.

Douglass lists ten characteristics of a competent Christian counselor, which seem to be reasonable to this writer. He should be 1) born again, 2) spiritually mature and Scripturally adept, 3) committed to the local church, 4) a person with empathy and ability to encourage, 5) someone who is honest and objective, 6) a good listener, 7) one who gives homework, 8) one who has the courage to confront you lovingly, 9) one who will pray with you, and 10) one who charges fees--reasonable fees, but does charge.[35] Free therapy is not always good therapy.

As noted previously, this writer does not take the position that the church counselor must meet the qualifications of the pastor or deacon as listed in I Tim. 3 and Tit. 1, but many of these qualifications are appropriate as follows.

Qualifications of a Church Counselor

1. Above reproach, I Tim. 3:2; Tit.2:7. No grounds to accuse this man of improper behavior

2. Temperate, I Tim. 3:2; Tit.1:8. Self-controlled, not in bondage to himself or desires of the flesh

3. Prudent, I Tim. 3:2; Tit.1:8. Balanced in judgment.

4. Respectable, I Tim. 3:2. Have an orderly life.

5. Hospitable, I Tim. 3:2; Tit.1:8. Unselfish, sharing with others.

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[34]Clemens, Corradi, and Wasman, "The Parish Clergy," 229.

[35]Douglass, "Do Christians Need Counseling?" 86.

6. Able to teach, I Tim. 3:2; Tit.1:9. Exhort in sound doctrine.

7. Not given to wine, I Tim. 3:3; Tit.1:7. No addictions.

8. Not pugnacious, but gentle, I Tim. 3:3; Tit.1:7. Not given to physical violence.

9. Must be non-contentious, I Tim. 3:3. Not given to quarreling and selfish argumentation.

10. Free from the love of money, I Tim. 3:3; Tit.1:7; I Pet.5:2.

11. Manages own household well, keeping children under control with all dignity, I Tim. 3:4-5;Tit.1:6.

12. Not a new convert, I Tim. 3:6.

13. Have a good reputation with those outside the church, I Tim. 3:7.

14. Not be self-willed, Tit.1:7. Not stubborn, insensitive, forcing his own ideas and opinions on others.

15. Not quick-tempered, Tit.1:7. Doesn't fly off the handle, must be in control of his own spirit.

16. Must love what is good, Tit.1:8; I Pet.5:2. Desires to do the will of God, does not desire that which is evil.

17. Must be just, Tit.1:8. Fair and impartial, able to make objective judgments based upon principle.

18. Be devout, Tit.1:8. Separated from sin.

19. Hold fast the faithful Word, Tit.1:9. Stable in his faith and obeying the Word of God, no hypocrisy.

Biblical Functions of a Church Counselor

1. Must help shepherd the flock of God, I Pet. 5:2; Acts 20:28; I Tim. 3:5. Guard the people of God against false teachers.

2. Be an example to the flock, I Pet. 5:3. Not lord it over those in his charge.

3. Teach and exhort, I Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:9. Instruct and warn.

4. Refute those who contradict the truth, Tit. 1:9-11.

Duties of the Church to the Church Counselor

1. All Christians are to honor one another (Rom. 12:10). But I Thess. 5:12-13 stipulates that we are to hold the pastor in highest regard. The Greek takes the adverb and triples the intensity (literally: "Honor, honor, honor in love those who work hard among you.")

2. Appropriate financial remuneration, Matt. 10:10; Gal. 6:6; I Cor. 9:14; Phil. 4:14; I Tim. 5:18.

3. Submission to pastoral authority and leadership, I Cor. 16:16; Heb. 13:7-13.

4. Pray for, Rom. 15:30.

5. I Tim. 5:17-22

   A. Honor

   B. Financial remuneration

   C. Appropriate accusations
      1) Not to be entertained unless brought by two or three witnesses
      2) Must be an accusation of disqualification
      3) Rebuke before everyone if founded
      4) Do this without partiality

   D. Do not promote to ministry before the person is ready.

The Programs

Coyle has suggested that a church-based family life and counseling ministry should utilize three primary modalities: 1) a preventative education ministry, 2) an equipping ministry, and 3) a professional counseling ministry.

Premarital counseling. An area of early intervention appropriate for a church counseling ministry is an effective premarital counseling program. Divorce has become a plague on this nation which precipitates innumerable social, moral, ethical and

interpersonal difficulties. Recognizing this, the state of Louisiana has developed law regarding a covenant marriage.[36]

A covenant marriage is more difficult to sever and requires premarital counseling to enter. The state of Louisiana has recognized that a firm marital commitment makes a difference both to the couple and to society in general.

There is an epidemic in the United States which is threatening its very survival as a nation. A strong nation must have strong families. The family is the structure that first civilizes children and shows them their meaning and purpose in the world. One only needs to look at the rising crime rate to see the results of the breakdown of the American family.

The 1991 National Commission on the Family stated that "this nation has the highest divorce rate in the world."[37] Here are some startling facts:

> 1,000,000 children per year suffer a parental divorce; half of them will not see the parent who leaves (usually the father) in the first year after the divorce.
> By age 18, 60% of American children will have lived in a one-parent family.
> Half of children who have seen one parent leave will suffer through a second divorce before they graduate from high school.
> Some 15.8 million children (nearly triple the number of 1960) are now living with a single parent.
> 70% of households in 1960 were married couples; this had dropped to 55% by 1990.[38]

God established marriage and family as the foundation of culture; should anyone be surprised at the results of ignoring His divine plan? One needs look no further than this to explain the moral decay of North American society over the past 40 years. This moral decay is accompanied by spiritual and emotional devastation. And where is the church? Over 75% of weddings occur in a church, yet there is a 50% divorce rate.

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[36]Jeff Hooten, "Tying the Knot Tighter," *Pastor's Family* (Aug. 1998): 24.

[37]Glenn T. Stanton, *Twice As Strong* (Focus on the Family Publishing, 1995): 7.

[38]Ibid., 8.

The church now as never before has a golden opportunity to make a difference in this area. It can better prepare these couples for marriage by requiring intense premarital training prior to the wedding ceremony. Premarital testing and instruction will help prepare people for that very important marriage commitment.

Why is it so important for the church to do this? Until 40 years ago America enjoyed a marriage culture. Even non-Christians supported the permanence of the marriage covenant. Sadly, today that is not the case. Most couples today have had few, if any models of marriage stability. They need to be taught God's plan for marriage, in a more intensive way than in two or three one-hour sessions with the pastor prior to the ceremony.

Churches can work to strengthen families. Being aware of potential hazards will allow the Christian counselor to focus energy on overcoming potential hazards to the marriage. McGoldrick and Carter list 13 signs of possible disaster for the premarital couple.[39]

McManus correctly advocates that churches develop policies and procedures which require premarital counseling prior to marriage.[40] He believes that many churches have not used the access they have to couples to prepare them for marriage, saying some are just "blessing machines or wedding factories." He has convinced clergy in 64 cities to sign pledges calling for marriage preparation involving premarital assessment inventories and the use of trained mentor couples to work with engaged or newlywed couples.

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[39]Monica McGoldrick and Elizabeth Carter, "The Stages of the Family Life Cycle," in James M. Henslin (Ed.), *Marriage and Family in a Changing Society* (New York: Free Press, 1980): 48.

[40]Michael J. McManus, *Marriage Savers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993): 75.

An effective premarital program would utilize a few measurements in the curriculum. McManus has well documented the efficacy of the *Prepare/Enrich* instrument for premarital counseling.[41] This instrument, developed by Dr. David H. Olson and colleagues, comes in three forms: *Prepare* for couples who have never been married, *Prepare MC* for couples previously married and *Enrich* for couples currently married who wish marriage enrichment.

Marriage and family enrichment. The church and the families which comprise it, find themselves in a cultural sea change. According to the Statistical Abstract of the United States (1993):

1. The divorce rate increased 279% from 1970 to 1992.
2. The number of children living with a divorced parent saw a 352% increase from 1960-1990.
3. Out of wedlock births skyrocketed 400% since 1960, yet the overall birth rate decreased 33% from 1950-1991.
4. Couples living together outside the bonds of marriage increased 533% from 1970 to 1992.[42]

The church can either decide to go with the cultural flow in order to fit in or, it can decide to make a strong statement regarding the importance of marriage and family and develop preventative and equipping-type programs which address these problems.

It would seem that any church that would address these issues would have a willing audience. There is evidence that Generation X (roughly those born after 1961 and before 1976) is in a "demographic sea change where the traditional one-paycheck family is now the fastest growing household unit." [43]

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[41]Ibid.

[42]U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstracts of the United States, 113th Edition, (Washington, D.C.), 1993.

[43]Stanton, *Twice as Strong*, 4.

It would seem that this generation, the ones who lost their fathers to divorce, lost their mothers to the work place and lost siblings, cousins and potential mates to abortion, have intuitively come to the conclusion that marriage and family are tremendously important. Yet, they have had few, if any, models to teach them how to have a functional family. What an opportunity for the church!

It is imperative that churches work diligently to enrich marriages so that they stay together rather than fall apart. Gilder has well documented the destructiveness of divorce and non-marriage, particularly to males.[44] He has proposed that marriage has a "civilizing" effect upon males that no other function in society offers.

Stinnett has noted that research on strong families consistently shows them to possess six qualities. "Strong families are defined as families that are intact and have a high degree of marital happiness, of parent-child satisfaction, and of meeting each other's needs."[45] The six qualities which Stinnett addresses are 1) appreciation, 2) spending time together, 3) commitment, 4) good communication patterns, 5) a high degree of religious orientation, and 6) the ability to deal with crises in a positive manner.[46] It would seem that programs designed to teach and equip in these areas would pay rich dividends.

A marriage enrichment program could also utilize the *Enrich* instrument. *Enrich* (Evaluation and Nurturing Relationship Issues, Communication and Happiness) was also designed by Dr. David Olsen, Dr. David G. Fournier and Dr. Joan Druckman. This inventory serves as a diagnostic tool for couples seeking marriage counseling and marriage enrichment.

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[44]George Gilder, *Men and Marriage* (Gretna: LA: Pelican Books, 1992), 62.

[45]Nicholas Stinnett, "Strong Families," in James M. Henslin (Ed.), *Marriage and Family in a Changing Society* (New York: Free Press, 1980): 48.

[46]Ibid.

Parent training. In addition to marriage enrichment, a church could offer programs in parent training, particularly fathering. As Dobson has pointed out, American families seem to have a "crisis of confidence."[47] Particularly Generation X, who grew up without strong models of family life, need someone to come along side of them to instruct in the skills of creating strong families through confident parenting.

A counselor could develop programs which address specific developmental needs of infants, toddlers, young children and adolescents. Parents could learn how to establish appropriate discipline, find their child's particular bent (compliant or strong-willed), faith development, and the establishment of appropriate boundaries and limits.

The importance of teaching fathering skills cannot be overstated. As previously alluded, absentee fathers in the American family have become a crisis of immense proportions. The Virginia Department of Health, Health Policy Group, a division of child and adolescent health, published a book in 1995 entitled *Fatherhood and Family Health: A Survey of Programs Throughout the United States*. This work documents many of the devastating consequences of father absence in American homes. Father absence has been correlated with a number of negative effects on children and adolescents. The Health Policy Group categorized these problems as health outcomes, health risks and social outcomes.

One of the studies cited is Garfinkle and McClanahan, 1986. "Daughters of single mothers are:164% more likely to have children out of wedlock, 111% more likely to have children as teenagers, and 92% more likely to be divorced or separated."[48]

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[47]James C. Dobson, *Parenting Isn't For Cowards* (Waco, TX: Word Publishing, 1987), 112.

[48]Virginia Department of Health Policy Group, *Fatherhood and Family Health*, (1995): 9.

McCullough and Seberman discovered that only 2% of adolescent mothers felt that they would turn to their father for support in a crisis.[49] Dawson surveyed 17,110 children and discovered that father-absent children had health vulnerability scores 20 to 35% higher than children living with their fathers.[50]

Paul told Timothy that in the last days men would be "lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderers, without self control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God." [51] This describes much of American culture in the last decade of the 20th century. This also describes much of the church. Divorce and father absence is as much an issue inside as outside the church! This nation has sown the wind and reaped the whirlwind and is in danger of experiencing the truth of Mal. 4:5-6 (NIV), "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse."

Malachi's statements truly describe much of American culture and this writer believes that it is the church's duty not only to prophetically declare and warn people of this problem, but also to offer redemptive solutions and training to teach men fathering skills, so that their hearts can be turned toward their children. Men will typically father the way they were fathered (following their models), for good or ill, unless they receive comprehensive fatherhood training. Men must learn not only their true worth and

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[49]Ibid., 11.

[50]Ibid., 12.

[51]II Timothy 3:2-4 NIV

significance in the family, but since so many have grown up with an absent or incompetent father, they also must be taught fatherhood functions.

Simmons stipulates that there are four main fatherhood functions: to love, bond with, lead, and equip their children.[52] He further states that one equips his children through teaching, training, tracking and tending. This didactic information utilized in a small group setting, with a mentoring program could prove to be very advantageous in addressing the issues of father absence and father incompetence.

Equipping

Equipping programs can serve two purposes: 1) provide small groups ministry/ counseling for support or recovery, and 2) train fellow recoverers as facilitators. These people can be trained to lead groups such as divorce recovery, 12-Step groups for chemical dependency, co-dependency or eating disorders, on death and dying, and various other issues. "One of the vital roles for small groups is to provide us with a place to talk together about raising kids, making life's decisions, understanding stewardship, working and what we believe, helping one another and learning from each other's experiences."[53] Many have written about both the benefits of the small group ministry and the church's reluctance to enter this domain.

For the church to effectively utilize these resources, it must confront the emotional health gospel as promulgated by people like Dave Hunt and John McArthur. "The emotional health gospel assumes that if you have repented of your sins, prayed correctly and spend adequate time in God's Word, you will have a sound mind."[54] The church must

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[52]Dave Simmons, *Dad the Family Coach* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 52.

[53]Farnsworth and Regier, "A Vision for the Future," 161.

[54]Dwight L. Carlson, "Exposing the Myth that Christians Should Not Have Emotional Problems," *Christianity Today* (1998): 30.

acknowledge that we have people with mental health needs in our pews and we must meet their needs. Additionally, the church must recognize that growth and recovery support groups can be an outreach to the community and become another avenue for evangelism.

No church should enter small group ministry haphazardly. This ministry offers great potential for effective ministry to hurting people. It also has great potential for harm if mismanaged. Tan offers five suggestions when starting a lay counseling ministry:

> Choose an appropriate model of lay counseling ministry for your church--informal organized model or formal organized model.
> Obtain full support for the ministry from church staff and boards.
> Screen and select appropriately gifted and qualified lay Christian counselors from the congregation.
> Provide an adequate training program for the lay counselors.
> Develop programs or ministries where the trained lay counselors can be used.[55]

The equipping ministry should also train and equip people for ministry outside the walls of the church, in community-based social ministries. "The church has a responsibility to address issues of poverty, homelessness, human abuse and a host of other problems. The church was never meant to be a country club for like-minded social and racial equals."[56] Members can be encouraged and trained to assist in crisis pregnancy centers, networks for abused women and children, or a host of other services of this type.

Statement of Methodology

This project will be comprised of one survey, research in family ministry, and a design of specific programs of family ministry. The survey will be of the 100 largest churches in the United States. This survey will be designed to elicit information regarding the types of family and recovery ministry used in these congregations. Specific programs will then be

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[55]Siang-Yang Tan, "Starting a Lay Counseling Ministry," *Christian Counseling Today* 3 (1995): 56.

[56]Collins, "What in the World is Soul Care?" 12.

researched and designed to meet those specific needs. A future dissertation may focus on the development of recovery ministry.

Review of the Literature

It is the church's role to make disciples (Matt. 28:19-20), and any counseling ministry should fall under this purpose. Counseling can assist the disciple-making process in a variety of often overlooked ways. Usually when one envisions a counseling ministry, he thinks of a counselor in an office providing therapy for an individual, couple or family. True discipleship will not only contain this type of counseling, but also programs of enrichment, prevention, training and intervention. These programs must follow a basic theory of practice which will be labeled as Biblical Cognitive Developmental. "Of the major psychological approaches to counseling and therapy (the behavioral, the humanistic, the psychoanalytic, and the cognitive developmental), the cognitive developmental seems to be the most open to the epistemological and ethical claims of theologians." [57]

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[57]Power, "The Distinctiveness of Pastoral Counseling," 76.

DUAL RELATIONSHIPS: PASTORAL AUTHORITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

It is no secret that dual relationships are a major concern for every subgroup of the counseling profession: psychiatrists, psychologists, licensed nurse practitioners, licensed social workers, licensed professional counselors, and pastoral counselors. This chapter will offer a brief treatment of some of the issues of dual relationships which are pertinent to all professions, but then attempt to deal with those that are of particular interest to the Christian counselor. The Christian counselor, whether in a staff position in a local church, a solo private practitioner, part of a Christian counseling group, or one who works in a "secular" setting, must address his function and pastoral authority, and accountability.

Issues of Agreement

Psychotherapy/counseling is an emotionally intensive proposition. "We know more about our clients than we know about most of our friends. We spend more time each week engaged in meaningful, deep, intimate conversation with a given client than we do with most of the other people in our lives, sometimes even more than with the people we live with."[1] This circumstance requires the therapist to exercise appropriate boundaries. The relationship must have closeness and separateness. It must be intimate, yet detached. "Those who err on the side of closeness burn up with the emotions they have taken in as they listen to people day after day. Those who err on the side of detachment become calloused to the pain of people who seek their help. The balance is delicate and involves compassion and reflection."[2]

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[1]Jeffrey A. Kottler, *On Being a Therapist*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993), 44.

[2]Ira David Welch, *The Path of Psychotherapy*, (Boston: Brooks/Cole Publishing, 1998), 14.

Dual relationships are destructive to the counseling process, the counselor's clients, and the church. "In a dual role relationship, one person simultaneously or sequentially plays two or more roles with another person."[3] "Dual relationships jeopardize professional judgment, the client's welfare, and the process of therapy."[4] "Dual relationships are problematic because they reduce the counselor's objectivity, confuse the issue, and often put the client in a position of diminished consent. Counselors should avoid becoming involved in dual relationships."[5]

It is evident that some degree of violation of this principle is the cause of a majority of complaints received by various licensing and professional boards. It is important that everyone involved in counseling and counselor training understand the severity of this problem and that its solution rests with the professional community. "Although a boundary violation can be initiated by either the client or the therapist, the counselor or therapist has the ethical responsibility to insure the well being of the client— which, after all, is the primary purpose of the relationship."[6]

Sexual Misconduct

Sexual misconduct is probably the best publicized and most egregious of all the boundary violations. "In a study done of Southern Baptist ministers through the Baptist Sunday School Board, it was found that among ministers who became involved in

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[3]Barbara Herlihy and Larry B. Golden, *Ethical Standards Casebook*, (Alexandria, VA: American Association for Counseling and Development, 1990), 62.

[4]Janet Malone, "Dual Relationships in Therapy," *Human Development* 17 (1996), 17.

[5]William H. Cormier and Sherilyn L. Cormier, *Interviewing Strategies for Helpers*, (Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing, 1985), 255.

[6]Malone, "Dual Relationships," 18.

adulterous affairs, 71 percent of those affairs started through counseling sessions."[7] Not

only is this practice unethical, non-professional, and destructive, in many states it is

criminal. "Texas, for example, holds the standard that a counselor shall not engage in

sexual contact or intimacies with any client or with a person who has been a client within

the past two years."[8] Many states enlist professionals to report violators. "Minnesota

mandates therapists to report sexual misconduct if a client states wrongful sex has taken

place within the context of counseling. . . . The California legislature has mandated that all

licensed mental health professionals in the state have available for review a small booklet

for abused clients entitled *Professional Therapy Never Includes Sex*. . . . Wisconsin

reports are made to the state licensing authority or the district attorney's office if the

violator is unlicensed (such as a pastor)."[9]

Sexual activity with clients is strictly prohibited by every mental health organization.

Even though the profession has a unanimity of opinion in this regard, there is still too high

an incidence of occurrence. "Incidence ranged from 3.6% to 12.1% for male therapists

with a aggregate average of 8.3%, and from 0% to 3.1% for female therapists with an

average of 1.7%."[10]

There are many paths to sexual misconduct and there are different types of individuals

who are involved in this misdeed. Some therapists lose sight of their boundaries and are

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[7]Bill Blackburn, "Pastors Who Counsel," *Christian Counseling Ethics*, ed. Randolph K. Sanders (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 84.

[8]Rose Marie Hoffman, "Sexual Dual Relationships in Counseling: Confronting the Issues," *Counseling and Values* 40 (1995): 20.

