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ABSTRACT

A Study To Identify and Define The Principle Characteristics and Approaches In Christian Premarital Preparation

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In today's culture marriages are suffering from a variety of ailments. It is difficult for Christian couples to go a lifetime without marital disharmony. This study looks at one possible way, premarital preparation, for the church to assist Christian couples in developing wholesome marriages.

This study identifies and defines the principle characteristics of premarital preparation. The study identifies and defines some of the characteristics and approaches in premarital counseling through surveys given to both clergy and laity and a review of literature.

Before pastors can enter into premarital preparation/counseling they must develop a theology of marriage. From that theology they can instruct couples about developing wholesome marriages. Premarital preparation is not so much a time for counseling but more a time to assist or prepare a couple for marriage.

Chapters Three, Four, and Five present the findings of the surveys and the review of literature. These three chapters define the characteristics of premarital preparation and present some of the approaches to doing premarital preparation. Chapter six gives a two pronged approach to premarital preparation. The first prong is a program designed to be done with teenagers. The second program is one that the pastor might use in his or her local church.

The study points out that there is a need for programs that will enhance the marriages of today. Premarital preparation is an important part of the overall ministry of the church and is an avenue of meeting the need for developing healthier marriages.

A STUDY TO IDENTIFY AND DEFINE
THE PRINCIPLE CHARACTERISTICS AND APPROACHES
IN CHRISTIAN PREMARITAL PREPARATION

BY

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of the requirements for the degree of

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AUTHORIZATION

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Signed Jay P. Cook.

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Table of Contents

| | Page |
|---|------|
| List of Graphs | viii |
| Chapter | |
| 1. Introduction | 1 |
| Definition of Terms | 3 |
| Problem and Purpose Statement | 3 |
| Justification of the Study | 4 |
| Organization of Proposed Study | 5 |
| Methodology | 7 |
| Limitations | 8 |
| Contextual Project | 8 |
| Organization of Chapters in the Dissertation | 9 |
| 2. A Theology of Marriage | 11 |
| The Importance of Theology of Marriage in Premarital Preparation | 12 |
| The Need For A Theology of Marriage | 12 |
| Justification for Developing a Theology of Marriage | 17 |
| A Biblical Framework For A Theology of Marriage | 19 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Cultural Influences on a Theology of Marriage . . . | 22 |
| A Theological Aspects of Marriage | 25 |
| Covenant Relationship | 25 |
| God's Creation - The Genesis Story | 31 |
| Paul's Theology on Relationships | 32 |
| A Case for Equality | 34 |
| Mutual Allegiance | 37 |
| Summary | 43 |
| 3. Design of the Surveys: Methods and Procedures . . . | 45 |
| Design of the Instruments | 46 |
| Description of the Survey Instruments | 46 |
| Pastor's Survey | 46 |
| Laity's Survey | 48 |
| Survey Instrument on Literature | 49 |
| Compilation of Data | 50 |
| Graphs | 51 |
| Tables | 57 |
| Table 3 Content by Authors | 60 |
| Summary | 61 |
| 4. History and Trends in Premarital Preparation . . . | 63 |
| The Purpose of Premarital Preparation | 66 |
| Trends in Approaches and Programs | 69 |
| Analysis of Surveys | 74 |
| Sessions Required by a Pastor | 75 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| First Session - Self-Confidence | 111 |
| Second Session - Dating | 114 |
| Third Session - Love | 115 |
| Fourth Session - Responsible Sex | 116 |
| Fifth Session - Christian Marriage | 117 |
| Schedule for a District-Wide Retreat | 118 |
| The Engaged Approach | 120 |
| First and Second Sessions | 120 |
| Session Three | 121 |
| Session Four | 122 |
| Session Five | 122 |
| Session Six | 123 |
| Follow-Up Session | 123 |
| Summary | 124 |
| 7. Summary | 126 |

Appendixes

| | |
|---|-----|
| A. Premarital Counseling Survey - Pastors | 130 |
| B. Premarital Counseling Survey - Laity | 132 |
| C. Tables | 133 |
| Table 1 - Premarital Preparation Content In Relationship to the Number of Sessions | 134 |
| Table 2 - Premarital Preparation Content In Relationship To The Age Of The Pastor | 135 |
| Table 3 - Premarital Preparation Content By Authors | 137 |
| D. Teen Program Handouts | 139 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| E. Premarital Counseling Handouts for the Engaged Couple | 148 |
| Bibliography | 175 |

GRAPHS

Graphs

1. Number of Sessions Required by Pastors Doing
Premarital Counseling 51
2. A Correlation Between the Age and the Number of
Respondants Doing Three to Four Sessions 53
3. A Correlation Between the Age and the Number of
Respondants Doing One to Two Sessions 54
4. A Correlation Between the Age and the Number of
Respondants Doing Three to Four Sessions 55
5. A Correlation Between the Age and the Number of
Respondants Who Do No Premarital Counseling 56

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

In view of the high percentage of troubled and failing marriages, this project studies the role of the church in preparing couples for marriage. The church's hope in providing premarital preparation or counseling is an attempt by a Christian pastor-counselor to assist an engaged couple in strengthening their potential for a stable and successful marriage. This may include guiding, informing, educating, and instructing the couple regarding various practical, emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects of marriage.

