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Dynamics of Marriage: Love, Sex, and Growth from a Christian Perspective

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However, the congregation can't do it alone. And this is where *Finding Leaders for Tomorrow's Churches* makes its greatest contribution. "With growing awareness that this new 'mission frontier' is in the local parish, it is time for all of us concerned about recruitment and screening to figure out how the values and wisdom of local congregations can be factored into the process." That will take new, more inclusive strategies and initiatives involving national judicatories and seminaries in support of congregations. Oswald proposes them in a chapter entitled *Responding Across Boundaries*. The ideas are multiple and varied: from Regional Consultants, Seminary-University Networks, Vocation Days, College Chaplains and Religion Departments, to Parish Identifiers, College and High School Internships and Trained Clergy Selectors. Are congregations aware of their formative roles? Give them this book.

Everyone interested in leadership for today's church will find something in it; candidates for ministry, parents whose children could be leaders, parishes who are seeking pastors, pastors who recognize themselves as role models, seminary professors who are preparing students for ordination or, synod councils who are involved in screening and supporting candidates. It is short and punchy, filled with facts, insights and practical ideas.

But reading it is not enough. Like any "idea..." book, its value lies in its stimulus to action. After all, recruitment is a task, not a topic.

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Dynamics of Marriage

Jack Dominionian

Mystic Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications, 1993
167 pp. \$9.95 U.S.

This book is written with sincere concern for the woman and man involved in the intimacy of marriage. The reader is informed very clearly about the melding of procreation and spousal love.

The first concern that I had in reading this book was the qualifications of the author, and I was informed that he is a practicing psychiatrist and founder and director of the Marriage Research Center at the Middlesex Hospital in England. Jack Dominionian has more than thirty years experience as a lecturer on marriage.

Dominian states that his desire is to inform us in a down to earth manner about marriage from a theological stance. This is accomplished with concern for the institution of marriage as a viable and loving relationship.

Marriage is explained from the first glimmer of attraction through the passion of courtship, into the intimacy of the pitfalls and pleasures of ensuing years.

Not only are the years and stages of marriage explained (or at least insights offered), but also the factors that arise from birth through childhood which affect the manner in which we establish future relationships.

"Infant bonding to parents", has always been of great interest to me personally. This aspect of early childhood behavior is discussed by Dominian and he highlights the importance of understanding the past to have a better conception of future developments in marriage.

Three aspects of marriage which I have used in marriage counseling are: patience, kindness, and unselfishness (1 Corinthians 13). These terms of affection cover a lot of territory in the arena of marriage and Dominian covers them in chapters titled: "Sustaining Love, Healing Love and Growing in Love".

The relationship of the divine to marriage is seldom separated in this book. The love of God and the relationship of love in all its aspects are maintained.

It takes a lifetime to get to know each other and respond accurately, but in the process, in the Christian sense, we are developing the qualities of the Trinity, in which three persons know each other perfectly and respond to each other fully. The growth of marital love is like this process, and it takes a long time to achieve it. (p. 167)

Sexuality is explained as a gift from the Lord which is enjoyed within marriage without pious censure. The creative nature of sexual union is well known, but Dominian accentuates that in sexual union there should also be a union of intimate personal knowledge of each other. The place where this can exist is in an aura of love and commitment (marriage).

Individually there will be certain chapters that will be more appealing than others, but, as an overall guide, this book may serve the purpose for marriage counseling. I think that I am wise in the ways of marriage (married for 38 years), and as I read, I may comment, "I know that". But, oh, if I had known 38 years ago!

This is a good book!

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