[9]George Ohlschlager and Peter Mosgofian, "Reporting Sexual Misconduct in Counseling," *Christian Counseling Today* 3 (1995): 56.

[10]Karen Kitchener and Susan Harding, "Dual Role Relationships," *Ethical Standards Casebook*, (Alexandria: VA: American Association for Counseling and Development, 1990), 76.

gradually ensnared by their sinful desires. The other scenario is that of the predator. "Predatory professionals deliberately seduce or exploit others, unconcerned with anything but their own needs."[11] Regrettably, not only are counselors involved in this type of misconduct, so are a small percentage of ministers. "A pastor in a southeastern town confessed, "I've had sexual contact with more than 1,000 women I've met at beaches, parks, in parking lots and near restrooms. I wanted to see if I could get them. It was a game, really."[12]

Other Dual Relationships

Dual relations in counseling are problematic in more areas than just sex. "In a dual role relationship one person simultaneously or sequentially plays two or more roles with another person. . . . Incompatibility of expectations and divergence of obligations may cause the professional to lose objectivity, divide loyalties, and neglect the well-being of the client. The power and prestige of the professional contains the potential for exploitation."[13]

At times a dual relationship is formed by pure coincidence. These circumstantial and innocent meetings are usually easily resolved and non-threatening. These may occur when a therapist accidentally runs into a client in a store, restaurant, at church or some other public setting. These incidents are probably more inevitable in small communities than they are in large urban areas.

Other times one may find himself in more formal structured multiple professional roles. This may occur in a university setting where one's counselor may also be a professor or

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[11]Brian Pearson and Nick Piazza, "Classification of Dual Relationships in the Helping Professions," *Counselor Education and Supervision* 37 (1997): 90.

[12]Harry W. Schaumburg, *False Intimacy*, (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1992), 106.

[13]Kitchener and Harding, "Dual Role Relationships," 44.

academic supervisor. "A counselor's duty to the client supersedes all other duties and interests. A counselor-educator has a duty to his or her student or supervisor."[14]

It is important to note that there is no unanimity of opinion in these areas. There are those who oppose a high wall of separation between therapist and client in every area of their existence. From their perspective, such relationships "lie in a continuum that includes those that are potentially harmful and those in which there is little potential for harm."[15]

The Christian Counselor and the Church

One must assume that if one is to practice counseling in the church, dual relationships will exist. By definition one is not only counselor, but also a brother or sister in Christ. Both have a common Lord, common faith, common allegiance and a common requirement of spiritual maturity, though one may have less of a commitment to it than the other.

This very dynamic motivates some to posit that counseling would be too enmeshed if conducted in the church; others affirm that the church is the only appropriate arena for Christian counseling. Krebs believes there is too much conflict in a church and counseling relationship. "Krebs reached the conclusion that pastors should not do formal, long-term counseling. He based this conclusion on his own experience in the ministry, where, even though he was a trained clinician, he faced unsolvable problems of transference, role confusion, misplaced pastoral priorities, and lay expectations for cheap therapy."[16]

Other difficulties may arise when counseling topics become sermon material. Certainly the counselee may feel betrayed, yet the pastor may be negligent if he avoids dealing with those topics from the pulpit.

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[14]Pearson and Piazza, "Classification of Dual Relationships," 91.

[15]Malone, "Dual Relationships," 18.

[16]Marilyn J. Montgomery and Camille DeBell, "Dual Relationships and Pastoral Counseling: Asset or Liability?" *Counseling and Values* 42 (1997): 32

Other areas of possible conflict may include that of finances. A counseling pastor may be conflicted when doing therapy with the chairman of the finance committee, or a good friend from the men's fellowship. "It is important for us to consider the ramifications of having the people we serve in ministry be our close friends as well."[17] Dual-relationship issues are a particular concern for the Christian therapist, especially for counselors who work in a church counseling center where, for example, the potential client could be an emotionally troubled person as well as a fellow Sunday school class member.

Some believe that the only way to avoid this catch-22 situation is to forego one of the relationships. "Treman found that those who left pastoral counseling for private practice counseling experienced greater satisfaction in both their professional and personal life than did those who remained in parish ministry."[18] Essentially this position would require all clergy, even counseling pastors, to remove counseling from their area of responsibility.

Adams holds the opposite point of view. "Counseling may not be set up as a life calling on a free-lance basis; all such counseling ought to be done as a function of the church, utilizing its authority and resources."[19]

Adams' position, admittedly controversial, has some attractive features. Too often, Christian counselors have become Lone Rangers. They have access to God's sheep in their most vulnerable state, without having accountability to God's church, and its leaders. (Hebrews13:17) Dobson suggests that this work can be accomplished in both the church and the private practice setting.[20]

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[17]Paul B. Macke, "Boundaries in Ministerial Relationships," *Human Development* 14 (1996): 23.

[18]Montgomery and DeBell, "Dual Relationships and Pastoral Counseling," 33.

[19]Jay E. Adams, *More Than Redemption*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), 66.

[20]Ed Dobson, "Pastoral Ministry in a Broken World," *Christian Counseling Today* 3 (1995): 55.

Holling suggests that ordination is the key to bridging this divide. "The counselee who enters therapy comes to the ordained pastor knowing that he or she not only represents the values, beliefs and traditions of the church by nature of the ministerial role, but also brings unique resources to that context. The two most important of these resources are theological interpretation and accountability to the church."[21]

The Christian counselor may find himself in a double bind. How can one obtain a competent accountability relationship within the context of a local church without divulging confidentiality? It would seem that one must entertain several options.

One of those options would be to enter a mentor-protégé relationship. This could be helpful for either clinical or theological mentoring. One problem in Christian counseling is the person who advertises himself as a Christian counselor who has a Ph.D. in psychology, and a Sunday School understanding of theology. Schmidt states that the mentor to protégé model is when "one person, more knowledgeable or mature, teaches another skills that will further personal or professional growth."[22]

Utilizing this model, one could be both a pastor and a counselor. Macke suggests that "many problems would be avoided if ministers would consult more with each other in peer supervision and account for each of their ministerial relationships with a supervisor."[23]

It is also important for the client to understand the need for a professional relationship. Wright suggests the following:

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[21]David W. Holling, "Pastoral Psychotherapy: Is It Unique?" *Counseling and Values* 34 (1990): 98.

[22]Wayne Schmidt, "The Two-Edged Sword of Accountability," *Christian Counseling Today* 4 (1996): 45.

[23]Macke, "Boundaries," 24.

It would be well to clarify with the couple that when you see them outside of the counseling setting in social setting or at church meetings, you will not mention what occurs within the counseling session and you would appreciate their not mentioning it either. It is also important that the individual or couple not go to friends or relatives and share what occurs in counseling or ask for additional advice. Too often, conflicting information could be shared or others will misunderstand what is occurring in the counseling setting.[24]

Another method of dealing with the issue of dual relationships is by using the continuum view and informed consent. This view recognizes that not all dual relationships can or should be avoided and that "it may be more useful to place dual relationships on a continuum ranging from those that are potentially seriously harmful to those that have little potential for harm, with practitioners evaluating the risks and acting accordingly."[25] The dual relationship must be openly processed with the client so he can give informed consent.

Ohlschlager states that "Christian counselors have a duty to reasonably disclose the benefits, risks and alternatives to counseling to a competent client or parishioner so that he or she can make an informed and voluntary decision to engage in counseling. The level of risk inherent to the counseling goal and process shapes the degree of detail required in obtaining consent."[26] Lewis and Epperson's studies "provide empirical support for the suggestion that the provision of pre-therapy information about a counselor's values, goals and techniques enhances the potential client's ability to make informed choices regarding a counseling relationship."[27]

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[24]H. Norman Wright, *Marriage Counseling*, (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1995), 104.

[25]Montgomery and DeBell, "Dual Relationships and Pastoral Counseling," 36.

[26]George Ohlschlager, "Ethical/Legal Frontiers," *Christian Counseling Today* 5 (1997): 41.

[27]Kathleen N. Lewis and Douglas L. Epperson, "Values, Pretherapy Information, and Informed Consent in Christian Counseling," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 10 (1991): 113-131.

Choosing the Degree of Confidentiality

The major dilemma facing the mental health professional or the professional pastoral counselor who belongs to the American Association of Pastoral Counselors, is what to do with confidential information, gained in a counseling session, which if not disclosed, is detrimental to the church body, or an individual's family. Unless otherwise noted, one would be bound by the Tarasoff ruling and by common practice set by legal precedent. It is certainly incumbent on the Christian professional to do the right thing. "As Christians, we want to practice not only doing right, but also being moral people. Morality is a state of being, as much as it is doing."[28]

It would be possible for one to find oneself in a no-win situation. Bound by strict confidentiality, the counselor would have to remain a silent witness to a spiritual train wreck, knowing that he had the power to engage a rail-switching device. The counselor might know Biblical church discipline to be the most redemptive intervention, yet be unable to consult with the client's spiritual authorities. It would be true cowardice, at this point, to cling to some idea of professional neutrality. "Christian therapists cannot be indifferent to the direction in which individuals move in therapy, cannot be neutral about the ideals that shape and direct psychotherapy. . . . Strict neutrality regarding Christian moral obligations and ideals is neither possible nor desirable."[29]

One possible solution to this dilemma would be to practice limited confidentiality. Obviously, one must clearly inform the client, in writing, regarding the parameters of confidentiality, prior to the start of therapy. "Ethical practice requires that they inform

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[28]Rudolph K. Sanders, ed., *Christian Counseling Ethics*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 20.

[29]Alan C. Tjeltveit, "Psychotherapy and Christian Ethics," *Christian Counseling Ethics*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 133.

clients at the outset of the degree of confidentiality they will maintain.... In this case, clergy persons retain the right to violate confidentiality if, in their opinion, the disclosure by the congregant were such that they seriously violated the rights of other congregants or the integrity of the church."[30]

It would seem that the Christian counselor would not only have a duty to his client, but also an obligation to his own and his client's spiritual authorities. The idea of limited confidentiality would allow the therapist to consult with these people, when appropriate. The client, through full disclosure by the therapist, would have been informed about this possibility (probability) prior to the onset of therapy. This model disallows the philosophy of the uninvolved, morally neutral therapist, but requires the counselor to become part of a treatment team which includes the client, therapist, client's family and other spiritual resources of the client.

Summary

It is evident that there are many opinions about the nature of dual relationships. It would also seem evident that both a high wall of separation and any form of enmeshment are both counter-productive and unethical. The high wall of separation could lead counselors to view clients as cases, diagnoses or statistics. But unfortunately, Christian counselors may be tempted to go to the opposite extreme and become too entangled with their clients, losing professional objectivity because they are brothers or sisters in Christ. "Just as rigid boundaries can be barriers to growth and grace in a professional, ministerial relationship, fuzzy boundaries can lead to chaos and confusion."[31]

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[30]Montgomery and DeBell, "Dual Relationships and Pastoral Counseling," 37.

[31]Macke, "Boundaries," 24.

Macke suggests eight preventative strategies which, if employed, will assist the therapist in traversing this potentially dangerous terrain:[32]

1) Be professional: carefully re-evaluate relationships that have dual purposes-- pastoral, business and social.

2) Work with others: Lone Ranger means trouble in ministry.

3) Develop a healthy personal life: By reducing personal stress and increasing appropriate intimacy, a religious professional is less likely to be tempted to meet personal needs through professional relationships.

4) Maintain self-awareness: Constantly monitor your thoughts, motivations, and feelings in your professional relationships.

5) Recognize the grave ramifications of misconduct: "Can a man take fire into his own chest and not be burned?" (Prov. 6:27 NIV) It is healthy to have a realistic fear of consequences.

6) Use selective hiring practices: Rigorously check out those who will work with clients, particularly minors.

7) Avoid potentially risky actions: Avoid frequent physical contact, experimental therapies, gift exchanges, overnight excursions, etc.

8) Adhere to guidelines for pastoral counseling: Refer those who are beyond your training. Adhere to the rule of confidentiality, limit self-revelation; counseling is therapy, not friendship.

If the counselor follows these suggestions, he will have an easier time of maintaining appropriate closeness and distance in the therapeutic relationship and avoid potential disasters within a church counseling ministry.

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[32]Ibid.

SURVEYS

One survey was developed for this dissertation. It was sent to the 100 largest churches in the United States. A mailing list was purchased from American Church List Inc. in Arlington, Texas.

The instrument was designed to discover what counseling programs those churches have developed. This survey was not only designed to elicit information about which churches have particular programs, but also what the results of those programs has been. Respondents were asked to disclose the benefits and problems with the programs. They were also asked to provide logistical information regarding their programs.

These churches are located in twenty-six states and the District of Columbia. They are affiliated with twenty-eight denominations. The churches are:

Apostolic Church of God, Chicago, IL
Beaverton Foursquare Church, Beaverton, OR
Bellevue Baptist Church, Cordova, TN
Bethel AME Church, Baltimore, MD
Brentwood Baptist Church, Houston, TX
Brooklyn Tabernacle, Brooklyn, NY
Calvary Lutheran Church, Golden Valley, MN
Calvary Chapel, Albuquerque, NM
Calvary Chapel, Downey, CA
Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa, Santa Ana, CA
Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Decatur, GA
Champion Forest Baptist Church, Houston, TX
Christ Universal Temple, Chicago, IL
Christ Church, Nashville, TN
Church of the Harvest, Los Angeles, CA
Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church, Fort Lauderdale, FL
Cornerstone Pentecostal Church, San Antonio, TX
Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile, AL
Covenant Church, Carrollton, TX
Crenshaw Christian Center, Los Angeles, CA
Deliverance Evangelical Church, Philadelphia, PA
Ebenezer AME Zion Church, Fort Washington, MO
Elmbrook Church, Brookfield, WI

Fielder Road Baptist Church, Arlington, TX
First AME Church, Los Angeles, CA
First Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA
First Baptist Church, Dallas, TX
First Baptist Church, Euless, TX
First Baptist Church, Ft. Lauderdale, FL
First Baptist Church, Hammond, IN
First Baptist Church, Jackson, MS
First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, FL
First Baptist Church, West Palm Beach, FL
First Southern Baptist Church, Oklahoma, OK
From the Heart Church Ministries, Temple Hills, MD
Grace Community Church, Sun Valley, CA
Great Hills Baptist Church, Austin, TX
Greater St. Stephens Baptist Church, New Orleans, LA
Green Acres Baptist Church, Tyler, TX
Hartford Memorial Baptist Church, Detroit, MI
Harvest Christian Fellowship, Riverside, CA
Hebron Baptist Church, Dacula, GA
Heritage Christian Center, Denver, CO
Hoffmantown Baptist Church, Albuquerque, NM
Horizon Christian Fellowship, San Diego, CA
House of Yahweh, Abilene, TX
Houston's First Baptist Church, Houston, TX
Hyde Park Baptist Church, Austin, TX
Jubilee Christian Church, San Jose, CA
Lackland AFB Catholic Church, Lackland AFB, TX
Idlewild Baptist Church, Tampa FL
Lakewood Charismatic Church, Houston, TX
Los Angeles Church of Christ, Los Angeles, CA
Loveland Church, Rancho Cucamonga, CA
Mariner's South Coast Church, Irvine, CA
Mt. Ephraim Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA
Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, MN
Mt. Paran Church of God, Atlanta, GA
New Hope Christian Fellowship, Honolulu, HI
New Life Christian Church, Colorado Springs, CO
New Birth Missionary Baptist Church, Decatur, GA
North Phoenix Baptist Church, Phoenix, AZ
Orlando Christian Center, Orlando, FL
Park Cities Baptist Church, Dallas, TX
Phoenix First Assembly of God, Phoenix, AZ
Pleasant Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Houston, TX
Prestonwood Baptist Church, Plano, TX
Ramsey Baptist Church, Montrose, SD

Rehoboth Baptist Church, Tucker, GA
Roswell Street Baptist Church, Marietta, GA
Saddleback Valley Community Church, Mission Viejo, CA
St. Agnes Baptist Church, Houston, TX
St. Aiden's Church, Williston Park, NY
St. John Missionary Baptist Church, Lovejoy, IL
St. John the Evangelist Church, Fenton, MI
St. John the Evangelist Church, Naples, FL
Second Baptist Church, Houston, TX
Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Birmingham, AL
Southeast Christian Church, Louisville, KY
Tenth Street Baptist Church, Washington, D.C.
The American Church, Arlington, TX
The Chapel, Akron, OH
The People's Church, Fresno, CA
The Potter's House, Dallas, TX
Thomas Road Baptist Church, Lynchburg, VA
Travis Avenue Baptist Church, Ft. Worth, TX
Trinity Baptist Church, San Antonio, TX
Trinity Church, Lubbock, TX
Universal World Church, Los Angeles, CA
Victory Christian Center, Tulsa, OK
Vineyard Christian Fellowship, Anaheim, CA
West Angeles Church of God in Christ, Los Angeles, CA
Willow Creek Community Church, Barrington, IL
Word of Faith Christian Center, Southfield, MI
World Changers Church International, Atlanta, GA
World Harvest Church, Columbus, OH
Zion Lutheran Church, Anoka, MN

Note that the list purchased from American Church Lists contains three or four false names so that the company can track and confirm that the list was utilized for the purpose for which it was purchased. The survey is located in Appendix A.

Survey Results

Survey of 100 Largest Churches

This survey was mailed on June 1, 2000 and as of August 1, 2000, thirty had been returned for a sample of 30% of the 100 largest churches in America. The survey was mailed with a self-addressed stamped envelope to facilitate ease for the respondents.

Many churches mailed the survey without identifying themselves. Those churches which did identify themselves were:

Bellevue Baptist Church, Cordova, TN
Calvary Chapel of Costa Mesa, Santa Ana, CA
Christ Church, Nashville, TN
Elmbrook Church, Brookfield, WI
First Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA
First Baptist Church, Dallas, TX
Great Hills Baptist Church, Austin, TX
Hebron Baptist Church, Dacula, GA
Heritage Christian Center, Denver, CO
Hoffmantown Church, Albuquerque, NM
Idlewild Baptist Church, Tampa, FL
New Hope Christian Fellowship, Honolulu, HI
Rehoboth Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA
Saddleback Valley Community Church, Mission Viegjo, CA
Saint John the Evangelist Church, Naples, FL
Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Birmingham, AL
Southeast Christian Church, Louisville, KY
The Chapel, Akron, OH
The People's Church, Fresno, CA
Thomas Road Baptist Church, Lynchburg, VA
Victory Christian Center, Tulsa, OK
Vineyard Christian Fellowship, Anaheim, CA
Willow Creek Community Church, South Barrington, IL
Word of Faith International Christian Center, Southfield, MI
World Harvest Church, Columbus, OH

Results

Question one: Do you have a premarital program?

All thirty churches answered yes to this question.

Question two: Is it required in order to be married in your church?

Twenty-nine of the churches (97%) answered yes; one church (3%) answered no.

Question three: How long is the program (number of hours and number of sessions)?

The number of hours were varied from two to seventy: 2 (one church), 4 (five churches), 6 (two churches), 8 (four churches), 10 (one church), 12 (four churches), 15 (six churches), 18 (one church), and 50-70 (one church).

Number of churches:	1	5	2	4	1	4	6	1	1
Number of hours:	2	4	6	8	10	12	15	18	50-70

The numbers of required sessions ranged from two to thirteen: 2 (one church), 3 (three churches), 4 (four churches), 6 (four churches), 8 (five churches), 10 (two churches), 12 (one church), and 13 (three churches).

Number of churches:	1	3	4	4	5	2	1	3
Number of sessions:	2	3	4	6	8	10	12	13

Question four: Do you use any instruments such as PREPARE, FOCCUS, Taylor-Johnson or others?

PREPARE was used by fifteen churches, FOCCUS (Facillitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study) by one church, and Taylor-Johnson by five churches. Additionally, other instruments utilized were the Pre-Marriage Awareness Inventory, Kirsey-Bates, Myers-Briggs, and the DISC.

Question five: Do you have a marriage mentoring program?

Twelve churches (40%) responded in the affirmative, sixteen churches (53%) responded in the negative, and two churches (7%) did not respond to the question. Two of the churches note that they use the PREPARE inventory in their marriage mentoring program.

Question six: Do you have programs of marriage enrichment?

Twenty-seven churches (90%) stated that they had programs; three (10%) did not. Of those who used seminars, one church provided monthly seminars, seven provided them quarterly, twelve provided them annually, and six provided them as needed. Of those

which provided support groups, eleven met weekly, and three met monthly. One church reported using marriage and family cell groups, one utilized three retreats per year, and one used a six-week *Fit To Be Tied* workshop.

Question seven: Do you have programs of parent training?