During the past eleven years of the author's ministry an observation was made that most couples entering marriage were little prepared. As a pastor in a small town for six years the author became alarmed at the high rate of weddings performed for couples who were pregnant. Sixty-seven percent of the weddings that the author performed in this small town were of couples expecting a child prior to their wedding day. By the third year in this pastorate he began counseling with a number of couples who were experiencing troubled marriages and discovered how ill prepared they were for marriage. These two influences alerted and compelled the author to search for

ways of assisting couples in developing effective Christian marriages. The one approach that seemed to have a preventative potential was premarital counseling. After examining the program offered by the United Methodist Church the author chose to develop a program that combined some of their material and along with material acquired from courses on premarital and marital counseling.

Being concerned for marriages today led the author to examine materials in the field of premarital preparation. Because many weddings that are performed are for young adults, it is imperative for the church to develop marriage preparation programs for teenagers that are practical and relevant. Also, there is a significant number of teenage marriages. With the increased number of teenagers who have been sexually active at an earlier age than ever before the church must be prepared to address the issue of sexuality and marriage. Pastors who are serious about assisting couples in developing healthy Christian marriages need to participate in seminars on marriage and premarriage counseling. It is because of that concern that the author continues to study new approaches and material in the field of premarital counseling.

With marriages in America suffering from a disposable attitude, marriages are in a floundering state. As the divorce rate continues to be a threat to family stability, many sociologists give marriage little hope of surviving in the future. The problems related to marriage impact the pastor and forces him or her to review the place of premarital preparation of those who form the marriage covenant. This

concern for marital preparation is the focus of this dissertation project.

Definition of Terms

The words premarital preparation and premarital counseling will be used interchangeably in this study. The premise is that premarital counseling is primarily that of preparation and of education. Counseling a couple prior to marriage is primarily a preventive and preparatory function.

Problem and Purpose Statement

The American family, with high divorce rates and problem marriages, faces a crisis. The challenge of this crisis can only be met by the efforts of many different, but concerned, professionals, institutions, and agencies. The active role of the clergy is an important element for the healing of troubled marriages. This study explores one role that pastors play in the marital drama - premarital preparation - which is one response for preventing potential marital stress and assisting couples beginning life together with a better foundation upon which to build their marriages.

The specific uniqueness of this dissertation project is that it identifies what topics and formats are being used by pastors for preparing couples for marriage. This includes determining how much time is given by pastors to premarital preparation and what topics are being discussed. Also, are there programs available for pastors and what can be learned from these programs? Is it possible that pastors

are not active in preparing couples for the inter-relational dimensions of marriage? What kind of training have pastors received in this area? These are some of the questions and issues that this study will address.

The purpose of this study is threefold: 1) to secure empirical information related to premarital counseling questions and issues from a specific group of pastors, 2) to survey the literature for the availability of programs for preparing persons for marriage, and 3) to develop a specific program that can be used in preparing young people for marriage. (Most premarital programs are designed for engaged couples.)

Justification of the Study

To answer the crisis that is facing the American family the church has developed different avenues to address this situation. One has been premarital preparation. Premarital counseling is offered as an attempt to reduce the potential for more marriage and family crises that are occurring in America. The justification of this study is reflected in the need for the church to be involved in premarital preparation as one way of counteracting this marriage and family crisis. The covenant that God established when He created marriage needs to be taken seriously by the church. Therefore, the church, as a messenger of God's principles, is the appropriate organ to provide premarital counseling. Furthermore the opportunity for clergy to teach young adults and adolescents about God's design for marriage is endless. Because couples contemplating marriage continue to come

primarily to pastors for that service, the church must communicate both the truth concerning marriage and family life and an understanding of the marital experience.

The sociological speculations on marriage and the high divorce rate forces the church to be ready to communicate the hope for Christian marriages. With the assistance of a pastor/counselor, a couple can participate in a worthwhile program of premarital preparation. Pastors have an opportunity to present a biblical, Christian perspective often lacking in counseling approaches outside of the church. Premarital preparation has emerged as one answer from both the church and the secular arena. The church must then communicate the hope of marriage from a relevant biblical standard. This study may be used as a resource for the church in the area of premarital counseling. As long as Christian marriages take place, there is value in doing premarital preparation.

There is, also, the need to pull together the relevant material that is available in premarital counseling. This study will attempt to bring together updated approaches and methods of doing premarital counseling, along with relevant materials in the content areas in order to assist those interested in preparing couples for marriage.