Twenty-five churches (83%) answered yes, five churches (17%) answered no. Of those which provided parent training using seminars, five offered them monthly, five quarterly, five annually, and five as needed. Of those which provided support groups, thirteen offered them weekly and two, monthly. Seven churches used *Growing Kids God's Way*. Other programs utilized were *Habits of a Healthy Home, Mothers of Pre-Schoolers, Homes of Honor, Just Me and the Kids* (single parenting), and *Mother's Heart*.

Question eight: Do you have programs to teach fathering skills?

Ten churches (33%) answered yes and twenty churches (67%) answered no. Those that offered seminars had them monthly (one), annually (four), or as needed (3). Those with regularly scheduled support groups met weekly (one) or monthly (one). One program mentioned was *Victory by Virtue for Men*.

Question nine: Do you have support groups for the chemically dependent?

Twenty-one churches (70%) answered yes and nine churches (30%) answered no. Of those which had support groups, twenty met weekly and one met bi-weekly. Twelve of these churches utilized *Celebrate Recovery*; others used *Victorious Living, Conquerors in Christ*, and *National Overcomers Outreach* material. Additionally, one church, Heritage Christian Center in Denver, CO, offers state-certified Relapse Prevention, Level I and II D.V.I. Educational and Therapeutic groups for individuals mandated to treatment by the courts.

Question ten: Do you have support groups for codependents?

Fifteen churches (50%) answered yes and fifteen (50%) answered no. Twelve churches reported weekly meetings and one church reported having a monthly meeting.

Materials mentioned were Lifeway's *Untangling Relationships, Celebrate Recovery,*
Al-Anon and *Victorious Living.*

Question eleven: Do you have a divorce recovery group?

Twenty-three churches (77%) answered yes, and seven churches (23%) answered no.
Twenty-one churches met weekly, one met bi-weekly, and one met monthly. Programs
mentioned were *Divorce Care* (seven churches), *Divorce Recovery, Divorce--Recover,*
Biblical Healing After Divorce, and *Separated But Not Severed.*

Question twelve: Do you have a parenting tough-love support group?

Three churches (10%) answered yes, and twenty-seven (90%) answered no. One
church meets weekly, one monthly, and one did not report.

Question thirteen: Do you have support groups for those who have been sexually
abused?

Thirteen churches (43%) have these groups, and seventeen (57%) do not, though one
church mentioned a one-to-one mentoring program. All churches with groups reported
that they met weekly. Materials mentioned for these groups were *Wounded Heart* (Dan
Allender), *Living Waters,* and *Victorious Living.*

Question fourteen: Do you have a support group for those who are or have been
sexually confused (homosexual, etc.)?

Fourteen churches (47%) reported yes and sixteen churches (53%) reported no.
Eleven churches reported weekly meetings and one reported a monthly meeting. Some
programs mentioned were *Living Waters, Living Hope, Binding Up the Broken Hearted,*
and *Men's Sexual Purity.*

Question fifteen: Do you have a support group for people with eating disorders?

Fourteen churches (47%) reported yes and sixteen churches (53%) reported no to this
question. All of the churches with programs met weekly. Programs mentioned were
Weigh-Down (4), *Breaking Free, Overeaters,* and *You Are Not What You Weigh.*

Question sixteen: Have any of these programs caused problems within the church?

One church (3%) did not answer, twenty-seven (90%) stated there were no problems. Two churches (7%) stated that there were problems. These two are worth a closer examination.

Bellevue Baptist Church was one of the churches which identified problems with their programs. They stated that three years ago the support group was nothing more than a "pity party." They noted that bringing a higher degree of accountability to the support group leadership alleviated that problem.

The Vineyard Christian Fellowship of Anaheim, CA, experienced a much more significant problem with their recovery program. They reported that they sustained a lawsuit due to an adult lay leader acting inappropriately with a minor. The lay leader had no previous history of this type of behavior, and this behavior occurred outside the context of the church. Regardless, the church had to pay out because of it.

Question seventeen: Do you have any other programs not listed?

Sixteen (53%) reported yes, thirteen (43%) reported no and one (4%) did not answer. Some of the other programs listed were cancer support groups, single parents, infertility, chronic mental illness, grief, general family dysfunction, *Finding the Love of Your Life* (singles), *Golden Girls* (over 50), *Financial Peace University, Children and Adults with A.D.D., Weigh-Down Workshop, Surrogate Grandparents* (for single parents and their children), *Viet Nam Veterans Restoration, Career Compass*, post-abortion recovery, on death and dying, seizure disorders, freedom from smoking, *Gamblers Anonymous,* multiple sclerosis, juvenile diabetes, *Adult Children of the Chemically Addicted, Women in Recovery for Overspending,* and homeschool support groups. It is obvious that many of these churches have seen needs as opportunities and have developed specific ministries to support people in need.

Question eighteen: Have you found a particular time and day to be best for these programs?

Nineteen (63%) answered yes, ten (3%) answered no, and one (4%) did not answer. Of those who answered yes, every day of the week with the exception of Saturday was mentioned: Monday (11), Tuesday (1), Wednesday (5), Thursday (1), Friday (2), Sunday (2) and evenings (6). One church noted that all of their groups met on Wednesday evening with the exception of their sexual purity group which met another night to maintain confidentiality.

Question nineteen: Does your church employ church discipline?

Nineteen (63%) stated that they employed church discipline while eight (27%) did not and three (10%) did not answer.

Question twenty: Do you have a stated policy and procedure for church discipline?

It was interesting to note that nineteen churches (63%) employed church discipline, but only twelve (40%) had a written policy and procedure for its employment. Fifteen churches (50%) do not have a policy and procedure, and three (10%) did not answer the question. One could assume that a full 60% of these churches do not have a written policy and procedure for church discipline. This could place them at risk for lawsuits.

Model Churches

The results of this survey uncovered three churches with sophisticated counseling programs. These churches shall be referred to as model churches. The churches are Victory Christian Center, Tulsa, OK; Mt. Paran Church of God, Atlanta, GA; and Saddleback Valley Community Church,, Lake Forest, CA.

Victory Christian Center

Victory Christian Center seems to have comprehensive programs. They have a required premarital program of twelve sessions which last fifteen hours. The premarital

program utilizes an instrument called *Premarriage Awareness Inventory* from Logos Productions, Inc. They do not have marriage mentors, but they do offer annual programs of marriage enrichment in addition to weekly marriage and family cell groups. They report having about 800 weekly cell groups on dozens of special needs and interests.

The church also reports weekly programs of parent training. These weekly meetings utilize *Growing Kids God's Way* and *Habits of a Healthy Home*. They also use *Victory by Virtue* for men in their weekly support group, which focuses on fathering skills.

This church also reports weekly support groups for the chemically dependent, codependents, divorce recovery, victims of sexual abuse, the sexually confused, and those with eating disorders. Unfortunately, this church failed to report the curriculum choices for these groups.

Mt. Paran Church of God

Mt. Paran offers many fine programs in addition to pastoral counseling and a referral service for longer-term professional Christian therapy. The professional therapy is provided through an arrangement with the Psychological Studies Institute (P.S.I.). P.S.I. offers counseling in several churches in the Atlanta and Chattanooga area. They staff these centers with graduate students who operate under the close supervision of licensed therapists. These counselors offer individual, marital, or family therapy for adults, adolescents, and children.

Mt. Paran also utilizes the Stephen Ministry which is a program that equips lay persons to provide distinctively Christian care on a one-to-one basis. These mentors assist for those who are hospitalized, terminally ill, and their families, those with a job crisis, the aging, and those facing other life transitions.

Mt. Paran also offers *Crown Ministries* small group study. This small group is designed to help disciple people in the area of finances. This group meets once a week for two hours for twelve weeks. Students learn about getting out of debt, saving, spending, earning money, training children, budgeting, giving, and investing.

Mt. Paran has an eight-hour, four-session premarital program, which is not required in order to be married in the church. This voluntary program utilizes the PREPARE premarital inventory.

Mt. Paran reports offering marriage enrichment seminars on an annual basis. They also have weekly support groups for marriage enrichment, in which they use the *Becoming One* material. Additionally, they offer weekly support groups of parent training for single parents.

Mt. Paran also offers *Victorious Living*, a twelve-step support group system on a variety of issues. *Relationships Victorious* is a sixteen-week closed group focusing on how to set healthy boundaries in relationships. *Newcomers Victorious* is a six-week orientation to support groups and the recovery process. After completing orientation, newcomers are assimilated into existing groups (*Addicts Victorious* for those struggling with prescription or illegal drugs, tobacco, or alcohol; *Men Victorious* for men with a primary focus on non-chemical addictions or other life-controlling issues; *Women Victorious* for women with a primary focus on non-chemical addictions or other life-controlling issues; *Teens Victorious* for ages 15-19, who are using an addictive substance, or are living in a home with an addict or absentee parent; *Families Victorious* for family members living with an addict, or dealing with the effects of a previous relationship with an addict; or *Survivors Victorious* for adults who grew up in a dysfunctional home caused by an addict or an absentee parent).

Mt. Paran also reports weekly support groups for those who have been sexually abused, sexually confused, and one for divorce recovery. The divorce recovery group is called *Complete In Him*. This open group is lay led and is designed to discover how to process the stages of divorce according to biblical principles.

Saddleback Valley Community Church

Saddleback offers a required premarital program. This program is eight sessions of ninety minutes each and uses the PREPARE instrument.

Saddleback offers a monthly marriage enrichment seminar called Life-Mates. It offers a monthly speaker, dessert, and optional attendance in a short-term small group.

They also offer a monthly seminar in parent training. These seminars begin in September with toddlers and going through June with teens. They also have weekly support groups: *Parents of Teens, MOPS, Apron Strings,* and a single parents support group.

They have several divorce recovery groups operating simultaneously. These are on a twelve-week rotation which meets on different nights.

Saddleback also has a sophisticated set of support groups which meet every Friday night called *Celebrate Recovery*. The senior pastor supported this program by kicking it off with an eight-week sermon series. This series legitimized the program and helped remove any stigma which may have been attached to it. He also uses many *Celebrate Recovery* testimonies in the weekend messages.

> The Friday night recovery groups are for:
> Chemically addicted women
> Chemically addicted men
> Codependent women
> Codependent men
> Codependent women in a relationship with chemically dependent men
> Adult children of chemically addicted for women
> Adult children of chemically addicted for men
> Women in recovery from Overspending
> Women's eating disorders
> Renewal from sexual addiction for women
> Renewal from sexual addiction for men
> Women in recovery from guilt and shame
> Co-addicted women in a relationship with sexually addicted men
> Women's love and relationship addiction
> Men in recovery from anger
> Women in recovery from anger

It is obvious that these three churches are serious about recovery, ministry to hurting people, and training people in family life as a way to avoid catastrophes.

PREMARITAL COUNSELING

The church and the families which comprise it, find themselves squarely in the midst of cultural change, as demonstrated by the following statistics.

1. The divorce rate increased 279% from 1970 to 1992.
2. The number of children living with a divorced parent saw a 352% increase from 1960 - 1990.
3. Out of wedlock births skyrocketed 400% since 1960, yet the overall birth rate decreased 33% from 1950 - 1991.
4. Couples living together outside the bonds of marriage increased 533% from 1970 to 1992.[1]

The church can either decide to go with the cultural flow in order to fit in or it can decide to make a strong statement regarding the importance of marriage and family by developing preventative and equipping-type programs which address these problems. This major change in American culture not only affects individuals, but the society at large.

Prevention science has identified a relatively small number of common risk factors that underlie a wide variety of psycho pathology. Marital distress is one of these common or generic risk factors. Specifically, marital distress has been linked to a wide range of both adult disorders (depression) and child disorders (conduct). In addition, a good marriage is seen as one of the common and generic protective factors against a wide range of dysfunctions.[2]

It is imperative that the church work diligently to prepare couples for marriage and to enrich marriages so that they stay together rather than fall apart. Gilder, in his book, *Men*

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[1]Glenn T. Stanton, *Twice as Strong: The Undeniable Advantages of Raising Children in a Traditional Two-Parent Family*, (Focus on the Family, 1995): 1.

[2]Howard J. Markman and Kurt Hahlweg, "The Prediction and Prevention of Marital Distress: An International Perspective," *Clinical Psychology Review* 13 (1993): 30.

and Marriage, has well documented the destructiveness of divorce and non-marriage, particularly to males. He has proposed that marriage has a "civilizing" effect upon males that no other function in society offers. The church may be the last line of defense between civilization and a total destruction of society.

It would seem that any church willing to address these issues would have an interested audience. There is evidence that Generation X (roughly those born after 1961 and before 1976) is in a "demographic sea change where the traditional one-paycheck family is now the fastest growing household unit."[3]

It also seems that this generation, who lost their fathers to divorce, lost their mothers to the work place, and lost siblings, cousins and potential mates to abortion, have intuitively come to the conclusion that marriage and family are tremendously important. Yet they have had few, if any, models to teach them how to have a functional family. What an opportunity for the church! But how can the church effectively meet this challenge?

An area of early intervention appropriate for a church counseling ministry is a comprehensive premarital counseling program. Divorce has become a plague on this nation which precipitates innumerable social, moral, ethical, and interpersonal difficulties. Recognizing this, the state of Louisiana has developed law regarding a covenant marriage.[4]

A covenant marriage is more difficult to sever and requires premarital counseling to enter. The state of Louisiana has recognized that a firm marital commitment makes a difference both to the couple and to society in general.

There is an epidemic in this land which is threatening its very survival as a nation. A strong nation must have strong families. The family is the structure that first civilizes

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[3] Stanton, *Twice as Strong*, 4.

[4] Jeff Hooten, "Tying the Knot Tighter," *Pastor's Family* (August/September, 1998): 24.

children and shows them their meaning and purpose in the world. One only needs to look at the rising crime rate to see the results of the breakdown of the American family.

Churches can work to strengthen families by being aware of potential hazards to marriages. This will allow the Christian counselor to focus energy on overcoming those potential hazards to the marriage. McGoldrick and Carter list 13 signs of possible disaster for the premarital couple.

1. The couple meets or marries shortly after a significant loss.
2. One or both partners wish to distance themselves from their families of origin.
3. The family backgrounds of each spouse are significantly different (religion, education, social class, ethnicity, age, etc.
4. The couple has incompatible sibling constellations.
5. The couple reside either extremely close to or at a great distance from either family of origin.
6. The couple are dependent on either extended family financially, physically, or emotionally.
7. The couple marries before age 20 or after age 30.
8. The couple marries after an acquaintanceship of less than six months or after more than three years of engagement.
9. The wedding occurs without family or friends present.
10. The wife becomes pregnant before or within the first year of marriage.
11. Either spouse has a poor relationship with his or her siblings or parents.
12. Either spouse considers his or her childhood or adolescence as an unhappy time.
13. Marital patterns in either extended family were unstable.[5]

Awareness of potential hazards alone will not ensure marriage stability. McManus correctly advocates that churches develop policies and procedures which require premarital counseling prior to marriage. He believes that many churches have not used the access they have to couples to prepare them for marriage, saying some are just "blessing machines or wedding factories." He has convinced clergy in 64 cities to sign pledges calling for marriage preparation involving premarital assessment inventories and the use of trained mentor couples to work with engaged or newlywed couples.

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[5]Monica McGoldrick and Elizabeth A. Carter, "The Stages of the Family Life Cycle," In James M. Henslin (Ed.), *Marriage and Family in a Changing Society*, (New York: Free Press, 1980): 48.

The Purpose of Premarital Counseling

"The fundamental aim of premarital counseling is to help prospective mates evaluate their relationship and acquaint them with the ways by which they might build a more happy and successful marriage."[6] In order to accomplish this aim, it is important to look at both constructive and destructive forces in marriage, and organize the program to address both.

Tolstoy wrote that all happy families resemble one another. Every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way. Regrettably, it would seem that there are as many ways to destroy a marriage and family as there are people; yet it becomes clear that they seem to fall in major categories with only minor deviations.

Wright lists four major reasons for marriage failure: 1) one or both of the individuals fail to understand the changes which occur in adult life--the seasons of life and how they affect marriage; 2) people have a false and inadequate basis upon which to build their personal identity, security, and self-worth; 3) people come to marriage with unresolved issues from their family of origin; and 4) people fail to adequately prepare themselves for marriage and enter this covenant with very unrealistic expectations.[7] "We are allowing unequipped and ill-matched couples to enter into a life-long relationship that may not survive the decade. In some states people spend more time preparing for their driver's exam than for marriage."[8]

Gottman's research has focused on factors which predict divorce. He has identified what he refers to as the four horsemen of the apocalypse for marriage. The four horsemen

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[6]D. Russell Bishop, "An Evaluation of Premarital Counseling from an Adlerian Perspective," *Individual Psychology* 49 nos. 3 and 4, (1993): 296.

[7]H. Norman Wright, *Marriage Counseling*, (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1995): 20.

[8]Ibid.

of complain/criticize > contempt > defensiveness > stonewalling follow a cascade model and are precursors of divorce.

This same research noted that couples who validated one another were more likely to succeed in marriage. "Validation is the opposite of contempt and whining is a central part of defensiveness. . . . The effects of validation or invalidation may become more powerful predictors of marital dissolution over time."[9]

Gottman's research also uncovered the importance of attributions in marriage. "In a happy marriage, if someone does something negative, the partner tends to think that the negativity is fleeting and situational . . . distressed couples engaged in more negative attributional activity."[10]

Additionally it would seem that potential marriage partners with extreme personality differences are a much higher risk for divorce. It seems that if opposites do initially attract, they are more likely to end in the attack mode.

Larson's research identifies types of people who are a poor marriage risk: 1) an addict who is not in recovery including drugs, alcohol, sex, food and work addictions; 2) someone who is violent or emotionally abusive; 3) young persons under the age of 20; and 4) those with major religious differences.[11]

It is also a myth that couples who cohabit prior to marriage (a form of trial marriage) will divorce-proof their marriage. Many studies have shown a much higher divorce rate for those who live together prior to marriage.

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[9]John Mordechai Gottman, *What Predicts Divorce?* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1994): 111.

[10]Ibid. 349.

[11]Jeffrey H. Larson, et al., " 'You're My One and Only:' Premarital Counseling for Unrealistic Beliefs About Mate Selection," *The American Journal of Family Therapy* 20 no. 3, (1992): 247.

The Program: Topic Inclusion, Methods, and Mechanics

It is obvious that intensive premarital counseling is a desperate need of the local church. Many have seen this need and have attempted to address this problem, but have not taken the time to ascertain what is needed in a productive premarital program. This may do more harm than good. "Research to date suggests that low-quality interventions are not much better from client perspective than not having any marriage preparation at all."[12]

The excellent premarital program must focus on both the biblical view of marriage and the best clinical information, gleaned from psychology, sociology, and medicine. "Considerable research conducted over the last two decades provides strong indicators of what constitutes effective premarital preparation. The data falls into three categories: timing (what are the teachable moments?), process (how do we interact with couples and they with themselves?), and content (what do couples need to know?)."[13]

Many have listed specific topics which should be covered in premarital counseling. Bagarozzi and Rauen list the developmental needs of newlyweds as 1) preparing for the physical maintenance of the couple, 2) securing, allocating, and planning the use of financial resources, 3) devising patterns of authority and control, 4) arranging for the assignment of familial rules and tasks, 5) developing a mutually satisfying sexual relationship, 6) establishing a system of intellectual and emotional communications, 7) establishing a workable relationship with relatives and friends, 8) planning for a family if desired, and 9) evolving patterns of decision making, problem solving, and conflict

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[12]Benjamin Silliman and Walter R. Schumm, "Improving Practice in Marriage Preparation," *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy* 25 (1999): 26.

[13]Paul Giblin, "Premarital Preparation: Three Approaches," *Pastoral Psychology* 42 no. 3, (1994): 148.

negotiations.[14] These same authors recommend that the program has a development orientation which takes "into consideration some of the developmental tasks that all couples must resolve successfully."[15]

Some might be reluctant to spend time in the area of sexuality, thinking that our culture has sufficiently informed everyone regarding the intricacies of sex. This would be a mistake; modern culture and those influenced by it are sexually confused. "It is clear from the use of the Sex Knowledge Inventory that the individuals studied had inadequate information about sex."[16]

Additionally, it is important for the couple to assess marriageability traits in themselves and their partners. Wright has suggested eight marriageability traits which must assessed: "adaptability and flexibility, empathy, ability to work through problems, ability to give and receive love, emotional stability, similar family backgrounds, similarities between the couple themselves, and communication."[17]

Stinnet has noted that research on strong families consistently shows them to possess six qualities. "Strong families are defined as families that are intact and have a high degree of marital happiness, of parent-child satisfaction, and of meeting each others' needs."[18] The six qualities are 1) appreciation, 2) spending time together, 3) commitment, 4) good

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[14]Dennis A. Bagarozzi and Paul Rauen, "Premarital Counseling: Appraisal and Status," *The American Journal of Family Therapy* 9 no. 3, (1981): 13.

[15]Ibid., 14.

[16]Samuel A. Nickols, David G. Fournier, and Sharon Y. Nickols, "Evaluation of a Preparation for Marriage Workshop," Family Relations (1986): 570.

[17]H. Normal Wright, *The Premarital Counseling Handbook,* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1977): 47.

[18]Nicholas Stinnett, "Strong Families," In James M. Henslin (Ed.), *Marriage and Family in a Changing Society,* (New York: Free Press, 1980): 304.

communication patterns, 5) a high degree of religious orientation, and 6) the ability to deal with crises in a positive manner. It would seem that programs designed to teach and equip in these areas would pay rich dividends.

Harley postulates that there are three stages in any marriage: intimacy, conflict, and withdrawal. These stages are not necessarily mandatory nor sequential, but any couple will be in one of them at any time during their marriage. Intimacy is always the goal in any marriage, yet conflict is inevitable.

Since conflict causes one to be uncomfortable, he often chooses withdrawal as an escape mechanism. Since conflict cannot be resolved by withdrawal, it is imperative to teach couples methods of conflict resolution. It is only through conflict resolution that intimacy can be regained.

Of course, for this to occur, the couple must be willing to re-enter the stage of conflict. The couple must have commitment if they are going to be successful. "The basic difference between couples who split up early in marriage and those who stay together is often their attitude toward their problems. A realistic, prepared, firm biblical attitude toward life and difficulties is a foundation."[19] "We assume that most couples will encounter problems and disagreements and that it is the couple's ability to handle differences (not the differences themselves) that will be the critical factor in determining future marital success."[20]

Research also indicates the importance of males having good problem-solving skills for the ultimate success in marriage. "Males who were destined to become distressed or divorced had significantly lower levels of problem-solving facilitation and significantly

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[19]Wright, *Marriage Counseling*, 16.

[20]Markman and Hahlweg, "Prediction and Prevention," 31.

higher levels of problem-solving inhibition, compared to males who were destined to remain happy."[21]

> It is undeniable that conflict resolution skills must be mandatory in the premarital program. While there are many factors that raise the risk of distress and divorce, the most powerful predictors concern the destructive ways in which couples handle conflict and disagreement. . . . For example, patterns such as escalation (returning negative for negative), invalidation (subtle or direct put-downs), and withdrawal (turning away, shutting down, or leaving the conversation) are excellent predictors of marital breakdown, and more so than positive dimensions like validation.[22]

"No matter what style your marriage follows, you must have at least five times as many positive as negative moments together if your marriage is to be stable."[23]

It is important to note that Gottman identified three types of healthy marriages which deal with conflict in very different ways. "In a validating marriage, couples compromise often and calmly work out their problems to mutual satisfaction as they arise. In a conflict-avoiding marriage, couples agree to disagree, rarely confronting their differences head-on. And finally, in a volatile marriage, conflict erupts often, resulting in passionate disputes."[24] He also notes that each member of the couple must desire the same method of conflict resolution for these methods to be productive. Problems arise if one wishes to avoid and the other desires to dispute.

If people are going to have the capacity to resolve conflicts, the value of effective communication cannot be underestimated. To take a mental concept, encode it into words, transmit that concept to another human being and then, that human accurately

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[21]Ibid., 36.

[22]Scott M. Stanley, et al. "Strengthening Marriages and Preventing Divorce," *Family Relations* 44 (1995): 137.

[23]John Gottman, *Why Marriages Succeed or Fail,* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994): 29.

[24]Ibid., 28.

decode the message in order to receive the same mental concept is indeed a very difficult proposition. Couples must discover their deficits and learn effective means of communication. Even if the couple does not recognize the significance of this training, the clinician should follow through anyway. "Research by Markman suggests that premarital training in communication skills does not manifest its effectiveness for at least a couple of years after marriage."[25]

Family of origin issues should be addressed in a comprehensive premarital program. "We can never ignore that there are three people in every marriage. A parent's influence in either a reactive or productive sense."[26]

There are three methods or tools to measure the dynamics of family of origin issues: the genogram, the circumplex, and family sculpting. The genogram is a method of illustrating the couple's family tree. "The genogram allows for notations of many other pertinent facts. It shows each family member in relationship to others and provides a way to examine the nature of these relationships."[27] This exercise allows the couple to see the reality of the relationships in the families of origin, in a very concrete way. "The following areas are of particular interest for premarital inquiry: models of being male and female, father and mother, husband and wife, how roles have changed or remained constant over time; communications patterns and expressiveness; styles of resolving conflict; ritual celebrations; expressions of intimacy and closeness; flexibility and change; decision-making and power."[28]

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[25]Frances Stucky, et. al., "Premarital Counseling as Perceived by Newlywed Couples: An Exploratory Study," *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy* 12 (1986): 227.

[26]H. Norman Wright, "Marital Counseling," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 13 no. 2, (1994): 175.

[27]William B. Berman, Dale R. Doty, and Jean Huff Graham, *Shaking the Family Tree*, (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1991): 21.

[28]Giblin, "Premarital Preparation," 155.

The second tool is the circumplex model. The circumplex model was developed by Dr. David Olson (author of PREPARE) and gives one insight into his family system and how it influences one's choice of mate, his expectation of marriage, and parenting styles. It measures emotional closeness in the family of origin and the family's ability to cope with change. This model will be discussed further under the PREPARE heading.

The final tool to be used to address family of origin issues is family sculpting. "Family sculpting concentrates on emotional and relational aspects and allows for their visual representation. The goals of family sculpting are to observe interactions in the family, examine problems in relational context instead of focusing on the individual, and consider intergenerational themes."[29] This method is considered because it is useful in cutting through intellectualization, defensiveness, and projection of blame.

It is evident that each couple has many areas of life to be assessed. It would take too many hours of counselor assessment without the use of instruments to facilitate this. "Assessment provides the opportunity for a couple to re-evaluate and confirm their commitment and decision to marry."[30]

An effective premarital program would utilize a few measurements in the curriculum. McManus has well documented the efficacy of the PREPARE instrument for premarital counseling. Studies have shown that PREPARE scores from three months prior to marriage predict with 80-90% accuracy which couples were ultimately separated and divorced from those who were happily married, demonstrating both the predictive validity of PREPARE as well as its utility in identifying high-risk couples.[31] This instrument,

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[29]Susan A. Lesage-Higgins, "Family Sculpting in Premarital Counseling," *Family Therapy*, 26 no. 1, (1999): 33-34.

[30]Lynn P. Buckner and Connie J. Salts, "A Premarital Assessment Program," *Family Relations* 34 (October 1985): 513.

[31]Giblin, "Premarital Preparation," 149

developed by Dr. David H. Olson and colleagues, comes in three forms: PREPARE for couples who have never been married, PREPARE MC for couples previously married, and ENRICH for couples currently married who wish marriage enrichment. In this section, PREPARE and PREPARE MC will be addressed.

The PREPARE manual notes that PREPARE is the fourth in a series of instruments developed by Dr. Olson. He used the Premarital Attitude Scale (PMAS 1968) and the Interpersonal Relationship Attitude Scale (IRAS 1976) as foundations for developing PREPARE/ENRICH.

The current version of PREPARE measures eleven content categories and one scale labeled idealist distortion designed to measure relationship idealism. The eleven content categories are 1) realistic expectations, 2) personality issues, 3) communication, 4) conflict resolution, 5) financial management, 6) leisure activities, 7) sexual relationship, 8) children and marriage, 9) family and friends, 10) egalitarian roles, and 11) religious orientation.

PREPARE-MC (couples with children) was developed in 1981 for couples planning marriage where one or both partners have children. Of the original 125 PREPARE items, 90 were retained, 25 were revised or reworded, and twelve new items were added. PREPARE-MC retains PREPARE's content categories.

This instrument also has a graph of the couple on the Circumplex Model. The Circumplex Model is a map of 66 types of couple and family relationships, a Couple Map and a Family Map. The Couple Map is used to describe sixteen types of marriages and is incorporated into ENRICH. The Family Map is used in PREPARE and PREPARE-MC to describe a person's family of origin.

The Circumplex Couple and Family Map shows each member of the couple on a cohesion scale and on the adaptability scale. The cohesion scale measures from 0-100, low to high. The labels are as follows: 0-15 Disengaged, 15-50 Separated, 50-85 Connected, and 85-100 Enmeshed.

The levels of cohesion measure the I-we balance, closeness, loyalty, and independence-dependency. The Disengaged, 0-15, is I on the I-we, with little closeness, a lack of loyalty, and high independence. The Separated, 15-50, is I-we, low to moderate closeness, little loyalty, and interdependent with more independence than dependence. The Connected, 50-85, is I-WE, with moderate to high closeness, some loyalty, and interdependent with more dependence than independence. The Enmeshed, 85-100, is We on the I-We balance, with very high closeness, high loyalty, and high dependency.

The Adaptability Scale also measures from 0-100 with 0-15 labeled Rigid, 15-50 labeled Structured, 50-85 labeled Flexible, and 85-100 labeled Chaotic. The Rigid, 0-15, on the adaptability scale is characterized by authoritarian leadership, rules never change, strict discipline and too little change.

The Structured, 15-50, is characterized by leadership that is sometimes shared, roles are stable, somewhat democratic discipline and change when demanded. The Flexible, 50-85, exhibits shared leadership, role sharing, democratic discipline, and change when necessary. The Chaotic, 85-100, is personified by lack of leadership, dramatic role shifts, erratic discipline, and too much change.

Premarital and marital counseling will be richly informed by the information contained in these instruments. The couple can see where each one is plotted as balanced, mid-range, or extreme.

The center of the circle on the cohesion and adaptability intersection is labeled as balanced and has four quandrants--structurally separated, flexibly separated, flexibly connected, and structurally connected.

Moving out from the center of the intersection to the mid-range, one finds eight types of marriages: rigidly separated, structurally disengaged, flexibly disengaged, chaotically separated, chaotically connected, flexibly enmeshed, structurally enmeshed, and rigidly connected. On the far end of each quadrant one finds the extreme sections. They are rigidly disengaged, chaotically disengaged, chaotically enmeshed, and rigidly enmeshed.

The instrument allows the counselor to understand the type of familial relationship to which each member of the couple has been exposed. It is also assumed that each person will view as normal that to which they have been exposed.

The disengaged relationship usually has extreme emotional separateness. There is little involvement between the couple or a family member, with a lot of personal separateness and independence. The separated relationship has some emotional separateness, but is not as extreme as the disengaged system. This couple, or person, exhibits more balance in desiring time apart and time together, making more joint decisions. Activities and interests are usually separate, but a few are shared.

The connected relationship has some emotional closeness and loyalty in the relationship. Time together is more important than time alone. They often have shared interests and shared friends, though they also have separate friends.

The enmeshed relationship exhibits an extreme amount of emotional closeness and loyalty is demanded. People are very dependent upon, and reactive to one another. There is little personal separateness or private space. Most of the energy is focused inward, into the relationship, with little or no energy remaining for outside individual friends or interests.

Olson has developed six hypotheses from the circumplex model. They are:
1. Couples/families with balance of cohesion and adaptability will generally function more adequately across the family life cycle than those at the extreme of these dimensions.
2. Balanced family types have a larger behavioral repertoire and are more able to change compared with extreme family types.
3. If the normative expectations of a couple or family support behaviors extreme on one or both of the Circumplex dimensions, they will function well as long as all family members accept these expectations.
4. Balanced couples/families will tend to have more positive communication skills than extreme families.
5. Positive communication skills will enable balanced couples/families to change their levels of cohesion and adaptability more easily than those at the extremes.

6. To deal with situational stress and developmental changes across the family life cycle, balanced families will change their cohesion and adaptability, whereas extreme families will resist change over time.[32]

Another helpful instrument to use with premarital couples would be the *Uniquely You* temperament analysis and spiritual gift profile. This profile was developed by Dr. Mels Carbonell.

The personality profile is divided into four quadrants labels D, I, S, and C. This model is also designed on two intersecting lines which are encircled creating four quadrants. The two lines of the axes measure personalities that are active or passive, and task- or people-oriented.

The D-type personality is characterized by those who are active and task-oriented. These lion-type personalities are determined leaders who enjoy taking charge of a situation. When these strengths are overused, they can become dictatorial, demanding, or domineering.

I-type personalities are active and people-oriented. These otter-type personalities are characterized by people who are optimistic and led by inspiration. They may be overconfident and talkative. Enjoying popularity, they may be in danger of compromising important standards to avoid rejection, acquiescing to peer pressure.

The S-type personality is passive and people-oriented. These Golden Retrievers are usually stable, submissive, and steady. They do not like change and are extremely loyal. Though these people are the most tolerant of all temperaments, they are in danger of being too timid and agreeable.

The C-type personality is passive and task-oriented. These Beavers are cautious, calculating and conservative. Seldom wrong, they can drive others to distraction due to

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[32]David H. Olson, David G. Fournier, and Joan M. Druckman, *Prepare/Enrich Counselor's Manual*, (Minneapolis: Life Innovations, 1992): 122.

the time needed to make a decision. They may over-analyze, fearing failure and can be too critical of others.

All of these personalities and personality blends have their own strengths and unique challenges. There are aspects of each of these types that are attractive to other types. There are also aspects of each of these types that may cause dissatisfaction with one or more of the other personality types. Understanding one another's profile will allow the couple to enter marriage informed of their strengths, and aware of their challenges.

This instrument also introduces the couple to their unique spiritual gifts profile. Based on the passages from Romans 12, I Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4, this profile not only measures spiritual gifts, but also identifies over 130 functions in the local church normed on one's spiritual gift and personality blend. Stinnet identified a high degree of religious orientation as one of six factors found in strong families. Stinnet also notes that "there are indications that this religious quality went deeper than going to church or participating in religious activities together. It could most appropriately be called a commitment to a spiritual lifestyle."[33] It would seem reasonable to assume that a newlywed couple who had an understanding of their spiritual gifts would be more likely to use these gifts in service within the local church, thus facilitating a spiritual lifestyle. The seven spiritual gifts identified by this instrument are prophecy, teaching, exhortation, showing mercy, serving, giving, and administration.

The prophets are perceivers and declarers of truth. They may be bold, or if extreme, fighters. They need to declare truth, not being divisive to the body of Christ.

The teachers prefer to clarify rather than declare truth. They enjoy studying and teaching in depth, but have a danger of focusing so much on the particulars that they miss the big picture.

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[33]Stinnet, *Marriage and Family*, 47.

Exhorters have the ability to bring encouragement to others. They are usually positive, but have the tendency to talk too much and minimize reality.

The mercy-showers demonstrate sensitivity to the suffering of others. They are caring, but can be too sensitive and gullible.

The servants enjoy helping behind the scenes. Since they are naturally selfless, they may take on too much and become martyrs rather than servants.

Those with the gift of giving are seriously concerned about financial matters. They can be good stewards, but may be tempted to use money as a power trip, manipulation, or as financial harassment.

Finally, those with the gift of administration enjoy organizing and delegation. They are initiators, but they may expect too much. They need to learn to lead by example, not manipulation.

These spiritual gifts/motivations are God's gifting to his people "so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."[34]

In addition to these two instruments, the couples will also be working through three books: *The Search for Significance*, by Dr. Robert McGee; *Strengthening Marital Intimacy*, by Dr. Ron Hawkins; and *The Act of Marriage*, by Drs. Tim and Beverly LaHaye. *The Search for Significance* focuses on biblical self-worth and common cognitive distortions. This material will confront one's predisposition to ascribe worth and value to people based on their performance rather than their position in Christ. This causes one to believe four false beliefs about themselves and others:

1) I must meet certain standards of performance to have value as a person.

2) I must have the acceptance and approval of others to have value as a person.

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[34]Ephesians 4:12, NIV.

3) Those who fail are unworthy of love and deserve to be punished.

4) I am what I am. I cannot change. I am hopeless.[35]

These cognitive distortions are addressed through cognitive restructuring using the doctrines of justification, reconciliation, propitiation, and regeneration. The participants will learn to recognize harmful emotions and destructive behaviors, and make changes using methods of cognitive restructuring.

Hawkins' book focuses on the biblical view of marriage and offers many ways of addressing significant details mentioned earlier in this paper. Some of those details are: the biblical view of marriage, definitions of intimacy and commitment, being in tune with God's sovereignty and reality, communication, companioning, personality differences, and sexuality.

While the Hawkins book addresses sexuality, *The Act of Marriage* is probably the most comprehensive book dealing with sexuality from a Christian perspective available today. The book was updated in 1998 from the original published in 1976 which sold over 2.5 million copies. This book is both a how-to sexual manual and a celebration of human sexuality confined to the covenantal commitment of Christian marriage.

There are several mechanics-type questions which remain to be answered about this program. When should it occur? How long should it be? Should it have a fee? Should it be didactic, experiential, or both? Should it be group or couple work?

The program should occur close enough to the marriage to be pertinent, but not so close that it would inhibit the couple from taking risks. "Couples less than two months from marriage took the fewest risks talking about issues or adapting new skills, whereas those further from a wedding date benefited more."[36]

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[35]Robert S. McGee, *The Search for Significance*, (Houston: Rapha Publishing, 1998): 32.

[36]Silliman and Schumm, "Improving Practice," 26.

One possibility would be to have the program last for ten weeks (being offered four times a year), utilizing ten, three-hour group sessions with both didactic and experiential approaches. Additionally, each couple will have four to five individual sessions to focus on issues from PREPARE, budgeting, and sexuality.

It is evident that the program must have both length and quality. Wright documents that those who definitely believed that premarital counseling helped their marriage were the ones who participated in the longest programs. The program should be long and intensive enough to facilitate both attitude and behavior. "We think that comprehensiveness may foster attitude change, everything else being equal."[37]

As in every other area of counseling, it would seem that people get increased value from the program if there is a reasonable fee. "Charging for services will likely increase credibility, particularly when matched by professional skill, eventually making couples more willing to pay professional fees."[38] It would also seem a combination of small group (eight to ten couples) and couple work is the best method to use in this endeavor.

It is evident that divorce has caused tremendous negative effects upon American culture. It is also clear that effective premarital preparation will equip couples to avoid the destruction of their marriages. Any congregation would be wise to require intensive premarital preparation of any couple wishing to be married in their church.

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[37]Ibid., 32.

[38]Ibid., 34.

MARRIAGE MENTORING

Introduction

Clergy in over 100 communities in 37 states of the United States have adopted Community Marriage Policies (C.M.P.) in the last decade.[1] A community marriage policy is a set of agreed-upon guidelines for premarital preparation and community support for marriages, to which clergy, congregations, and the community voluntarily commit, hoping to reduce the number of divorces in their community. These policies are not intended as criticism of any who, due to unfortunate circumstances are members of, or were reared in, single-parent families. Nor do they assume that one should endure an abusive situation.

The purpose of these policies is to empower couples to attain and maintain a committed lifelong marriage, and to raise the standard of intact two-parent families in the community. Clergy who agree to these policies are committing themselves to foster an environment which places a high priority on marriage and family. This offers the greatest likelihood of ensuring the well-being of its members and especially providing the atmosphere which has proven best for their children.

Each community has set their own requirements but most have set their goals as follows:

1. Encourage teenagers and single adults to practice sexual abstinence.
2. Encourage a minimum of one year of courtship with at least four months of marriage preparation.
3. Encourage attendance at enrichment opportunities designed to strengthen marriages.
4. Encourage attendance at intervention services for stressed and troubled marriages.

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[1]Pamela Johnson, "Mentors for the Marriage-Bound," *Essence* 30 no. 2, (June 1999): 50.

5. Promote abstinence outside of marriage and faithful marital relationships.

6. Train mature married couples to serve as mentors to those who are engaged or experiencing marital difficulties.

7. Cooperate with other congregations and organizations to share resources.

8. Create a positive community climate in which all marriages are helped to succeed.

9. Provide engaged couples with the best marital insurance possible by: 1) requiring a premarital program which utilizes a premarital inventory, 2) utilizing a religious approach to cover issues such as communication, conflict resolution, finances, and sex, and 3) encouraging attendance at retreats designed to improve their communication skills and establish God as the center of their relationship.

Pastors who agree to this covenant are making a courageous stand for the sanctity of the family and it would seem that their stand is reaping rich rewards. One rabbi and 95 pastors and priests signed a C.M.P. in January of 1986, in Modesto, California.

> In 1986, Stanislows County had 1,923 divorces--a divorce rate of 6.3 per thousand. In 1995, the same area had only 1,606 divorces. Considering that the county experienced an almost 39% population increase during those years, the figure is extremely significant. If divorces had increased in proportion with populations, there would have been 2,672 of them. As it was, Modesto had 1,066 fewer divorces than expected, for an actual divorce rate of 3.8 per thousand, a decrease of almost 40 percent.[2]

Another remarkable example is that of Kansas City, KS, which had a drop of 35% in their divorce rate in only two years, (1995-97), from 1,530 to 1,001.[3] What makes this story truly interesting is that there were only 40 churches which originally signed the C.M.P. The *Kansas City Star* wrote a number of articles about it, but then zoned their paper so the articles were only seen in Kansas City, Kansas and not Kansas City, Missouri.