Organization of Proposed Study

The organization of this study is four-fold. The study begins by articulating the need for a theology of marriage. An examination of marriage today, from a cultural and theological point of view, will be discussed with the intention of demonstrating the need for a relevant

Christian theology of marriage in today's society. A theology of marriage should be a segment of any premarital preparation program. This segment will present a relevant and biblical theology of marriage for today.

Another section will gather and analyze data related to the trends and history of premarital counseling. Premarital counseling was not a major field of interest for pastors until the 1950's. By analyzing the data from the surveys given to pastors and married church members, pertinent information will be provided concerning history and trends of premarital preparation. Also, an examination of literature will assist the study in learning about the history of premarital preparation.

The third area will identify and examine programs and approaches presently being used in the field of premarital preparation. The major content areas and programs found in premarital preparation will be identified by analyzing the data gathered from surveying pastors and reviewing the literature. The survey and literature review will provide data about what a select group of pastors are doing and what are the major subjects covered in premarital preparation.

Fourth, a contextual project will develop a program of marital preparation for teenagers. Preparation for marriage must begin prior to the time two persons become engaged. In one sense all of a young person's life is preparation for the consideration of marriage. The contextual project will present teenagers with subjects that are pertinent to the development of relationships within the adolescent's life. Pastoral care at this juncture which intentionally aids

teenagers, concerning dating and engagement, is seen as a significant part of the church's total ministry of premarital preparation.

Methodology

Three procedures or methods will be used in this study:

One method will examine articles and books on premarital preparation. The literature concerning premarital counseling will be surveyed to determine the subjects, programs, and methods used by pastors to prepare engaged couples for marriage.

Another method will gather information by analyzing two surveys. One survey will be sent to selected pastors in the Western Pennsylvania area, requesting information about their premarital preparation programs. This survey will be designed to provide information concerning:

1. The length of time the pastor has been doing premarital counseling.
2. The type of programs that are being used by pastors in local churches.
3. The major content areas being covered in premarital counseling.
4. What kind of change has occurred in their ministry to the engaged.
5. The effect of the age of a pastor and what is being done in premarital preparation.

A closer examination of some of the pastors' responses in this survey will be pursued in order to study more closely some of the existing programs being used by pastors. Programs being used by these pastors will be studied by reviewing the materials that they use and,

where possible, attending their programs for engaged couples.

A further survey will gather information from local church members concerning their participation or lack of participation in premarital preparation. This survey will seek to determine from a lay person's perspective what should be done in premarital counseling.

These three methods will be used to develop an understanding of what is occurring in the field of premarital counseling. These procedures will attempt to present some of the most relevant and up-to-date approaches and materials in premarital counseling.

Limitations

This study will not examine the programs and methods of premarital preparation used in the secular field of counseling or in the Roman Catholic Church. Nor will all Protestant programs be discussed in this study. The programs and methods studied will be a selected sample from within the Protestant church.

This study will not identify or define all the subject areas covered in premarital preparation. The areas discussed will be the most commonly used areas discovered through a review of literature and an evaluation of the surveys.

Neither will this study evaluate the effectiveness of premarital preparation programs. Rather, it will identify and define the characteristics of premarital counseling of the programs studied.

Contextual Project

A bilateral approach is needed in premarital preparation, one

associated with the engaged couple and the other helping adolescents prepare for the world of dating, engagement, and marriage. The contextual project will develop a program to be used with teens in the local church. The program will cover pertinent material related to dating, engagement, and marriage. This project will be presented in this study as an approach to premarital preparation.

The program will be tested in the writer's local church among the teens, as well as a presentation given to the teens' parents. This project will be offered to other church youth groups and district youth retreats. The development of this material will come from a review of literature and personal material gathered over the years of working with teens.

Preventive steps are important in curbing the crisis that is occurring in the family. Troubled marriages are not easily cured from within, but there is the possibility that a program that presents the teenage and young adult with directions concerning dating and marriage may assist the family in the long run. This is just one option within the premarital counseling field that can serve to help better our marriages.

Organization of Chapters in the Dissertation

The first chapter will introduce the purpose of the study, its justification, and limitations. It will also describe the methods used in developing this study of premarital preparation. The second chapter will describe the importance of having a theology of marriage and present a theology of mutual allegiance.

The third chapter will describe the procedures and methodologies in obtaining the data for the study. Using the data from the surveys, by reviewing the existing literature, and drawing from the study of selected, existing programs; chapter four will describe the recent history and trends in premarital counseling. Chapter five will review some of the major areas of content and examine selected approaches and programs being used for premarital preparation.

Chapter six will present a bi-lateral approach to premarital preparation. The first will be an outline of the Contextual Project, a program for teens on marriage. The second approach will be a program tailored for the local pastor. Chapter seven, the conclusion, will summarize the study.