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[2]Connie Marshner, "Marry in Haste, Repent at Leisure," *Philanthropy, Culture and Society* (June 1998): 3.

[3]Mike McManus, *The Remarkable Kansas City, KS/Kansas City, MO Story* [article online]; available from website: marriagesavers.org.

These two cities sit side by side, separated only by the Missouri River. The pastors of Kansas City, MO did not create a C.M.P. and the paper ran no stories about this initiative in Kansas City, KS. In the same two-year period that the Kansas City, KS divorce rate dropped 35%, Kansas City, MO's rate rose 4%.[4] These phenomenal results have even caught the attention of some in the civic and judicial community.

Bill Hardiman, the mayor of Kentwood, a major suburb of Grand Rapids, Michigan, has been a highly visible advocate for the Greater Grand Rapids C.M.P. He grew up in a single-parent family of eight children and is divorced and remarried. "Hardiman has used his platform as a respected civic leader to attract broad high-level support. This spring, Hardiman appointed three task forces, for physical and mental health, legal and judicial matters, and religious issues. Their purpose is to mobilize each sector of the community to help strengthen marriage."[5]

> Joseph Scoville, a federal district judge, is co-chairman of the Legal/Judicial Task Force. He intends to challenge judges and lawyers to become more sensitive to family considerations in their application of the law. Scoville sees two major obstacles to this goal. The first is a strong bias in the law toward individual rights. Within this framework, marriage is regarded simply as a lifestyle choice and divorce as a right to be exercised unilaterally at will.[6]

These people have identified divorce and family dissolution as a cancer upon society, and are attempting to mobilize various facets of the community to become marriage savers.

> If a disease were to afflict the majority of a populace, spreading pain and dysfunction throughout all age groups, we would be frantically searching for reasons and solutions. Yet this particular scourge has become so endemic it is virtually ignored. The scourge is divorce, an oddly neglected topic in a nation that has the worst record of broken

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[4]Ibid.

[5]Roger Sider, "Grand Rapids Erects a Civic Tent for Marriage," *Policy Review* no. 90, (July/August 1998): 7.

[6]Ibid.

marriages in the entire world. Divorce is the root problem in our country and is the cause of any number of other social ills.[7]

A church that is serious about marriage and family will train mentors to help people at every stage of the marital life cycle--the engaged or seriously dating couple, newlyweds, mid-marrieds, marriages headed for divorce, the separated, and stepfamilies.

Mentoring

A mentor is one who is skilled in a task who attempts to transfer that skill to another.

> A mentor provides modeling, close supervision on special projects, individualized help in many areas--discipline, encouragement, correction, confrontation and a calling to accountability. A mentor is genuinely interested in a protégé's growth and development and is willing to commit time and emotional energy to a relationship with an understudy. This goes beyond mere interest and is a commitment that, more often than not, is intense.[8]

Mentoring has proved to be an effective training tool in several different venues: for executives,[9] economically disadvantaged students,[10] and staff in federal correctional facilities.[11]

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[7]George Gallup, Jr., foreword to *Marriage Savers*, by Michael McManus (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993), 9.

[8]Dave Simmons, *Dad the Family Coach* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1991), 162.

[9]Belle Rose Ragins and Terri A. Scandura, "Burden or Blessing? Expected Costs and Benefits of Being a Mentor," *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 20 no. 4, (July 1999): 493.

[10]Jongyeun Lee and Bonnie Cramond, "The Positive Effects of Mentoring Economically Disadvantaged Students," *Professional School Counseling* 2 no. 3, (February 1999): 174.

[11]Peter M. Wittenberg, "Successful Mentoring in a Correctional Environment," *Federal Probation* 62 no. 2, (December 1998): 77.

The question arises regarding the qualifications of these mentors. This writer will argue that mentors need not be professional counselors or clergy, but can be lay people in the congregation. In addition to extending the breadth of ministry, it is even possible that these people will be more effective than a professional counselor or clergy in this venue. "Protégées of informal mentors viewed their mentors as more effective and received greater compensation than protégées of formal mentors."[12]

The theory behind this concept is quite simple. It is that God has uniquely equipped individuals in every church to participate in ministry. This equipping is through natural and supernatural sources. Eph. 4:11-16 clearly stipulates that God placed pastors, teachers, etc. to equip the saints to do the work of the ministry. I Cor. 12 and Rom. 12 address the specific spiritual gifts given for the work of the ministry. "God calls every Christian to counsel some people, somewhere, at sometime about something, but He does not call him to counsel every person, under every situation, at all times about everything."[13]

> Other passages in the Bible (e.g. Rom. 15:14; Col. 3:16; I Thess. 5:14) direct all believers to be involved in admonishing, encouraging or helping one another. These verses also emphasize the spiritual qualities or qualifications like goodness or caring, knowledge, and wisdom (rather than credentials or professional training) that are crucial for effective Christian counseling.[14]

Finally, it would seem that those best qualified to be recruited as mentors would be couples who are in a stable 15- to 40-year marriage, those in a second marriage that is stable and has lasted at least five to seven years, couples whose marriage was once on the verge of divorce but were able to recover, couples who divorced but later reconciled, or

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[12]Bella Rose Ragins and John L. Cotton, "Mentor Functions and Outcomes," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 84 no. 4, (August 1999): 530.

[13]Jay E. Adams, *Ready to Restore* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1981), 1.

[14]Siang-Yang Tan, *Lay Counseling: Equipping Christians for a Helping Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1991), 27.

who were separated but reconciled, and those who have created a truly blended step-family.

The use of trained and equipped mentors is an extension of the pastor's ministry of pastoral care. "The theology of pastoral care understands our world to be a broken one in which God is redeeming lost people and offering reconciliation. God is renewing the life of the believer in the image of Christ, and we respond with a life of obedience in gratitude for the grace which we have received."[15]

It is imperative that those who participate as mentors/lay counselors have a proper understanding of their roles, their limits, and confidentiality. Problems will be mitigated by ensuring boundaries through professional staff supervision of these personnel.

One danger of lay counseling is that the mentor will take upon himself more responsibility for the issue than the client does. It is not the mentor's role to fix the problem or make decisions for the protégée. Doing so would make one an enabler rather than an equipper. Wilcox describes Aaron "as an enabler who leads people where they want to go, and Moses as an equipper who had a vision to inspire people to go where they would not go on their own."[16] Enablers often stand between the protégée and the logical consequences of his behavior. Equippers are willing to allow others to fail and then stand ready to offer further mentoring.

It is also imperative that the mentor not view himself as a psychotherapist or a marriage and family counselor. "Lay counseling refers to people helping by nonprofessional or paraprofessional counselors with either no training or limited training

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[15]Gary A. Johnson, "Recapturing a Vision: Lay Counseling as Pastoral Care," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 16 no. 2, (1997): 133.

[16]Gloria Willcox, "A Model for Training Lay Persons in Counseling Skills: The Barnabas Ministry," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 16 no. 2, (1997): 123.

in counseling skills."[17] "When lay counselors are clear about their role as that of a member of the community of faith skillfully and humbly fulfilling God's call to help another, and not as that of a quasi-therapist, many of the complex dynamics between the lay counselor and the client are mitigated."[18]

Though mentor couples are not professional counselors, they must be trained in the area of confidentiality. They must keep information gathered in these sessions confidential, only alerting the Director of the ministry of any important problem areas. This is done with the couple's knowledge. No information should be shared in any other venues. Case notes and instrument scores should be kept in the Director's files.

It is important that these mentors receive their "counselor identity" not from training or education, but from their unique qualifications. These unique qualifications are a combination of lay counselor training, spiritual gifts, temperament and their own personal life journey which has prepared them for such a time as this. These are the couples in long stable marriages, those who came back from great distress, those reconciled after previous separation or divorce, and those who have effectively blended a step-family.

Premarital Mentors

Every couple contemplating marriage should register for the premarital class and be assigned to a mentor couple. This includes not only the engaged, but also those who are seriously dating. This process should be rigorous enough that the weak relationships either improve or break apart on their own, and the rest are strengthened to go the distance of a lifelong commitment.

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[17]Siang-Yang Tan, "Lay Counseling: A Christian Approach," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 13 no. 3, (1994): 264.

[18]Johnson, "Recapturing a Vision," 137.

Note the recommendation of including not only the engaged, but also the seriously dating. The other main reasons to include the seriously dating are: "1) to encourage and equip seriously dating couples to explore their relationship in a deliberate and thorough manner, 2) to help couples to make their decision about whether to marry a particular person before a wedding date has been set, thus avoiding the embarrassment of canceling a scheduled wedding, 3) to provide an alternative way to test the relationship than to cohabit, the preferred way to test a relationship by this generation."[19]

Each premarital mentor couple should be trained in the administration of and use of the PREPARE instrument. (This instrument has been discussed in detail in a previous chapter and that discussion will not be repeated here.)

The mentor couple will have taken the PREPARE instrument as part of their training and will have had six sessions prior to being assigned their first premarital couple. These sessions should be conducted by the Director of the premarital ministry.

The choice of mentor couples is critical to the overall success of this ministry. The heart of what the mentors offer is the wisdom and care which grows in an intimate Christian marriage of 15-40 years. It will also be imperative to recruit couples who are in their second marriage due to spousal death or divorce. These couples will probably have shorter lengths of marriage, but it would be wise to set a minimum of five to seven years. Many of the premarital couples will be entering second marriages and the insight of these mentors will be invaluable.

A few other factors to consider in matching mentors to proteges would be workload, geography, requests, interests and cross-cultural or interracial couples. Matches that are as close to each other as possible are to be desired.

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[19]Michael J. McManus, *A Manual to Create a Marriage Savers Congregation* (Marriage Savers, Inc., 1999), 82-83.

Mentors for the Distressed

One must assume that marriages in the church will undergo stress. The divorce rate can be reduced by providing programs of both marriage enrichment and marriage reconstruction. Marriage enrichment will be addressed in a later chapter; marriage reconstruction will be dealt with here.

Many believe that referral to a Christian counselor would be the best intervention for these couples. While this may be a good choice, it may not be sufficient in and of itself. "Diane Sallee, former associate Executive Director of the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy, who now heads the Coalition for Marriage and Family Education, says studies show that therapy is not the answer. We have only a 20% success rate with therapy."[20] This is not to say that professional marriage counseling is useless, but that it should be augmented with other interventions.

Two other specific interventions for the distressed are using mentors who themselves have reconstructed their marriages, and a weekend retreat intervention called Retrouvaille. Some couples can be helped by only one of these interventions; others will require a combination of two or three of them.

Retrouvaille is a French word for rediscovery, and is an outgrowth of Marriage Encounter. This is a lay ministry intervention which occurs in a retreat setting run by couples who have been helped by Retrouvaille in the past. "The best evidence is a weekend retreat called Retrouvaille that has been attended by 60,000 couples with marriages headed for divorce, four out of five of whom have been saved."[21]

Retrouvaille is not a miracle cure and it requires work, dedication and a high investment on the part of the participants. There are four basic requirements of this

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[20]McManus, *A Manual*, 105.

[21]Ibid.

intervention: 1) both partners must be prepared to work, 2) if a third party is involved, that relationship must be terminated prior to attendance, 3) if either party is under professional care, that professional must be contacted and permission for attendance secured prior to the intervention, and 4) they must have a willingness to attend twelve follow-up sessions spread out over the next three months.

Retrouvaille has proven to be effective in the past because of its intensity and the high level of commitment of its participants. Those without that level of commitment will require a different type of intervention.

In Retrouvaille, couples practice a style of communication in the weekend and the follow-up sessions. "The communication take place in three steps, repeated many times. First, there are presentations by a pastor and three lead couples who share stories on the near failure of their marriage. . . . Second, couples are asked to write their answers to questions formed by the lead couples as personal letters to their spouses. Third, couples then read each other's letters and dialogue about the feelings in total privacy, at no time ever asked to share their problems with anyone else."[22]

The mentor couples provide discipleship of an older wiser couple who have restored their own troubled marriage. One could recruit these couples by simply making an announcement asking for couples who were on the brink of divorce and have been able to reconstruct their marriage.

An Episcopal priest, Father Richard McGinnis, did this in his Jacksonville, Florida, church in 1987.[23] There were 180 people who heard that announcement and ten couples responded. They were able to distillate 17 Marriage Ministry Action statements based on

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[22]Michael J. McManus, *Marriage Savers*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1993), 215.

[23]Ibid., 199.

their successful experiences. These 17 action statements as found in *Marriage Savers*
are:[24]

A. Christian example

    1. Through other Christians' testimony and example we/I found hope for our
marriage.

B. Commitment to God

    2. I experienced God's love and forgiveness.

    3. I made a decision/*commitment* to *love*: Christ, mate, self. (This wording indicates
that this kind of love comes only after commitment is made. Known as *agape*, it is
the form of love that is self-giving rather than self-receiving.)

    4. I made a decision and commitment to follow Jesus as my Savior and Lord.

    5. Once obedient to God, we were able to begin to love by His standards, not ours.

    6. I became accountable to God for my behavior, thoughts, and actions and became
aware of my accountability to others.

C. Commitment to Partner

    7. We/I made a decision to stay together.

    8. We/I made a decision to forgive mate and myself.

    9. I accepted my mate as he/she is.

D. Changed Myself

    10. I realized that the problem was with *myself*.

    11. I began to look at myself as needing change to be able to love, no matter what. I
became aware that I needed to change, became willing to change, learned *what*
and *how* to change, and began to change with God's help.

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[24]Ibid., 202.

12. I made an examination of my *role* in our marriage according to God's Word and changed accordingly with God's help.

13. I accepted change in my mate.

E. Trust

14. Through Christ, I began trusting enough to increasingly put my whole self in the care of my mate.

15. I learned to communicate honestly, truthfully, and openly, in love.

16. I learned to put God and mate ahead of myself (became humble before the Lord).

F. The Process

17. We are still in the process and realize that we must share what we have found with others.

These 17 action statements are shared with the couples in a similar way as a 12-step program.

Additionally, these mentor couples would be trained to administer, score and utilize the REFOCCUS instrument. REFOCCUS is a self-scoring, five-instrument packet that measures strengths and weaknesses in five areas. The five areas are: 1) marriage as a process, 2) intimacy, 3) compatibility, 4) communication, and 5) commitment. The instrument can be hand or computer scored. Each of these areas have prompts which the mentor couple can use as they guide the troubled couple through the process of discussing their problem areas.

This tool is designed to help the couple communicate, understand, and study their marriage. It is a photograph of their marriage at that particular time. It can be a sharply focused tool to help affirm their marriage strengths and help them explore areas ready for growth and problem solving.

Reconciliation of the Separated or Divorced

Just as experienced mentor couples can assist those headed for divorce or separation choose an alternative route, other experienced mentor couples can help divorced or separated couples choose the difficult road to reconciliation. "About five million couples, a tenth of the nation's 54 million marriages, have separated and restored their marriages, almost without help of organized religion."[25] A large church should be able to recruit and train mentor couples who have experienced separation or divorce, but have reconciled.

There are at least four viable methods to help those who are already divorced or separated reconcile, by using mentors. Some of these interventions use mentor couples; others just use same-sex mentors.

Retrouvaille has already been discussed previously and that discussion will not be repeated here. The only addition is to stipulate that 20 to 40% of those who attend Retrouvaille are already divorced or separated.

Reconciliation Instruction is a course developed by Dr. Jim Talley, author of *Reconcilable Differences*. This is a couple-on-couple program that has been used by 2,000-3,000 churches that report reconciliation of more than half of the participants.

This program requires participants to pledge not to date for 6-12 months as they work toward reconciling with the estranged partner. During this time the couple take a course using *Reconcilable Differences* and work in a *Reconciliation Instruction* workbook. The program has three components:

> Each person does the homework which involves writing in the workbook, filling out material that will take an hour or two each week. This should be done while each is alone.
> The couple get together the next week, exchanges notebooks, reading what the other has written, and talks about it for an hour or two.

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[25]McManus, *A Manual*, 122.

The couple meet with mentor couple or an instructor, who reads both manuals and asks questions of the couple. This session lasts an hour.[26]

A third intervention is *Reconciling God's Way* developed by Joe and Michelle Williams. This couple each had three divorces before becoming Christians and were, at one time, separated from one another.

This program is designed to work with each person separately rather than as a couple. This allows the process to begin when only one partner is interested, or continue when only one partner is working.

This program can be used as a twelve-week class or on an individual basis. The mentors can use the leaders manual, and each participant has his or her copy of the workbook and *Support Partner Handbook*. The cost is about $20 per person.

The final intervention is a set of videos entitled *Before You Divorce*. These videos are both stark and biblical. Their purpose is to help separated couples reconsider before they choose divorce.

These tapes are divided into five sections. The sections are 1) The Legal and Financial Impact of Divorce, 2) The Physical, Emotional, and Spiritual Effects of Divorce, 3) The Many Effects of Divorce on Your Children, 4) Forgiveness, and 5) Reconciliation.

Step-family Mentoring

"While first marriages have a 50% chance of failure, those in second marriages face a 60% likelihood of dissolution, and if stepchildren are involved, about a 65% probability."[27] Since the failure rate is so high, it would seem imperative to find mentors who have successfully formed a truly blended family.

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[26]Ibid., 125.

[27]Ibid., 140.

One author stresses understanding the unique conditions of step-families. She views these needs clustering in five areas: 1) emotional, 2) sexual, 3) social, 4) kinship relations, and 5) financial.[28]

A step-family support group facilitated by a mentor couple helps step-families to understand that their problems are typically structured and not personal. The skill needed to truly blend a step-family is not easily attained, but can be learned.

Rev. Dick Dunn is a United Methodist minister who has developed a manual entitled *Developing a Successful Step-family Ministry,* and the book, *Willing to Try Again.* His step-family support group has met with tremendous success. "He looked into the 16-year history of the group and concluded the failure rate was about 20%."[29] This 20% rate compares quite favorably to the 60-65% rate experienced in the rest of the culture.

Another resource for this group is *Step-parent is Not a Bad Word* by David Z. Nowell. This book challenges readers to focus on reality, to view their situation from their children's perspective and to work on spiritual nurture. It also deals with the unique issues of discipline and how to deal with the weekend travel of children going back and forth to biological parents. This book offers a perspective on the step-family with a decidedly Christian agenda.

Conclusion

It is evident that many, if not most, churches have ignored the institution of marriage. They simply have no strategy to assist people to establish a new marriage, rescue a dying marriage, or resurrect a dead marriage. This chapter has offered several different viable strategies to accomplish that task by utilizing members of the body of Christ to minister to one another.

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[28]Billie Davis, *Teaching to Meet Crisis Needs* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1984), 17.

[29]McManus, *A Manual,* 144.

MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT

Introduction

The Wall

Their wedding picture mocked them from the table, these
two whose minds no longer touched each other.

They lived with such a heavy barricade between them
that neither battering ram of words
nor artilleries of touch could break it down.

Somewhere, between the oldest child's first tooth
and the youngest daughter's graduation,
they lost each other.

Throughout the years each slowly unraveled
that tangled ball of string called self
and as they tugged at stubborn knots,
each hid his searching from the other.

Sometimes she cried at night
and begged the whispering darkness to tell her who she was.

He lay beside her, snoring like a hibernating bear,
unaware of her winter.
Once, after they had made love,
he wanted to tell her how afraid he was of dying,
but, fearing to show his naked soul,
he spoke instead about the beauty of her breasts.

She took a course in modern art,
trying to find herself in colors splashed upon a canvas,
complaining to other women about men who are insensitive.

He climbed into a tomb called "The Office,"
wrapped his mind in a shroud of paper figures,
and buried himself in customers.

Slowly, the wall between them rose,
cemented by the mortar of indifference.

One day, reaching out to touch each other
they found a barrier they could not penetrate,
and recoiling from the coldness of the stone,
each retreated from the stranger on the other side.

For when love dies, it is not in a moment of angry battle,
nor when fiery bodies lose their heat.
It lies panting, exhausted,
expiring at the bottom of a wall it could not scale.

(Author unknown)[1]

Some may question the need for a ministry of marriage enrichment. This poem illustrates that marriage, like so many other things, requires regular maintenance to operate at optimum levels. The marriage ministry should be a seamless garment of premarital training, marriage mentoring and marriage enrichment.

What is marriage enrichment? "Enrichment typically refers to weekend retreats and other group settings in which reasonably healthy married couples learn how to improve their marriage and increase pleasure and success. Enrichment uses psychoeducational methods that address affective, behavioral, cognitive and intentional dimensions."[2]

There are many indicators for starting couples in enrichment programs immediately, and for offering enrichment programs to couples who have been married for years. "We know that 200,000 new marriages each year end prior to the couple's second anniversary."[3]

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[1]Kevin Leman, *Keeping Your Family Together When the World is Falling Apart*, (Colorado Springs: Focus on the Family Publishing, 1992), 143-144.

[2]Richard Hunt, Lucy Hop, and Rita Demaria, *Marriage Enrichment*, (Brunner/Mazel, 1998), 6.

[3]Les Parrott III and Leslie Parrott, "Growing a Healthy Marriage," *Christian Counseling Today* 4 no.2, (Spring 1996): 17.

It is obvious that the disintegration of marriages has not only wreaked havoc upon children and culture, but also upon the individuals involved in the marital disruption. There is a great deal of evidence which links marital disruption to a number of health risks.

Coronary heart disease is the number one cause of death in America. "When we look at the risk factors for coronary/artery disease and the psychosocial risk factors, many studies have shown that they are very strong. I think that it is no accident that we have an epidemic in this country of divorce and dissatisfaction in marital relationships and also an epidemic of coronary artery disease."[4] Additionally, researchers have discovered that: 1) poor social relationships are as damaging to physical health as cigarette smoking, 2) for adults, a stable, happy marriage is the best protector against illness and premature death, and for children, such a marriage is the best source of emotional stability and good physical health, 3) marital distress leads to depression and reduces immune system functioning in adults, 4) adults who experience divorce more than double their risk of early mortality, 5) marriage education is effective in promoting marital quality and stability. Brief skills-based educational programs for couples increase couple satisfaction, improve communication skills, reduce negative conflict behaviors including violence, and may prevent separation and divorce.[5]

Researchers have discovered that the seeds of the destructiveness which sabotages marriages are evident early on. For this reason it is imperative to begin programs of marriage enrichment within the first year of marriage. "I have no doubt, whatsoever, that it

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[4]Martin Sullivan, M.D., *Relationship Skills and Heart Disease: A New Frontier* (on-line) accessed 1/13/00; available from www.smartmarriages.com/healthyheart; Internet.

[5]William J. Doherty, *The Scientific Case for Marriage and Couples Education in Health Care*, (on-line) accessed 1/13/00; available from www.smartmarriages.com; Internet.

is the first year of marriage, the time when the interaction pattern of the couple is shaped, often for good or ill."[6]

Much time and energy is spent on rescuing troubled marriages through remedial services; one could argue that an equal amount of time, effort and money could be better spent on preventative services. These preventative efforts began with intensive premarital training and mentoring but it is evident that these services alone will be insufficient.

The best premarital program should be able to identify those couples who are most incompatible, but it may not be able to convince them to postpone or cancel their wedding plans. Premarital couples are not always open to instruction and feedback. "Premarital couples are often viewed as unrealistic in their expectations about marriage and, hence, resistant to change. Newlyweds, on the other hand, are seen as being past these high levels of idealism and as beginning to encounter difficulties common to marriage. At the same time, interaction patterns are still in the process of forming. As such, couples in the early marital stage may be more malleable than at points later in their marriage."[7]

There is always a gap between acquiring knowledge and acting upon that knowledge. One must not only have information but motivation to make any great attitudinal or behavioral change. "Indeed, I can identify a whole series of stages which must be gone through--information must be stored in the brain as knowledge; knowledge must be applied to the relevant life situation as insight; insight must result in experimental action; experimental action, if successful, must lead to attitudinal change; and attitudinal change

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[6]David Mace, "Three Ways of Helping Married Couples," *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* 13 no. 2, (April 1987): 184.

[7]Dale R. Hawley and David H. Olson, "Enriching Newlyweds: An Evaluation of Three Enrichment Programs," *The American Journal of Family Therapy* 23 no. 2, (Summer 1995): 130.

must be transformed, over time, into lasting behavioral change."[8] Or as Prov. 23:7 puts it more succinctly, as a man believes in his heart, so is he.

Providing a program of enrichment may prevent potential destructiveness that couples experience shortly after the wedding. "Between 47% and 58% of newlyweds reported dramatic increases in the number of arguments they had after their wedding and their tendency to be critical of their mate."[9] Three of the most common sources of arguments and criticism are poor financial management, poor conflict management and poor communication. Couples, who may have only been partially attentive when these subjects were addressed in premarital training may have a greater motivation for learning during that first year or two of marriage.

All the arguments for a local church establishing a premarital training ministry and marriage mentoring also apply to marriage enrichment. If a church claims to be pro-life and pro-family, it must address issues which destroy families. "Some Christian rescue missions are also shifting their focus from primarily drug and alcohol programs to teaching marriage and parenting classes."[10] These ministries have discovered that one does not maintain his sobriety or maturity when he reinvolves himself in a dysfunctional family system. Therefore, this writer will argue that marriage enrichment is a primary function of the church in its disciple-making, mind-maturing ministry.

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[8]Mace, "Three Ways of Helping," 181.

[9]Michael J. McManus, *Marriage Savers*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1993), 146.

[10]Jan Johnson, "How Churches Can Be Truly Pro-Family," *Christianity Today* 39 no. 2, (February 6, 1995): 35.

Methods of Marriage Enrichment

Marriage is a skill-based proposition. To have a healthy marriage, couples need opportunities to either acquire, practice, or refine these skills. "The research shows that couples who stay madly in love disagree to the same degree as couples who divorce. . . . They argue over the same topics--money, time, sex, kids. The difference is they know how to handle it."[11] "Participation in marriage enrichment, especially those programs that focus on skills training, was highly effective and that couples who participate in enrichment are better off than 67% of couples who do not participate."[12]

Couples have the ability to enrich their marriages in a variety of ways. They can read books, listen to tapes, radio programs or sermons, or watch seminars on tape in the comfort and seclusion of their own home. All of these methods can be helpful, but it can be argued that the most effective means of marriage enrichment are retreats and small group ministry.

The retreat setting offers many benefits. Specific retreat-type ministries shall be discussed later in this chapter. The retreat offers a setting away from the general tensions of the home. This time allows the couple to have special moments of intimacy that provide special memories of rest and relaxation. A church can rotate different types of retreats knowing that some will be more attractive than others for specific couples. Regardless of the type of retreat chosen, it is evident that the retreat setting is beneficial. "Lester and Doherty evaluated the long-term results (four years on the average) of marriage encounter weekend experiences among several hundred couples. The results were overwhelmingly

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[11]Bonnie Rubin, "Ties That Bind," *Good Housekeeping* 226 no. 4, (April 1998): 109.

[12]Charles Lee Cole and Anna L. Cole, "Marriage Enrichment and Prevention Really Works: Interpersonal Competence Training to Maintain and Enhance Relationships," *Family Relations* 48 no. 3, (July 1999): 275.

positive. . . indicating that the experience helped to improve the marriage, the openness and trust increased, and that participants were more satisfied and fulfilled with their spouses."[13]

Another proven method of marriage enrichment is the small group. Small groups have been proven to be an effective means to get past the resistance encountered in programs which utilize only the dissemination of information. Discussion groups have been used to improve couples' marriage satisfaction and their sexual and intellectual intimacy; and marital satisfaction over time. One study has shown that the most beneficial marriage enrichment experience is one that combines information-giving with the small group environment, which allows for social interaction and group discussion.[14]

Goals of Marriage Enrichment

According to Grunlan, satisfaction with one's marriage reached predictable highs and lows across the family life cycle.[15] The female typically starts the marriage with a higher degree of satisfaction than the male, but reaches her lowest point during the period of having school-age children. The male, who did not start out as high on the scale as the female, does not dip as low on the scale as the female during his low point. It is important to note that both the husband and wife reattain similar scores on the satisfaction scale if they are able to navigate these troubled waters to enter the marital harbor of the empty

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[13]David G. Zimpfer, "The Use of Groups in Religiously Based Helping Relationships," *Counseling and Values* 30 no. 2, (April 1986): 158.

[14]Everett L. Worthington, Jr., Beverly G. Buston, and T. Michael Hammonds, "A Component Analysis of Marriage Enrichment: Information and Treatment Modality," *Journal of Counseling and Development* 67 (June 1989).

[15]Stephen A. Grunlan, *Marriage and the Family* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984): 255.

nest and retirement. That being the case, it seems reasonable to provide growth opportunities for couples during these times of transition.

Adam was the first to discover that marriage was provided by God for man's benefit. When the man awoke to find the woman (ishshah), he was overwhelmed by the magnitude of God's provision for him. Likewise, every man should be cognizant of that provision and attempt to nurture the bond which was created by God.

Don Joy, in his book, *Bonding*, outlines twelve steps of pair bonding which coincides with the four Greek words for 'love' and the four steps of becoming one (leave, cleave, one flesh, naked and unashamed).[16] It is important to note that couples not only go through this twelve-step process in courtship, but that vitalized couples also proceed through these steps on a regular basis.

The first three steps coincide with eros love and are part of the leaving command of Gen. 2. Step one is *eye to body*. In this step, one becomes aware of the existence of the other and creates an awakening. Step two is *eye to eye*, in which mutual eye contact is consummated. Step three is *voice to voice* in which the two first begin to get to know one another through language. Note that there has yet to be any physical contact.

The next stage of bonding coincides with philia love and the cleaving aspect of Gen. 2. In this stage are the first aspects of touching, but note that all of these steps may be carried out in public. Step four is *hand to hand* which makes a social statement of togetherness. Step five, *arm to shoulder*, is not quite a hug, but implies that a relationship is going somewhere. Step six, *arm to waist*, is a more intimate gesture, but notes that faces are still looking forward and not intently on one another. "Step six turns out to be the last exit on the freeway of love; you can get off without leaving skid marks."[17]

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[16]Donald M. Joy, *Bonding: Relationships in the Image of God*, (Nappanee, IN: Evangel Publishing House, 1985).

[17]Ibid., 45.

The third bonding stage coincides with the word cleave and storge love. "The Old Testament concept of knowing describes how Eve knew Adam and how Sarah knew Abraham."[18] Step seven is *face to face*, the successful negotiation of the first six steps will set the couple up in this stage of first knowing the other person. Step eight is *hand to head*; one does not allow another person to touch their head unless a bond of trust has been established. Step nine is *hand to body*; this knowledge of the body excludes the genitals. This touch is not sexual, but one of treasuring the other's body, and knowing its complexities and imperfections. This is the type of knowing which bonds for a lifetime, the type of knowing which makes weight gains, mastectomies, baldness or other signs of aging inconsequential.

The final stage of bonding corresponds with the phrase, naked and unashamed or agape love. These words also coincide with marital vows: 1)eros: to love, 2) philia: and to cherish, 3) storge: in sickness and in health, and 4) agape: till death do us part. This final stage of bonding seals the relationship and any disruption thereafter causes significant trauma from which one may never recover. Step ten is *mouth to breast*; this step is seen only in humans. There are no animal species which engage in this behavior. Step eleven, *hand to genital*; sexual arousal begun in this stage is both enjoyable and preparatory for stage twelve: *genital to genital*.

This final consummation sets the stage for the bonding sequence to begin all over again. Healthy marriages not only go through these twelve steps in courtship leading to the honeymoon, but also repeat them on a regular basis. Programs of marriage enrichment will provide couples with opportunities to learn methods of strengthening their intimacy.

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[18]Ibid., 47.

How to Accomplish Marriage Enrichment

There are a variety of ways for a congregation to provide opportunities for marriage enrichment. A church could provide in-house classes, or off-campus retreats facilitated by staff members or specialists from outside the church staff. Additionally, the counselor facilitating marriage enrichment opportunities may choose between those which carry a primary cognitive behavioral format or those that are affective oriented. These programs have proven to be effective and "an initially unexpected finding is that clinical or distressed couples seem to improve more than non-clinical couples following marital enrichment programs."[19] These results suggest that learning techniques of cognitive reframing, problem solving and enhancement of self-esteem are essential for improving marriages.

A program of marriage enrichment could be built around two instruments: ENRICH and REFOCCUS. These instruments can be used in either marital counseling or enrichment, with a specific couple or in a group setting.

ENRICH was developed by the same team which developed PREPARE and PREPARE-MC which was discussed in a previous chapter. "To develop ENRICH, we reviewed the 125 items in PREPARE for relevance to married couples. Of the total of 125, 70% of PREPARE items were changed. Of the 87 changes, there are 55 new items and 31 items which were revised."[20] Additionally, the authors switched the Realistic Expectations category in PREPARE to a Marital Satisfaction category in ENRICH. The Family of Origin of PREPARE becomes the Type of Marriage in ENRICH. ENRICH was

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[19]Linda S. Noval, et al., "Cognitive-Behavioral Marital Enrichment Among Church and Non-Church Groups: Preliminary Findings," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 24 no. 1, (1996): 48.

[20]David H. Olson, David G. Fournier, and Joan M. Druckman, *Prepare/Enrich Counselor's Manual*, Life Innovations, Inc., 1992, 5.

vigorously screened for reliability and validity and was found to be highly reliable and valid, just like PREPARE.

REFOCCUS is a packet of five instruments which married couples can use by themselves, with a therapist, as part of a retreat, or in a five-class session with other couples. The five instruments are: 1) Marriage as a Process, 2) Intimacy, 3) Compatibility, 4) Communication, and 5) Commitment. These instruments are self-scoring, have in-depth questions, and profile strengths and weaknesses in topic areas. This profile is available in either English or Spanish. "REFOCCUS is designed to help you communicate, understand and study your marriage. . . . It can be a sharply focused tool to help you affirm what is strong in your marriage and help you explore areas ready for growth and/or problem solving."[21]

Marriage Encounter

Over the past thirty years, over two million people have taken part in a Marriage Encounter weekend. "There are about sixty studies which report that 80% to 90% of attendees have a life-changing experience, literally falling back in love with their mate."[22] The emphasis of the Marriage Encounter weekend is on the communication between husbands and wives.

Marriage Encounter does not claim to be a confrontation, marriage clinic, group sensitivity, or a substitute for counseling, but a unique approach aimed at revitalizing marriage. This unique approach is closely aligned to the affective. "The word, encounter, means to meet on a feeling level."[23]

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[21]B. Markey, M. Micheletto, and A. Becker, *REFOCCUS Manual,* (1988) inside cover.

[22]Michael J. McManus, *A Manual to Create a Marriage Savers Congregation,* (Marriage Savers Inc., 1999), 100.

[23]McManus, *Marriage Savers,* 177.

Marriage Encounter has both strong proponents of its approach and those who offer strong criticism. Some have criticized it because it is non-confrontational. During the encounter, couples listen to speakers and then retire to their rooms to write letters to one another on assigned topics. At no time are the participants required to disclose any of this information to other group members. "Privacy is purchased at the expense of feedback that might help the couples to increase their overall communication effectiveness."[24] Of course, one has to keep in mind that the organizers have stated that their purpose is not marital therapy. This is an encounter, not a confrontation.

Others have criticized Marriage Encounter for its highly religious overtones and its intensity. Though some criticize for lack of confrontation, others criticize for it being too highly intense. "It is powerful medicine delivered rapidly to the marital system. The weekend is crammed with intense experiences of self-revelation, partner revelation, and leader self-revelation. The Marriage Encounter literature is replete with terms like born again and crash course in communication."[25]

Others have offered high endorsements of Marriage Encounter. "In particular, research results have shown the effectiveness of such nationally known marriage enrichment programs as Marriage Encounter"[26] "There is some evidence for positive change resulting from religiously based marriage enhancement groups."[27] These same researchers attest

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[24]Hal Witteman and Mary Anne Fitzpatrick, "A Social-Scientific View of the Marriage Encounter Movement," *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 4 no. 4, (1986): 516.

[25]William J. Doherty, Mary Ellen Lester, and Geoffrey Leigh, "Marriage Encounter Weekends: Couples Who Win and Couples Who Lose," *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* 12 no. 1, (1986): 58.

[26]Noval et al., "Cognitive-Behavioral Marital Enrichment," 48.

[27]Zimpfer, "The Use of Groups," 159.

that Marriage Encounter has overwhelmingly positive results documented through retrospective survey questionnaires.

Dr. James Dobson offers a ringing endorsement of Marriage Encounter. "Frankly, I attended for professional reasons, not expecting to get anything relevant to my wife and me. I have rarely been so wrong. The beauty of Marriage Encounter is that it has the ability to float to wherever the need is the greatest."[28] It would seem that Marriage Encounter is a completely viable modality which could be utilized as a way to enrich marriages within the church.

Retrouvaille

Though not a marriage enrichment program in the classical sense, Retrouvaille offers a group intervention for a specific type of couple within the church. Many of the couples who were not helped by Marriage Encounter were those which had adultery as part of their presenting complaints. Retrouvaille (French for rediscovery) is a program for those on the brink of divorce.

Any counselor knows that this population has a higher rate of divorce than any other. One 1992 survey of Retrouvaille studied participants in northern California from 1986 - 1991. Of the participants who responded, 73% were still married. "The finding of 73% still married was higher than the projected hypothesis of 50-60 percent. Another hopeful result was that 97% of the respondents were positive about the program and said they would recommend it to therapists, friends, relatives, church personnel and people with marital problems."[29]

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[28]James C. Dobson, *Love Must Be Tough*, (Waco: Word Books, 1983), 199.

[29]Ed Gleason, "Recovery for Troubled Marriages," *America* 167 no. 10, (October 10, 1992): 253.

Retrouvaille is run by volunteers. These are people whose marriages were on the brink of divorce, but have made it back. Similar to Alcoholics Anonymous, leaders not only lead discussions, but, like mentors, are able to offer personal disclosure and feedback.

Training in Marriage Enrichment (TIME)

TIME is an eight-week training program developed by Don Dinkmeyer and Jan Carlson. This is an education program of 16-20 hours which can be employed in an eight- to ten-week session or a retreat format. *Training in Marriage Enrichment* is the leader's guide and the couples use the test, *Time for a Better Marriage*. One study of mainly working-class couples showed significant differences between participants of the program and a non-participant control group.[30] Another study showed this program to be popular with participants: "96% indicated they would repeat the experience if they had it to do over, while 98% reported they would recommend it to a friend.[31]

Family Life Marriage Conferences

Family Life Marriage Conferences are offered by Family Life, a ministry of Dr. Dennis Rainey and his wife, Barbara. These conferences are held in hotels and offer speakers such as the Raineys, Bob Levine, Dr. Gary Chapman, Dr. Rod Cooper, Ken Davis, Dr. Tim Kimmel, Dr. Crawford and Karen Loritts, Dr. Gary and Barbara Raspberry, Dr. Joseph Stowell and Dr. Glen Wagner.

These events occur on a Friday evening and all day Saturday. Subjects cover areas of intimacy and oneness in marriage. Participants learn communication, conflict resolution and problem-solving skills.

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[30]Donald J. Mattson, O.J. Christensen, and J.T. England, "The Effectiveness of a Specific Marital Enrichment Program: TIME," *Individual Psychology* 46 no. 1, (March 1990).

[31]Hawley and Olson, "Enriching Newlyweds," 141.

Fall Festival of Marriage

The Southern Baptist Convention offers a marriage enrichment retreat called the Fall Festival of Marriage. This program starts on a Friday evening, runs all day Saturday and Sunday morning. These retreats are held in several venues around the country. The average cost is about $350 which includes room and board.

These conferences cover subjects like communication, covenant marriage, blended families, parenting, sexuality, spiritual growth and Experiencing God for Couples. The workshop opportunities allow some interaction in smaller groups with other couples, as well as couple private time.

Adventure and ACME

All of the previously discussed programs connect couples on a cognitive or affective level or attempt to utilize both of these modalities. Adventure and ACME (Association for Couples in Marriage Enrichment) attempt to connect on a kinesthetic level. "Adventure experiences stand in contrast to traditional approaches to marital enrichment by providing a holistic experience that involves mind, body, and emotions."[32] Psychiatric hospital practitioners and corrections personnel have long understood the effectiveness of activity therapy in treatment programs. This modality is often attractive to types of people, usually men, who are kinesthetic learners. This program has the couple participating in such exercises as Trust Fall, Treasure Hunt, Constructing a Rope Bridge, Blind Climb, Obstacle Course, Maze, and Dam Building.

Summary

A church that is serious about strengthening marriages will offer opportunities for marriage enrichment. Those opportunities will be varied: on and off campus, weekly

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[32]William Adrian Hickmon, Jr., Howard O. Protinsky, and Kusum Singh, "Increasing Marital Intimacy: Lessons from Marital Enrichment," *Contemporary Family Therapy* 19 no. 4, (December 1997): 582.

classes or seminars, cognitive, affective, or behavioral, but all should be biblical and Christ-centered.