CHAPTER TWO

A Theology of Marriage

The alarming statistics which call attention to the high divorce rate brought a great deal of concern for the church. One such statistic states that, "today in the United States, four out of every ten marriages end in divorce."⁽¹⁾ This statistic highlights the concern that many young people who enter or contemplate marriage have little or no training to prepare them for this important step. In fact more training is required for a young person to obtain a driver's license than for a couple to marry. The training that most young people receive is through the example of their parents. When parents model a healthy marriage their children learn from that example. However, the increasing divorce rate and the number of first marriages not succeeding means children have fewer models for observing a healthy marriage. One of the major concerns of the church today is to provide young people the needed training and examples of healthy Christian marriages. This training must be based upon a theology of marriage relevant for the present and applicable for the future. This chapter

1. Richard Dobbins, "Premarital Counseling," Pastoral Psychology Workshop, Series 1, No. 1 cassette, Emerge Ministries, n.d.

examines a rationale for presenting a theology of marriage in a premarital preparation program, a biblical framework for developing a theology of marriage, a cultural view of marriage, a case for equality, and then presents a theology of marriage appropriate for the remainder of the twentieth and the beginning of twenty-first century.

The Importance of A Theology Of Marriage in Premarital Preparation

This section has two thrusts. The first part discusses the need for developing a theology of marriage. The other part examines the justifications for developing a theology of marriage in premarital preparation.

The Need For A Theology of Marriage

There are many articles describing the breakdown of the traditional marriage. Periodicals from Woman's Day to Playboy Magazine are saturated with articles concerning a crisis in today's marriages. With so many "experts" on marriage, predicting the demise of the traditional husband - wife relationship, engaged couples and others anticipating marriage are probably in a state of confusion. There seems to be little general consensus about the concepts of marriage and its values. This can be especially confusing for those related to the church. Pastors who are extremely concerned about the family, no doubt have discovered many couples who are involved in marital unhappiness. Authors of one manual write, "some pastors estimate that from 25 to 40

percent of the persons in their congregation each Sunday are unhappy in their marriage."(2) This may seem high but is very realistic according to most secular counselors. The dilemma for many couples is not necessarily the issue of happiness, but rather recognizing that their marriage could be better and not knowing how to improve on it.

Premarital preparation may be one way to help level off or reduce these escalating figures. No authentic research is available to prove that premarital preparation has a direct effect on assuring better marriages. Though it may help a couple understand some of the problems facing them and prevent some of the problems that occur in marriage.

The high divorce rate in the United States leads many pastors to feel deeply concerned about performing the marriage ritual. Some pastors feel partially responsible for the success or failure of those who come to them for marriage. Pastors are further influenced by many appalling figures about divorce. Smith relates that "in some metropolitan counties, as many divorces are granted as marriage licenses issued in a given year."(3) Divorce statistics are very misleading because the ratio includes people who were married a number of years and those that have been divorced and remarried a number of times. These statistics are compared with those that were married for the first time in a given year. On this basis, there was roughly one

2. Antoninette & Leon Smith, Pastor's Manual for Growing Love in Christian Marriage (Nashville: The United Methodist Pub. House, 1981), p. 12.

3. Smith, p. 12.

divorce for every fifty existing marriages. Smith states that at the present time approximately two-thirds of all married couples live together "until death us do part."⁽⁴⁾ The most accurate and distressing statistic is the one cited at the beginning of this chapter. Studies also suggest that the divorce rate are higher among couples whose parents were divorced. Smith continues with some appalling statistics:

In marriages where the husband and wife came from homes where there had been no divorce, the divorce rate was 14.6 percent. But if the parents of one of the partners had been divorced, the couples divorce rate probability increased to 23.7 percent. If the parents of both partners had been divorced, the divorce rate probability rate climbed to 38 percent.⁽⁵⁾

This does not imply that individuals who come from homes that have experienced a divorce can not have a happy marriage. Spouses need to be aware of the possible strain that their broken home experience may place on their marriage and the effort that must occur to bring about a healthy marriage. Another sobering fact is that approximately one-half of all teenage marriages end in divorce.⁽⁶⁾ With these statistics there is sufficient evidence that there is a tremendous strain on couples desiring to marry, which must be addressed by the church. The church needs to begin addressing this issue by developing a relevant theology of marriage for today.

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- 4. Smith, p. 12.
 - 5. Smith, p. 13.
 - 6. Smith, p. 13.

The increasing number of views concerning marriage make it difficult to find a common ground which constitutes marriage. There are so many different alternatives to the traditional marriage that many young people are uncertain about what constitutes marriage. Demarest writes that "among these alternatives are the socially approved group marriages, open marriages with limited or unlimited sexual disposable marriages, bigamous marriages relationships, homosexual marriages." (7) What began as a reaction to the Victorianistic and Puritanistic view of marriage has created a dilemma in the church. Alternatives to a traditional monogamous marriage are numerous.