Though these programs have differences, they also have similarities. They all have a communication and modeling component. Modeling is the act of teaching a skill through active demonstration of a teacher. This teacher can be a live model or the use of videotape has even proven to be effective.[33] It should also be noted that marital enrichment can even be accomplished if only one member of the couple attends.[34]

Effective communication is mandatory for all healthy interpersonal relationships. "Couple communication teaches that there are two basic components to good communication skills: 1) one's attitude toward the other person, and 2) one's communication and listening skills. . . . A caring attitude and skills together provide the foundation for building each other's self-esteem and having a positive, mutually-enjoyable relationship."[35]

A church that is serious about preserving the institution of marriage will find ways to employ enrichment activities in the total life of the church. This should be an ongoing process that remains aware of congregational needs and new interventions offered in the Christian community.

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[33]Glenda Cleaver, "Marriage Enrichment by Means of a Structured Communication Programme," *Family Relations* 36 (January 1987).

[34]Malcom, Karen D., "Personal Growth in Marriage: An Adlerian Unilateral Marriage Enrichment Program," *Individual Psychology* 48 no. 4, (December 1992).

[35]Henry A. Virkler, "Building Communication and Conflict-Resolution Skills in Marital Counseling," *Marriage and Family: A Christian Journal* 1 no. 4, (1998): 344.

PARENTING

Introduction and Philosophy

Parenting is the most demanding, difficult, thankless, productive, fulfilling and important job on earth. It was in the context of this task that God originally established the propagation of His truth as seen in Deut. 6:4-9. No one will ever be mistake-free in this endeavor, but all who wish to be excellent parents must acquire skills of parenting.

Effective parenting is done on and with purpose. Parents cannot expect their children to become successful and mature simply by wishing it. Good intentions are insufficient; parents must exert time effectively and efficiently. Parents must purposely teach skills, not merely tell expectations. This is an immensely important task for which many do not feel prepared. One author has noted that there are five fears of most families: "1) the fear that our children will make life-dominating mistakes, 2) the fear that our children will not turn out right, 3) the fear that we are failing as a family, 4) the fear that a family member will die or be seriously injured or sick, and 5) the fear that our children will not share our family's values or faith." [1]

One's philosophical and theological understanding will dictate much of his understanding of the parental role. "Philosophically, the distinction is between the communitarian tradition, in which individuals emanate from groups and therefore are delegated to pursue collective good and to frame individual aspirations and actions in that context, and liberalism, in which groups are the products of individuals and their actions."[2] The more

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[1]James R. Slaughter, "Toward a Biblical Theology of Family," Kenneth O. Gangel and James C. Wilhoit, eds., *The Christian Educators Handbook on Family Life Education.* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 13.

[2]David G. Bromley and Clinton H. Cress, "Beyond Corporal Punishment Debate Rhetoric: The Logic of Child Discipline in Two Social Worlds," *Marriage and Family: A Christian Journal* 1 no. 2, (1998): 153.

liberal one's theology, the more apt he would be to view the parent-child relationship as egalitarian, one in which each strives to arrive at a mutual agreement concerning daily activities and appropriate behavior. "Children are portrayed as logical and compassionate actors who will make decisions that are appropriate to the situation and considerate of others' rights if they are given options, responsibility, and an interest in an equitable outcome."[3]

Those who take a more conservative view of theology (as this writer does) would view the task of parenting quite differently. This view requires the parent to train up the child. This places the emphasis upon parental authority, accountability, and responsibility. This view requires that children learn to respect their parents. "If they are not worthy of respect, then neither is their religion or morals, or their government, or their country, or any of their values."[4] Parenting from this perspective enables one to exercise authority in a loving, not a dominating way or with a punitive spirit. Discipline and love are not incompatible, but integral to one another.

This then begs the questions: what skills are needed, what are the best methods for imparting those skills to parents, and are parenting programs truly helpful and effective?

Program Effectiveness

There is much research indicating that parent training is helpful and effective, so much that one author has suggested that parenting courses become mandatory for all juniors and seniors in high school.[5]

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[3]Ibid., 159.

[4]James Dobson, *Dare to Discipline*, Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1970.

[5]Nicholas Anastasiow, "Should Parenting Education be Mandatory?" *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education* 8 (1988): 60-72.

There have been two highly utilized programs in non-church settings, Parent Effectiveness Training (P.E.T.) and Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (S.T.E.P.). Both of these programs have shown positive results.[6] "Overall the results of the study support the continued promotion of parenting courses such as P.E.T. and S.T.E.P. since the courses were generally seen as improving family functioning."[7]

A program used in suburban and inner-city Detroit showed positive results for both sets of clients. "Each parent was given a manual containing materials related to their particular group. The assertiveness manual contained a description of each of the sessions, with accompanying homework assignments. Session one focused on positive assertion, session two on listening, session three on making requests and expressing anger, session four on discipline, and session five on problem solving."[8]

Parent training is also effective in the African-American community. IMPACT has combined cultural awareness with the Christian faith. IMPACT (I Must Parent According to Christian or Cultural Teachings) has three components: giving children a blessing, knowing the impact of one's parenting style, and using skillful periodic non-abusive discipline. "The IMPACT program is an example of parenting intervention designed to help Christian/minority parents create positive self images and develop goal-setting behaviors in their children based upon their values and congruent with their culture."[9]

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[6]Mary Lue Summerlin and G. Robert Ward, "The Effect of Parent Group Participation on Attitudes," *Elementary School Guidance Counseling* (December 1981): 133-136.

[7]Patricia Noller and Robert Taylor, "Parent Education and Family Relations," *Family Relations* 38 (1989): 199.

[8]Annette U. Rickel, Grenae Dudley, and Shirley Berman, "An Evaluation of Parent Training," *Evaluation Review* 4 no. 3, (June 1980), 393.

[9]Micah L. McCreary, "The Impact Program: An African-American Parent-Training Program," *Marriage and Family: A Christian Journal* 1 no. 2, (1998): 143.

This program is consistent with other research which shows the positive effects of utilizing religious belief and practice. Many secular professionals have been reluctant to recognize the benefits of including religious concepts in parent education. "In these efforts to promote family well-being, an additional resource that is readily available to many families, but seldom recognized nor utilized by family professionals may be religion."[10] "It would be unwise to ignore the existence of the beneficial effects of religion. . . . In some cases a large gap in religious perspectives between the professional and client may be an indication of a need to refer the client to other resources."[11] Additionally other authors have viewed parent education and parent training as being superior to family therapy.[12]

Methods of Skill Presentation

Much of the debate in this area is whether to use purely didactic or experiential methods in skill presentation. Those who come from a behaviorist perspective argue against the use of didactic presentations. This, of course, requires that participants be willing to participate in this type of training without being presented with biblical or cognitive data supporting the techniques. One must assume that this type of presentation would not be acceptable in a church setting.

Conversely, didactic presentations without opportunities for experiential interventions could be viewed as boring. The answer would seem to be to combine both approaches. "In

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[10]Douglas A. Abbott, Margaret Berry, and William H. Meredith, "Religious Belief and Practice: A Potential Asset in Helping Families," *Family Relations* 39 (1990): 443.

[11]Ibid., 447.

[12]Frank Ainsworth, "Parent Education and Training or Family Therapy: Does It Matter Which Comes First?" *Child and Youth Care Forum* 25 no. 2, (April 1996): 101.

two studies conducted to measure the effectiveness of this approach, the data revealed that separately neither the didactic (cognitive) nor an experiential only approach is as powerful as both combined. That is to say that the two components have complementary value, and the effect of each other is enhanced when they are together."[13]

Additionally, it would seem that best results are attained through weekly classes which last eight to twelve weeks. "Sessions should meet every week to build continuity and trust in the group."[14]

Skills To Be Taught

It is obvious that there are innumerable skills that could be taught in a parenting class. Parenting classes should be an on-going program in the church. Some classes will be generic; others would be more age-specific. Following are many of the issues which should be addressed in this program.

Parenting Activities

The Scripture's command to parents is to train up their children. This is a simple command which has many implications. The Christian parent must teach the child to conform his behavior to acceptable standards, while at the same time focusing on the development of morality, ethics, independent thinking skills, and physical, spiritual and social development.

> University of Minnesota researchers were interested in what kinds of parenting patterns best fostered the following four qualities in children:
> 1. Self respect--a strong sense of self worth in the child

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[13]Ibid., 106.

[14]Don Dinkmeyer and Don Dinkmeyer, Jr. "A Comprehensive and Systematic Approach to Parent Education," *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 49.

2. Convention obligation--an appropriate sense of conformity to authority figures
3. Religiosity--the degree to which the child has accepted his/her parents' religious values and practices
4. Counterculture--the degree to which the child chooses behaviors contrary to his/her parents' values[15]

These same researchers developed two common parenting functions: control--the ability to manage a child's behavior, and support--the ability to make a child feel loved. When these two functions were cross laid as axes, they produced four parenting models: permissive, neglectful, authoritarian, and authoritative.

The permissive parent is characterized by high support and low control. These parents are 100% love and 0% discipline. Typically these parents flee from their children, sending them into the world without much training or direction.

Opposed to that is the authoritarian parent. This type of parent exhibits high control and low support, 100% discipline and 0% love. The parents fight with their children. They are often oppressive parents who produce oppressive and oppressed children.

The neglectful parent exhibits low support and low control, 0% love and 0% discipline. The neglectful parent may be the most destructive of all, since the opposite of love is not hate, but indifference. The neglectful parent leaves the child to drift without parental input.

Opposed to this type of parent is the authoritative parent, who exhibits high support and high control, 100% love and 100% discipline. This parent is highly involved with his children and the relationship could be characterized by the word fellowship.

The results of the Minnesota study bore out the truth regarding the authoritative parent. This study noted that the authoritative style scored the highest marks for religiosity, self-worth and conformity to authority. It also was the style which was least

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[15]David M. Carder. "Parenting Programs in the Church." Kenneth O. Gangel and James C. Wilhoit, eds., *The Christian Educators Handbook on Family Life Education*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 158.

likely to promote identification with the counter culture. The authoritarian and neglectful styles were tied as being most highly associated with identification with the counter culture.

It is obvious that adoption of the authoritative style should yield the most productive parenting results. In order to be an authoritative parent, one must understand the difference between person and performance.

Person/Performance

For one to become an authoritative parent, they must grasp four concepts to establish healthy family patterns:

1. The parents' aptitude for flexibility
2. The parents' attitude toward their parenting task
3. The parents' ability to bond emotionally with each child at various stages of the life cycle
4. The parents' appropriate use of control[16]

These four skills go hand in glove with learning to differentiate person from performance.

Most people learn to achieve their self worth through their performance plus the opinions of other people. If their performance is adequate to superior, they feel good about themselves. But when they experience failure, they suffer from low self worth. If others are accepting of them, they feel good about themselves, but they experience low self worth from any form of rejection. The key is to learn to separate one's worth as a person from performance.

One's worth as a person is linked both to creation (Gen. 1:26-27) and redemption. As one examines the doctrines of justification, reconciliation, propitiation, regeneration and sanctification, one discovers that God assigns value and worth to a person apart from his performance. This does not mean that God is not interested in the person's performance

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[16]Ibid., 163.

(Heb. 12:5-11), but has chosen to offer unconditional acceptance of the person as he attempts to conform the performance (Rom. 12:1-2).

Excellent parents do the same thing. They offer unconditional love and acceptance to the child as they attempt to shape his behavior, attitudes and use of abilities.

Personality Types

The Scripture (Prov. 22:6) commands parents to train up a child according to his bent, or according to his uniqueness.[17] It is important to discover the specific bent or unqiueness which God has placed in every child and parent accordingly.

Many authors have written about different types of personalities (choleric, sanguine, phlegmatic, melancholy, lion, otter, beaver, golden retriever, etc.), but this section will look at the DISC model of personality. Since this has already been addressed in the premarital chapter, this author will refer the reader to that discussion of types.

Just as it is important for potential spouses to understand temperament differences and the possible conflicts those differences may sponsor, it is also important to understand the temperament differences between parent and child as potential or actual sources of conflict. Parents must be aware of their natural responses to conflict and then opt to choose a biblical response.

In addition to understanding the parent and child temperament mix, it is important to teach parents how their children think. William Lee Carter has written a book entitled *Kid Think*, which helps parents get behind the eyes of six common types of children. These six types of children are the 1) oppositional, 2) sensitive, 3) anxious, 4) depressed, 5) self-centered teenager, and 6) deceitful child.

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[17]Mels Carbonell, *What Makes You Tick*, (Houston: Rapha Publishing, 1994), 147.

Dr. Clyde Narramore, an author of numerous books on Christian counseling and parenting, has identified twelve characteristics of healthy families. These are tasks which parents develop in and for their children. They are 1) developing respect, 2) discovering and developing talents, 3) expressing and showing emotion, 4) respecting reasonable limits and boundaries, 5) developing healthy self images, 6) sensing the community and world, 7) becoming spiritually fulfilled, 8) identifying personal and family goals, 9) working and playing together, 10) observing good health habits, 11) meeting mutual financial needs, and 12) assuming responsibilities in the home.[18] One could choose to teach this material in a one-session overview as part of a different series, or to take each of the topics and develop a twelve-week series.

Responsibility

Another important task of parenthood is to teach responsibility to children. "Responsibility means to become mature in the sense of being responsible for all aspects of our lives and our situations: for our talents, for our potential, for our feelings, for our thoughts, for our actions, for our freedom."[19]

Linda and Richard Eyre wrote *Teaching Your Children Responsibility* in 1982. This book is divided into four sections of three chapters each, which would serve well as the foundation for a twelve-week parenting course. The chapters show parents how to have their children embrace responsibility for: 1) obedience, 2) things, 3) work, 4) actions, 5) talents and gifts, 6) a peaceful attitude, 7) choices, 8) character, 9) potential, 10) smaller children, 11) dependability, and 12) contributing. Certainly any parent should

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[18]Clyde M. Narramore, *Parents at Their Best*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1985), 11-21.

[19]Linda and Richard Eyre, *Teaching Your Children Responsibility*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 4.

be pleased to have their child exhibit responsibility in these twelve areas, and this book would find its way into the parenting curriculum.

No parenting program would be complete without teaching the material found in the book by Gary Smalley and John Trent entitled *The Blessing*. This work focuses on the concept of the blessing given by the family patriarch to his children in the Old Testament, as a way to pass on the spiritual heritage, along with financial resources. "In Old Testament times each child in the family was given a general blessing as well as a special blessing for the firstborn."[20]

The authors identify five elements of the blessing which could serve as the outline for another family life series. These five elements are 1) meaningful touch, 2) a spoken message, 3) attaching high value to the one being blessed, 4) picturing a special future for the one being blessed, and 5) an active commitment to fulfill the blessing. Teaching parents these five components of parenting should pay rich dividends for their children.

Additionally, one might also decide to teach a few sessions about family atmosphere. Two qualities of importance in the home are a quality of support called cohesion and a quality of control called adaptability or flexibility. One can locate his family system on a family map which utilizes cohesion and adaptability as the horizontal and vertical axes. Families might have adaptability functions which are chaotic, flexible, structured, or rigid.

Chaotic families are characterized by lack of leadership, dramatic role shifts, erratic discipline, or too much change. Flexible families may be characterized by having shared leadership, shared roles, democratic discipline and change when necessary. In structured families, one finds that leadership is shared, that roles remain stable, and they have somewhat democratic discipline and change when demanded. Rigid families are

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[20]Gary Smalley and John Trent, *The Blessing*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1986), 30.

characterized by authoritarian leadership, roles that seldom change, strict discipline and too little change.

Families also exhibit levels of cohesion which are labeled as disengaged, separated, connected, or enmeshed. The disengaged have little closeness, a lack of loyalty, and place a high value upon independence. The separated have low to moderate closeness, little loyalty, are somewhat interdependent with more independence. The connected have moderate to high closeness, some loyalty, and are interdependent with higher levels of dependence. The enmeshed are characterized by very high closeness, high loyalty, and a high degree of dependence.

Summary

It is evident that parenting is an important, time-consuming and energy-depleting activity. Only the strong and brave fully apply themselves to this task. The lack of training in this area has produced many negative consequences in the church and in the culture at large. The subjects addressed are merely a starting point for this portion of the family ministry. Other issues will be addressed as the ministry matures.

FATHERING

Introduction

Approximately 400 years before the birth of Christ a relatively unknown author wrote the final words of the Old Testament. Malachi (my messenger) spoke forcefully to a people who had left their position of godliness and embraced moral and social decline. The religious leaders were compromised. The family was being destroyed by divorce. Many who still believed in God generally distrusted Him. The economy was doing well, but the people did not handle their luxury very wisely.

It is to this people that God promises the inevitability of the dreadful day of the Lord. It is to these people that the future appearance of Elijah is promised. And the promise is that Elijah will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers, and if not, the earth will be struck with a curse. Theologians debate if this portion of Scripture refers to the first or second coming of Christ or both. Regardless of one's interpretation, it is evident that one definition of a cursed earth is characterized by fathers and children whose hearts are distant and separated from one another. Certainly American culture in the last fifty years fits this description.

The American culture is one that basically views the role of the father as superfluous. A literature review demonstrates this point. "As we began to look at the data we realized that there were more than 70,000 books on mothering, but fewer than 1,700 on fathering. There's plenty of information out there on how to be a good mother, but very little on how to be a good father."[1]

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[1]Katherine S. Mangan, "Teaching Men to Become Better Parents," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 42 no. 40, (June 14, 1996): A6.

Fathering may not be an important subject for the general American culture, but it certainly is important to God. Simmons notes that "a father not just a parent. An interesting note about the emphasis the Bible places on fatherhood lies in the sheer volume of references to it. There are 1,190 biblical references to fatherhood, 365 to motherhood, and only 36 to parenthood."[2] It is evident the emphasis which God places on fatherhood lies in deep contrast to the state of fatherhood in contemporary American culture.

Extent of Fatherlessness

Baby boomers could expect to grow up in an intact family with both mother and father present; sadly subsequent generations no longer hold that expectation. Many believe that fatherlessness is the most significant family or social problem facing America. The following statistics will illustrate the severity of this issue.[3]

	1960	1970	1980	1990
Percent of births outside of marriage	5.3	10.7	18.4	28.0
Percent of children living apart from their fathers	17.5	22.4	32.2	36.3

-The divorce rate increased by 279% from 1970-1992.
-The number of children living with a divorced parent saw a dramatic 352% increase from 1960-1990.
-The number of children living in single-parent homes has increased 108% in the last two decades. In 1970, 12% of children under age 18 were being raised by one parent. In 1980 that number increased to 20%. In 1990, it was as high as 25%.
-Out of wedlock births have skyrocketed by 400% since 1960.
-Family size has shrunk every year since 1960 (with the exception of 1990-91).
-Couples living together outside the bonds of marriage increased 577% from 1970 to 1992.[4]

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[2]Dave Simmons, *Dad the Family Coach* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1991): 145.

[3]David Blankenhorn, *Fatherless America* (New York: Basic Books, 1995): 227.

[4]Glenn T. Stanton, *Twice As Strong: The Undeniable Advantages of Raising Children in a Traditional Two-Parent Family* (Focus on the Family, 1995): 1.

It is evident that the exponential increase of divorce and out-of-wedlock births have caused ever increasing numbers of children to be raised in single-parent homes, typically with an absent father. This being the case, the next question must be: What are the consequences of this cultural sea change?

Consequences for Children

For decades common wisdom declared that fatherlessness would have significant negative consequences on children. Starting in the 60s and 70s the elites of society strenuously criticized this assumption. It seemed that only those with a conservative religious orientation attempted to hold on to the idea that fathers were important. Now, after three decades of ever-increasing fatherlessness, social scientists and medical researchers are also becoming vocal about the consequences of fatherlessness. They have generally organized this information into two categories: health outcomes and social outcomes. It will be evident that the findings are significant for both health and social outcomes.

Many fatherless families are created from out-of-wedlock births. The Scripture is clear that the sins of the parents are multiplied in succeeding generations, which proves to be true about this issue. Daughters of single mothers are 164% more likely to have out-of-wedlock births, 111% more likely to have children as teenagers and 92% more likely to be divorced or separated.[5] It is obvious that most single-parent families will have reduced communication, father support, and adult supervision.

Children who live apart from their fathers also have an increased susceptibility to disease. Unmarried mothers are less likely to receive adequate prenatal care and are more

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[5]Virginia Department of Health, *Fatherhood and Family Health* (September, 1995): 3.

likely to produce a low birthweight baby. Single-parent families have more stress and utilize daycare more often, both of which correlate highly for childhood disease.[6]

Father-absent children also exhibit increased risk for tobacco, alcohol, and drug use. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has stated that "fatherless children are at a dramatically greater risk of drug and alcohol abuse."[7] This same agency has shown that fatherless children smoke at a rate 4.3 times as great as do children in intact homes.[8]

Father-absent children have higher incidences of suicide, mental health disorders, and physical and sexual abuse.[9] All of these findings have caused alarm among social scientists that previously had no moral concerns regarding divorce and illegitimacy.