Many sociologists do not view the disintegration of the marital institution with alarm or concern. One such view is stated by Lawrence Casher in Is Marriage Necessary? He writes:

Contemporary marriage is a wretched institution. More often than not it turns out to be a personal calamity for the happy couple.... It spells the end of voluntary affection, of love freely given and joyously received. The relationship becomes constricting, corrosive and contractual.... The institution of marriage...has failed.(8)

Some sociologists even believe that if the marriage institution would totally disintegrate it could have a positive consequence on our society. Psychologists and sociologists, who have studied the manifestations of a disintegrating institution have suggested numerous

7. Gary W. Demarest, Christian Alternatives Within Marriages (Waco: Word Inc., 1977), p. 10.

8. Lawrence Casher, Is Marriage Necessary? (New York: Human Science Press, 1974), p. 144.

dramatic and imaginative - if not always practical - alternatives to the traditional marriage.(9) Traditional marriage is when two people of the opposite sex come together under the laws of a given state in holy matrimony. Further, it is recognized by the church as covenant made between this couple and God. As this century progresses towards it's end, couples who had secretly practiced these alternatives are now bringing them to the forefront. Carl Rogers in his book Becoming Partners emphasizes the importance of experimenting with alternatives to marriage and the family as we have known them. He states:

... marriage and the nuclear family constitutes a failing institution, a failing way of life. No one would argue that these have been highly successful. We need laboratories, experiments, attempts to avoid repeating past failures, explorations into new approaches... Unherald and unsung explorations, experiments, new ways of relating, new kinds of partnership are being tried out, people are learning from mistakes and profiting from successes. They are inventing alternatives, new futures, for our most sharply failing institutions, marriage and the nuclear family.(10)

In thinking about alternatives to marriage a question comes to the forefront; alternatives to what? The concept of a traditional marriage comes out of the Judeo-Christian custom that goes back a number of centuries. Any reaction to this traditional marriage must be understood from relieving the reactionists view of a traditional marriage. The reactionists go as far as questioning whether marriage

9. Nera & George O'Neill, Open Marriage A New Lifestyle for Couples (New York: M.Evans & Co. Inc., 1972), p. 17.

10. Rodger W. Libby & Robt. W. Whitehurst, Renovating Marriage Toward New Sexual Life Style (Darville: Consensus Pub. Inc., 1973), p. 8.

is necessary. Another part of the traditional view is the idea that all people should get married. This view makes the male dominant and the female submissive to the husband. Many reactionaries think that all church purists believe that the Bible clearly states one model which should be followed no matter what. This model singles out one word or phrase such as "wives submit to your husbands" (Eph.5:22) and appropriates it as their definitive model for marriage. The reaction to this model has been varied within our culture and the church.

Some of the alternatives to the traditional position are trial marriages, where a man and a woman live together without a marriage license; group marriages, where three or more heterosexuals join together to create a commune type arrangement. Other alternatives are open marriages where mates are able to share comradeship with person's of the opposite sex and homosexual marriages which involve long term commitment by two people of the same sex. Confusion about the meaning of marriage, seen in the increasing divorce rate and the alternatives to a traditional marriage, means that a clear understanding of a theology of marriage is important for today's pastors.

Justification for Developing a Theology of Marriage

The statistics on divorce and the many alternatives to traditional marriage give evidence to the instability of marriages and the family structure of today. What is the answer to this frightening situation and what kind of hope does the church have to offer? Reaction to this new found freedom in society by the church has been varied. The church

has suffered from extremists who either answer the situation with commands and demand that these alternatives are unchristian; stating there is only one biblical theology. To the other extreme are those in the name of relevance handled the biblical teachings too loosely.(11)

Much that has been written about the problems facing marriage has come from the perspective of the "how-to's. In the area of premarital preparation programs can become "how-to" marriage courses. However, to see premarital preparation as only a "how-to" course is to put the cart before the horse. What is needed is an understanding of what marriage is before communicating the "how to's." Frederick Herwaldt in Christianity Today wrote, "Marriage is in trouble today because society and the church has a faulty view of it - a deified myth of this human, delightful, yet flawed institution."(12) There are so many different views of marriage that there is no common ground of what constitutes a marriage. The increasing number of alternatives to the traditional marriage make it confusing to develop a common concept of marriage.

Pastors need to define marriage from a scriptural point of view. They need to present a sound biblical theology of marriage which will speak to where they are in our society. It is essential for a pastor to come to terms with a balanced theology of marriage so that premarital preparation may be done with integrity.

To take seriously God's creation of marriage, requires an

 11. Frederick Herwaldt, Jr. "The Ideal Relationship and Other Myths About Marriages," Christianity Today, 26 (Apr.9,1982), p. 30.

12. Herwaldt, Jr. p. 30.

expression of what God meant by marriage. That can only come through the forming of a theology of marriage. The "how to's" of marriage are important but only really meaningful after having developed a theology of marriage. A theology of marriage will bring relevance and meaning to the methods of improving a marriage. Therefore it is essential to develop a theology of marriage to do an adequate job in premarital preparation. It will be helpful then to take a closer look at the biblical foundation for developing a theology of marriage.

A Biblical Framework For A Theology of Marriage

Premarital preparation is a form of Christian ministry, which Smith contends is "set within a framework of Christian understanding of the nature of God, men and women and specifically, of marriage."(13) Basic beliefs must be realized before forming a theology of marriage. A summary of those beliefs may be helpful.

Faith in God. Fundamental to Christian faith is the belief in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. First there must be a belief that God, the Father, exists and that nothing exists without God including marriage. All of life is dependent on God, including marital life. He initiated marriage and continues to have an invested interest and concern in marriages. Because God is the Creator and Sustainer of life then it is important for us to understand how God views His creation of marriage.

13. Smith, p. 24.

The Christian faith believe in God the Son, Jesus Christ, who came revealing God's nature, God's love, and God's will. He was and is truly God coming as a man in human nature and yet was and is divine. Only through Jesus Christ is life truly found. Living without a personal regeneration is mere existence; for only through God's Son, Jesus Christ is there true "life" (John 14:6). It is through this regeneration that a person enters into the Christian walk. A Christian marriage must then have as its starting point the couples commitment to Jesus Christ.

Through the Holy Spirit, God continues to work in the world whether it be through individuals, marriages and families, or through the church. The Christian is never alone because God is with him/her in the form of the Holy Spirit. Through God's Spirit the Christian is able to retain a life of faithfulness in marriage.

Two other aspects are in order at this juncture. One is that God is the God of all life. Being the God of all life means there is no distinction between the sared and secular when it comes to His concerns about life, including marriage. Nothing is outside God's concern. The other observation is that God is the God of truth. This means the God of truth in disciplines other than theology, like sociology, psychology, and education. The Christian is obligated to try and understand and use all knowledge that is compatibale with their

understanding of the Christian faith.(14)

Faith In the Word of God. "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (II Tim. 3:16-17). The Bible is a starting point for developing a theology. It should be used as the truth and the guide for determining a theology of marriage as well as a guide for faith and action in the world.

Belief in the Church. The Church is the community of believers who should be living under the loving Lordship of Jesus Christ and be functioning corporately as a body that looks like Jesus Christ here in the world. The church is an imperfect community of Christians who are trying to live a new way under direction of the Word of God. The Church should be a supporting arm to those that have joined together in wedlock.

Humanity And Our Life In The World. Antoinette and Leon Smith amply express some Christian beliefs about humanity and our life in this world that have special significance for marriage.

1. Human beings are creatures of God and are worthy enough to be treated with dignity.

2. God created female and male, of equal worth. There is, then, a belief in equality of men and women as the basis for mutuality in marriage.

14. Smith, p. 25.

3. Although, limited and controlled by certain 'givens' in background and circumstances, people are essentially free and responsible creatures.

4. People are whole beings who must be understood in terms of all dimensions of our being - body, mind, and spirit. All are interrelated.

5. In spite of rebellion against God, a person can by the gift of God's grace become "in Christ...a new creation" (II Cor. 5:17; Eph.2:8-10).

6. Human beings have certain physical, emotional and social needs that must be met, but essentially are creatures in search of meaning.

7. Life is not fixed. In spite of past history and present conditions, God works in the lives of individuals and families to restore broken relationships and bring them to wholeness of life.

8. Human beings are dependent creatures who cannot exist apart from God. Our very existence depends on God's providential care.

9. Being social in nature people cannot live in isolation from other people. A person depends on intimate relationships.

10. Christians are under obligation to acknowledge and demonstrate the reign of God in all areas of life in society.

11. Life is not limited to this present world. Because a Christian believes in the triumph of life over death, they ought to live for the ultimate values of the Bible and abide in Christian hope.(15)

Cultural Influence on a Theology of Marriage

Is there such a thing as Christian marriage? Do Christians have a corner on on the truth that make their marriages happier than the world