As serious as the health consequences of fatherlessness are, the social consequences may be even more devastating. One writer has described fatherlessness as the "engine that drives our most pressing social problems."[10] "Study after study has shown that father absence is the greatest risk factor facing children in terms of their likelihood to become involved in negative, dangerous, or even criminal behavior, ranging from dropping out of school to committing murder."[11]

One of the most obvious consequences of fatherlessness is poverty; in fact, growing up in a single-parent home is the greatest predictor of poverty. "In 1996, young children

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[6]Ibid., 4.

[7]National Center for Fathering website accessed 1/29/00 at www.fathers.com.

[8]Virginia Department of Health, *Fatherhood*, 5.

[9]Blankenhorn, *Fatherless America*, 39-40.

[10]Judith Davidoff, "The Fatherhood Industry," *The Progressive* 63 no. 11, (November, 1999): 28-31.

[11]Douglas Seibold, "Reinventing Fatherhood," *Our Children* 1 (September-October, 1995): 7.

living with unmarried mothers were five times as likely to be poor and ten times as likely to be extremely poor. Almost 75% of American children living in single-parent families will experience poverty before they turn eleven years old. Only 20% of children in two-parent families will do the same."[12] "In married-couple homes with pre-school children, median family income in 1992 was approximately $41,000; in single-mother homes with young children, median income was about $9,000--a ratio of more than four to one."[13] This institutionalized poverty is not mitigated by child support. "Using census data from 1990, . . . the Urban Institute determined that such fathers paid, on average, only seven percent of their income in child support. More than half paid no support at all, and among those who did, more than half paid less than 15% of their income on it!"[14]

Most social scientists agree that there is an intrinsic link between poverty and crime. Some conservatives argue against this point by comparing crime rates during the Great Depression to current crime rates, arguing that poverty alone does not cause crime. Reviewing both of these arguments might cause one to decide that the connection of poverty and the lack of a father in the home may be the connection to crime and delinquency. It may be that the father's presence in depression-era homes was the factor which counteracted the poverty factor. "Studies show that only 43% of state prison inmates grew up with both parents, and that a missing father is a better predictor of criminal activity than race or poverty."[15]

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[12]National Center for Fathering website.

[13]Blankenhorn, *Fatherless America*, 42.

[14]Davidoff, "The Fatherhood Industry," 32.

[15]Joseph P. Shapiro and Joannie M. Schrof, "Honor Thy Children," *U.S. News and World Report* 118 no. 8, (February 27, 1995): 39.

One can see the connection between fatherlessness and crime early in the child's life. "Seventy percent of juveniles in state reform institutions grew up with one or neither parent."[16] "It was found that children living with biological fathers exhibited the least delinquency."[17]

In addition, fatherless children have increased educational problems. "A study of 17,000 children living apart from their biological fathers found that the children were 40% more likely to repeat a grade in school and 70% more likely to be expelled than children living with both parents."[18]

One would be hard pressed to determine if father abandonment is more difficult for males or females. Studies have shown that father-deprived girls have more promiscuity and less developed internal locus of control.[19] On the other hand, boys have an increase of behavioral problems and more difficulty with attaining appropriate gender role identification. "But if there is no man to stand beside the boy, to lead him into manhood, and to tell him when he has achieved his destination and can now relax, the boy gets his images of manhood from the movies or from other boys, so he grows up as a masculine impersonator, faking it for a lifetime, pretending that he knows what a man feels and trying to act the way he thinks a man is supposed to act. He is not likely to get it right."[20]

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[16]Davidoff, "Fatherhood Industry," 29.

[17]David Popenoe, *Life Without Father* (New York: The Free Press, 1996): 150.

[18]Virginia Department of Health, *Fatherhood*, 6.

[19]Popenoe, *Life Without Father*, 159.

[20]Frank Pittman, *Grow Up!* (New York: Golden Books Publishing, 1998): 77.

Consequences for Fathers

The previous section cited ample evidence regarding the negative effect of fatherlessness upon children. This section will focus on the astronomical toll upon the men themselves for abandoning this position of responsibility. These men have become the P.O.W.s in the war between the sexes, and have suffered severe destruction because of it.

One result of fatherlessness is that men are less apt to remain in a stable marriage for a lifetime. Many authors have documented the negative impact on men by not being married.

George Gilder in the seminal work, *Men and Marriage*, has argued that marriage is the institution which "civilizes" the male. The desire for a wife and family provides the motivation for the testosterone-driven male to bring his drive under control, and focus his energy in a productive manner. Gilder argues that free sex has demotivated the male from making a lifetime commitment to one woman, which has produced destructive consequences for the male. Thinking that he has achieved freedom, he has become enslaved. "The breakdown of monogamy produces unproductive and disruptive men."[21] "In a larger sense, the fatherhood story is the irreplaceable basis of a culture's most urgent imperative--the socialization of males. More than any other cultural invention, fatherhood guides men away from violence by fastening their behavior to a fundamental social purpose. By enjoining men to care for their children and for the mothers of their children, the fatherhood story is society's most important contrivance for shaping male identity."[22]

It is marriage and family which does more to bend men's natural anti-social selfishness toward a prosocial bent. By doing this it protects the man from the ravages of singleness.

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[21]George Gilder, *Men and Marriage* (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Co., 1986): 80.

[22]Blankenhorn, *Fatherless America*, 65

"In general, compared to others in the population, the single man is poor and neurotic. He is disposed to criminality, drugs, and violence. He is irresponsible about his debts, alcoholic, accident-prone, and susceptible to disease. Unless he can marry, he is often destined to a troubled and abbreviated life."[23] These men have a much higher mortality rate from natural causes, accidents, and suicide.

A man must pay a price for the rewards of marriage. He must abandon selfishness and egocentrism to embrace the honesty of an intense interpersonal relationship. "Marriage and salvation both rest on unconditional love offered in exchange for complete honesty."[24]

Men who abandon their children feel a shame which is not easily ameliorated. "An absent father's shame about his departure often deepens a negative self-image that can begin a vicious cycle of failure in other areas of his life, sabotaging career and schooling."[25] This type of shame when sublimated in denial will often resurface in many self-destructive attitudes and behavior.

Pittman has identified three types of these men who he refers to as "masculine impersonators, philanderers, controllers and contenders."[26] These men play at manhood but never learn to make the deep commitments which bring peace and stability to the male barbarian.

Consequences for Society

General society will be impacted to the same degree that the men and the children have been impacted. All of society suffers from the ravages of crime, delinquency, illegitimacy,

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[23]Gilder, *Men and Marriage*, 62.

[24]Donald Joy, *Men Under Construction* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1993): 92.

[25]Mark Bryan, *The Prodigal Father* (New York: Clarkson Potter Publications, 1997): 23.

[26]Pittman, *Grow Up!*, 80.

and barbarian-type behavior. Additionally, American society has suffered from attempting to answer this problem from an amoral perspective.

Only able to crunch numbers and incapable of ascertaining God's wisdom, modern America has reduced the problems of fatherlessness to that of money. Programs were instituted to replace the man as provider with the government as provider. Of course, this has become an expensive proposition so now there is a movement to make those deadbeat dads pay up. Society has reduced the importance of fathering to a paycheck. "The minimum requirement for every biological father in the United States is eighteen years of regular child-support payments. Do anything else you want; we don't mind. Don't get married if you don't want to. The same goes for the mother. The only rule is the guy should make these payments. We do not care about the male image. But we are serious about the male income."[27]

This society has lost sight of all the contributions which fathers make except money. American society has ignored the male role of providing for and protecting the family. It has forgotten the man as a role model for boys to define their masculinity and girls to define their femininity. It has also devalued the complementary parenting style which completes the picture of humanness. If men's hearts are not turned to their children, the earth surely will be cursed.

Turning Hearts, Restoring Homes

It is evident that the lack of men doing the job of fathering has created a social catastrophe of immense proportion. It is also logical to assume that the insertion of competent fathers into the equation should also create significant results.

Many studies confirm the positive impact of fathers who spend time with their children. Children with involved fathers are:
-more confident and less anxious in unfamiliar settings

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[27]Blankenhorn, *Fatherless America*, 133.

-better able to deal with frustration

-better able to gain a sense of independence and an identity outside the mother-child relationship

-more likely to mature into compassionate adults

-more likely to have higher self-esteem and grade point averages

-more sociable.

According to a Gallup Poll, 90.3 percent of Americans agree that "fathers make a unique contribution to their children's lives."

A study on parent-infant attachment found that fathers who were affectionate, spent time with their children and overall had a positive attitude were more likely to have securely attached infants.

A study assessing the level of adaptation of one-year olds found that, when left with a stranger, children whose fathers were highly involved were less likely to cry, worry, or disrupt play than other one-year olds whose fathers were less involved.

Father-child interaction has been shown to promote a child's physical well-being, perceptual abilities, and competency for relatedness with others, even at a young age.

A survey of over 20,000 parents found that when fathers are involved in their children's education including attending school meetings and volunteering at school, children were more likely to get A's, enjoy school, and participate in extracurricular activities and less likely to have repeated a grade.

Using nationally representative data on over 2,600 adults born in the inner city, it was found that children who lived with both parents were more likely to have finished high school, be economically self-sufficient, and to have a healthier lifestyle than their peers who grew up in a broken home.

In a 26-year longitudinal study on 379 individuals, researchers found that the single most important childhood factor in developing empathy is paternal involvement. Fathers who spent time alone with their kids performing routine childcare at least two times a week, raised children who were the most compassionate adults.[28]

It is estimated that there is a dynamic at work that shall be labeled Father Power.

Father Power is a force that is always active and can be used for good or evil.

Take, for instance, the case study of Jonathan Edwards and the impact he had on a span of four generations. His fatherhood left a legacy of 300 clergymen, missionaries, and theology professors, 120 college professors, 100 lawyers, 30 judges, 60 authors of books, 14 university presidents, 3 United States Congressmen and one Vice President of the United States. The legacy this one man left can give us a perspective of the significance of the fourth generation rule when used in a positive way.

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[28]National Center for Fathering website.

On the other hand, great destruction can come down through the generations when negative father power is used. For example, consider the progeny of one man who lived in New York City, Max Jukes (from whose name the term "juke" was coined which means to fake or deceive). Among his known descendants, 1,200 were researched and here is his negative father power legacy: 310 were vagrants, 440 had their lives physically wrecked by debauchery and uncleanliness, 130 were sent to prison for an average of 13 years each, 7 were murderers, 100 were alcoholics, 60 were habitual thieves, and there were 190 prostitutes. They collectively cost the state of New York over $1.2 million in a four-generation span that overlapped the 1700s and 1800s.[29]

One may wish to argue that Christianity was the difference between these two examples. This writer would certainly agree with that assessment as a partial explanation. It is also this writer's experience that men who are truly born-again Christians can be highly ineffective fathers. Fatherhood is a skill which is not automatically acquired by having X-Y chromosomes. Fatherhood is a skill that must be learned, and the local church is the best location for this training to take place.

For one to change from mediocre fathering to excellent fathering, one must have a change of attitude. Great change will only take place when a man places a high degree of value on the job. "An examination of the variations in father involvement based on differences in attitudes toward the paternal role suggested that those men with more favorable attitudes toward the paternal role were significantly more involved in child-rearing activities than those with less favorable attitudes, even after controlling for hours of maternal employment."[30]

Attitude is a greater predictor of father involvement than the mother's employment outside the home. Fathers with employed wives are generally only slightly more involved

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[29] Simmons, *Dad the Family Coach*, 40.

[30] Brent A. McBride and Thomas R. Rane, "Role Identity, Role Investments, and Paternal Involvement: Implications for Parenting Program for Men," *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 12 no. 1 (1997): 189.

than fathers with at-home wives.[31] "The High Paternal Involved fathers indicated that commitment to parental roles and a conscious choice to make parenting a priority make some men more likely to be actively involved in childrearing."[32]

Focus on Men

If attitude is the primary determinant, than a comprehensive fathering program will not only address the mechanics of fathering, but also the formation of godly character in males. The impact of fathering is not so much involvement in major activities but in the "casual transmission of values" which occurs in a myriad of daily interactions with one's children.[33]

This casual transmission of values will automatically occur as a father interacts with his children. The question remains, will the values be ones that deserve to be transmitted to the next generation? It has become apparent that Christian men in our culture have often been acculturated with the values of this present evil world system. Christian men often place as much value on money, power, acquisitions, and pleasure as the rest of society. For change to occur, men must be changed from the inside out.

Promise Keepers has been the most effective men's ministry in the twentieth century. This ministry has offered a prophetic voice to men calling them home to responsibility and

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[31]Cynthia S. Darling-Fisher and Linda Beth Tiedje, "The Impact of Maternal Employment Characteristics on Fathers' Participation in Child Care," *Family Relations* 39 (January, 1990): 25.

[32]Brent A. McBride and Johnna Darragh, "Interpreting the Data on Father Involvement: Implications for Parenting Programs for Men," *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services* (1995): 493.

[33]James C. Dobson, *Straight Talk to Men and Their Wives* (Waco: Word Books, 1980): 31-38.

accountability in seven areas of life. These seven areas are embodied in their Seven

Promises:

1. A Promise Keeper is committed to honoring Jesus Christ through worship, prayer, and obedience to God's Word in the power of the Holy Spirit.
2. A Promise Keeper is committed to pursuing vital relationships with a few other men, understanding that he needs brothers to help him keep his promises.
3. A Promise Keeper is committed to practicing spiritual, moral, ethical, and sexual purity.
4. A Promise Keeper is committed to building strong marriages and families through love, protection, and biblical values.
5. A Promise Keeper is committed to supporting the mission of the church by honoring and praying for his pastor, and by actively giving his time and resources.
6. A Promise Keeper is committed to reaching beyond any racial and denominational barriers to demonstrate the power of biblical unity.
7. A Promise Keeper is committed to influencing his world, being obedient to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.[34]

The Promise Keeper movement has called men to a genuine authenticity which will

generate character qualities worthy of reproduction by one's children. "Excellent fathers

work from a foundation of proven ethical principles, convictions, and good character, out

of which flows effective fathering practices, techniques, and skills."[35] Many men will find

that they must learn new rules for manhood to attain this authenticity. Rodney Cooper

has addressed the characteristics of this authenticity: 1) emotions are immediate,

2) spontaneity, 3) know what's going on inside, 4) honest expressions of emotion, and

5) knowing that emotional expression is appropriate.[36] It will be important for men to

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[34]Various Authors, *Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper* (Colorado Springs: Focus on the Family, 1994): 8.

[35]Dave Simmons, *Dad the Family Mentor* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1992): 23.

[36]Rodney L. Cooper, *Double Bind* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996): 155-168.

understand that they suppress emotion to their own detriment. The following poem

illustrates this point.

> A letter written during World War II by a father to his soldier son:
> Dear Son,
> I wish I had the power to write
> The thoughts wedged in my heart tonight
> As I sit watching that small star
> And wondering where and how you are.
> You know, Son, it's a funny thing
> How close a war can really bring
> A father, who for years with pride,
> Has kept emotions deep inside.
> I'm sorry, Son, when you were small
> I let reserve build up that wall;
> I told you real men never cried,
> And it was Mom who always dried
> Your tears and smoothed your hurts away
> So that you soon went back to play.
> But, Son, deep down within my heart
> I longed to have some little part
> In drying that small tear-stained face,
> But we were men--men don't embrace.
> And suddenly I found my son
> A full-grown man, with childhood done.
> Tonight you're far across the sea,
> Fighting a way for men like me.
> Well, somehow pride and what is right
> Have changed places here tonight
> I find my eyes won't stay quite dry
> And that men sometimes really cry.
> And if we stood here, face to face,
> I'm sure, my Son, we would embrace.[37]

Effective Fathering

Not only must one be the right kind of person to be an effective father; one must

acquire the skills of fathering. Over past centuries these skills were taught informally in a

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[37]Author Unknown

mentoring process from father to son. With the breakdown of the family, many young men have grown up without a model. Many others have had models not worth copying. It is for these men that the church of Jesus Christ must stand in the gap, and offer programs to equip them for the monumental task of fathering. "The second truth we must accept is that effective fathering must be learned. Fathering skills don't automatically accompany that y-chromosome your dad gave you. Hopefully, your dad also presented a good model of fathering. As you grew up you could watch him, take subconscious notes on how a man interacts with his wife and kids. Unfortunately, with the divorce rate doubling in the last forty years, many of us grew up without any accessible fathering models, let alone effective ones."[38]

Fortunately, there are many programs and ministries available to help disciple men in their fathering task. One may utilize Promise Keepers for stadium rallies, small group training or curriculum for small groups in the local church. Other ministries like Dad the Family Shepherd or the National Center for Fathering provide training in fatherhood skills.

Fathering programs should focus on teaching factors that promote excellent fathering. "Comparison of questionnaire data from a sample of men judged to be effective fathers and a large control sample resulted in seven internally consistent dimensions of fathering: commitment, knowing your child, consistency, protecting/providing, love of spouse, active listening, and spiritual equipping."[39] A comprehensive fathering curriculum will address all of these factors.

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[38]Ken Canfield, *The Seven Secrets of Effective Fathering* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1992): 42.

[39]Gale H. Roid and Ken R. Canfield, "Measuring the Dimensions of Effective Fathering," *Educational and Psychological Measurement* 54 no. 1, (Spring, 1994): 215.

Conclusion

The evidence is overwhelming that fathering makes a difference. The presence of an effective father is critical for the well-being of children, the family and the nation as a whole. Much of the incompetence of fathers can either be ascribed to lack of appropriate motivation or lack of fathering skills. Motivation must be caught; skills can be taught. The local church must promote the former and provide the latter.

APPENDIX A

Survey

1. Do you have a premarital program?   Y   N

2. Is it required in order to be married in your church?   Y   N

3. How long is the program? # of hours_____ # of sessions_____

4. Do you use any instruments?   PREPARE   Y   N
                                  FOCCUS   Y   N
                                  Taylor Johnson   Y   N
                                  Other (please specify)_____

5. Do you have a marriage mentoring program?   Y   N
   Please describe briefly.

   _____

   _____

6. Do you have programs of marriage enrichment?   Y   N

   Seminars
         ___ monthly   ___ quarterly   ___annually   ___ as needed
   Regularly scheduled support groups
         ___weekly   ___biweekly   ___monthly
   Please describe briefly.

   _____

   _____

7. Do you have programs of parent training?   Y   N
   Seminars
         ___ monthly   ___ quarterly   ___annually   ___ as needed
   Regularly scheduled support groups
         ___weekly   ___biweekly   ___monthly
   Please describe briefly.

   _____

   _____

8. Do you have programs to teach fathering skills?   Y   N
   Seminars
           ___ monthly   ___ quarterly   ___annually   ___ as needed
   Regularly scheduled support groups
           ___weekly   ___biweekly   ___monthly
   Please describe briefly.

   _____

   _____

   _____

9. Do you have support groups for the chemically dependent?   Y   N
   How frequently?
   ___ weekly   ___ biweekly   ___ monthly
   Please describe briefly.

   _____

   _____

   _____

10. Do you have support groups for codependents?   Y   N
    How frequently?
    ___ weekly   ___ biweekly   ___ monthly
    Please describe briefly.

    _____

    _____

    _____

11. Do you have a divorce recovery support group?   Y   N
    How frequently?
    ___ weekly   ___ biweekly   ___ monthly
    Please describe briefly.

    _____

    _____

    _____

12. Do you have a parenting tough love support group?   Y   N
    How frequently?
    ___weekly   ___ biweekly ___ monthly
    Please describe briefly.

    _____

    _____

    _____

13. Do you have support groups for those who have been sexually abused?   Y   N
    How frequently?
    ___weekly   ___ biweekly ___ monthly
    Please describe briefly.

    _____

    _____

    _____

14. Do you have a support group for those who are or have been sexually
    confused (homosexual, etc.)?   Y   N
    How frequently?
    ___weekly   ___ biweekly ___ monthly
    Please describe briefly.

    _____

    _____

    _____

15. Do you have a support group for people with eating disorders?   Y   N
    How frequently?
    ___weekly   ___ biweekly ___ monthly
    Please describe briefly.

    _____

    _____

16. Have any of these programs caused problems within the church?   Y   N
Please describe briefly.

_____

_____

_____

17. Do you have any other programs not listed?   Y   N
Please describe briefly.

_____

_____

_____

18. Have you found a particular time and day to be best for these programs?   Y   N
Please specify:

_____

_____

_____

19. Does your church employ church discipline?   Y   N

20. Do you have a stated policy and procedure for church discipline?   Y   N

Do you want the results of this survey?   Y   N

Name_____

Address_____

_____

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