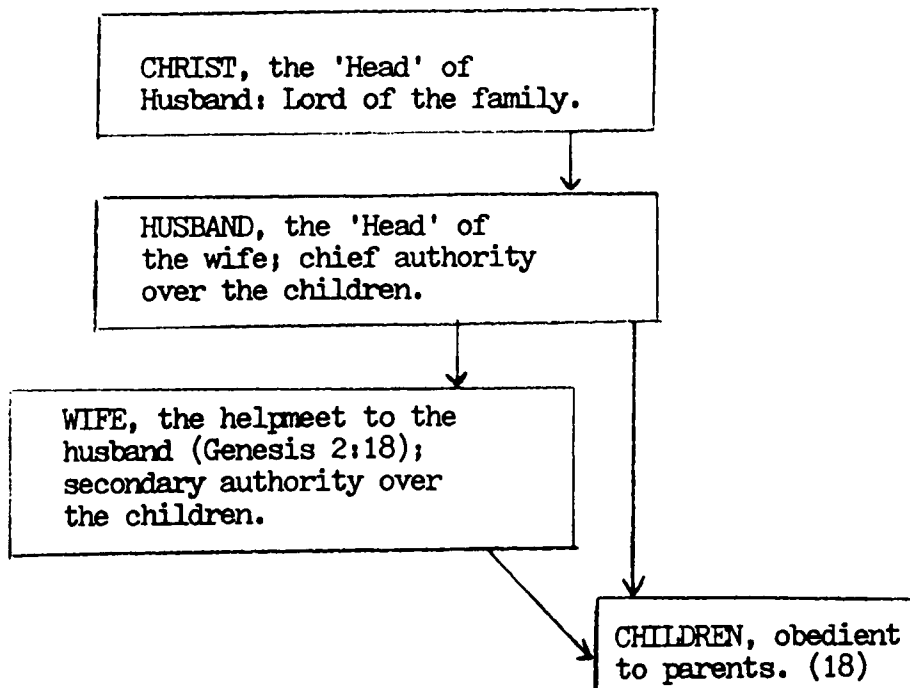
15. Smith, pp. 25-26.

at large? A theology of marriage has been impacted by culture and western civilization. Most people realize that Christian marriage suffer from the same strains and troubles that all marriages do. Margaret Mead assessed the condition of the family and marriages by saying that "we are in an emergency as a war - endangered as we were by World War II."(16) In recent years there has been a proliferation of Christian writing which defines the answer to this marital crisis adopting the concept of the husband's authority over the wife. This may have been done to balance out the opposite extremes that have been presented by a liberal point of view and the Women's Liberation Movement. Is there not a biblical alternative to this traditional view of marriage with the husband as the head and wife as the subject? This culture that has generally accepted the authority of the husband as the norm. This concept has been described as "patriarchal" which goes back many centuries before the Church. What is unfortunate is that many well meaning Christians have accepted this as the only design without doing serious study of the Scriptures to see if the Bible, as a whole, really does teach this ideal. The patriarchal doctrine was practiced among those of early Christianity and for centuries before. In the past, society was male dominated, controlled under man's authority. It is difficult to examine a different point of view than what society has grown accustomed to as a norm. The concept of divine order for

16. Demarest, p. 9.

marriage is rooted in history as much as it is rooted within the Scripture.

Some Christian leaders and pastors promote a male-dominant, female-submissive point of view, that has been influenced by culture and tradition. Larry Christenson presents such a view, for example, in his book, The Christian Family. He writes: "God has ordered the family according to the principle of 'headship.' Each member of the family lives under the authority of the 'head' whom God has appointed."(17) He gives the following diagram as a theology of marriage.



 17. Larry Christenson, The Christian Family (Minneapolis: Bethany House Pub., 1970), p. 17.

18. Christenson, p. 17.

This order presented by Christenson and many others bring with it a doctrinal attitude that any other design is a mutation of God wills. It is only through this divine "hierarchy" that God will work. Yet, the Scripture also presents a theology of equality in marriage.

Theological Aspects of Marriage

Christians do not necessarily need to remain status quo. There are times that the scripture speaks to us today in a different way than it did two thousand years ago. What is needed is a relevant theology of marriage that speaks to today's issues. It would be more helpful to reach back into the New Testament and look for the principles taught which can help the believer deal with the present situation. To force present marriages into old traditional marriage patterns would be like putting new wine in old wineskins. There can be a biblical theology of marriage developed from principles within the scripture that is relevant for today.

Covenant Relationship

Many books and articles on marriage and premarital preparation begin with the concept that marriage is a divine institution because God Himself created it (Gen. 2:22-23). God did officiate at the first wedding ceremony in the Garden of Eden before the Fall. God also directs its continuation throughout the Scripture. Adam and Eve were to be a pattern for man and woman. This is clearly expressed as the will of God by Moses in Gen 2:24 where we read, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they

will become one flesh' (NIV). Jesus reiterated the same decree adding 'therefore what God has joined together, let no man separate' (Mark 10:6-9)

God first established the pattern and He prescribes the ground rules. Marriage is referred to as a covenant with God. A covenant is an agreement between two parties; in the Scripture, it refers to the solemn agreement made between a king and a servant, or between God and a person or group, like Israel. In the Scripture it is normally given by God and directed toward man and woman. There is no doubt as to who initiated and created marriage, in fact God still is involved in this process today.

There is some difficulty in calling marriage an "institution". The word institution carries with it a rather negative connotation for some; many think of an institution as an object and not a relationship. So often the word institution is related to an "established organization; especially one dedicated to public service, as a university," or a home for troubled children or even a mental institution.(19) The word's primary meaning is to "establish, organize or set in operation" which is not negative, but does present a rather impersonal point of reference.

In fact many family sociologists would agree that the word institution is no longer appropriate. Dr. David Mace believes that

19. The American Heritage Dictionary of English Language, 1969 ed., s.v. "institution."

part of the current marriage crisis is the result of a major transition from the institutional to the companionship marriage. He explains that we need a new understanding so there might be a more effective approach to counseling. To explain farther he quotes from the preface of The Family: From Institution to Companionship written by Ernest Burgess and Harvey Loche in 1945:

In the past the important factors unifying the family have been external, formal and authoritarian as the law, the mores, public opinion, tradition, the authority of the family head, rigid discipline, and elaborate ritual. At present, in the new emerging form of companionship family, its unity inheres less and less in community pressure and more and more in such interpersonal relationships as the mutual affection, the sympathetic understanding and the comradeship of its members.(20)

What Mace purposes in this article is that we, the church and clergy, have not responded to the transition from institutional concept of marriage to the relational concept of marriage. What has happened within the structure of our society is a rebellion against the establishment or organization by God or anyone else. The word institution infers authoritarianism and a rigid static concept of marriage. Because of this inference, even though it is not necessarily true, it would be wise to use a different word than institution when referring to God's participation in marriage. It may be best to see marriage as a relationship which God created and is still creating. When a man and woman marry they voluntarily commit themselves to each

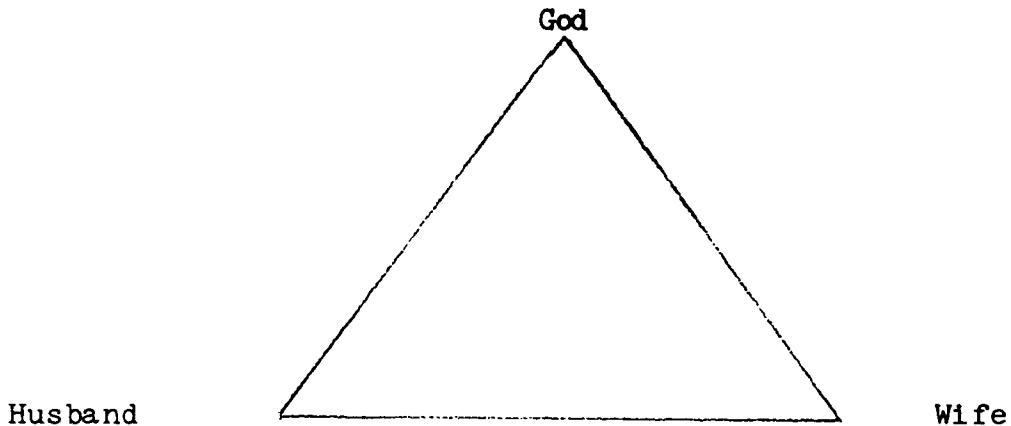
20. David R. Mace, "Marriage in Transition: Implication for Social Policy," Pastoral Psychology, 25 No. 4 (Summer 1977), pp. 237-238.

other. Yet from a Christian standpoint they are entering a relational covenant with one another and with God.

Christian marriage is not just a personal relationship between a man and a woman, nor is it merely a legal contract or social institution. It appears that sometimes all the Church does is place its stamp of approval on a social and cultural expectation. Essentially the Church should understand and communicate that Christian marriage is a covenant relationship between a man and a woman in which the partners live together in love and fidelity. The covenant that is made between the man and the woman is not the only one. A covenant is, also, formed by the couple with God to keep their marriage inviolate. Marriage is more than an institution - rather it is a covenant relationship.

Webster's New World Dictionary defines covenant as a "binding and solemn agreement made by two or more individuals, etc. to do or keep from doing a specific thing."(21) Marriage is a three way binding agreement between God, husband and wife.

21. Webster's New World Dictionary, 1980 ed., s.v. "covenant."



The first part of understanding this covenant originates with God the Creator and the Master Architect. Marriage is something God conceived; it really belongs to Him first. He does not just hand it over to men and women to do with it as they wish. Marriage is the responding to God's call on the basis of a free and equal consent. Smith relates that; "the covenant relationship is based on the personal choice of two people responding to God's will for them."⁽²²⁾ The truth is that marriage just does not belong to us but rather there is a union formed between a couple and God. What has happened in our society is that God has been left out of this marriage covenant and the results have been that our marriages have been abused, set aside, suspended, or reconstructed to suit what the person desires.

Even though the covenant relationship is personal and private between the couple and God, marriage can never be totally private. Much has been written concerning the trouble that the family is in and

22. Smith, p. 30.

how the decaying of the marital bond is effecting our society. Society's welfare is involved in every marriage. Smith relates that "in our culture we recognize that marriage is a social institution having such profound effect on the total social structure that society has a right to regulate it for the common good."(23) In fact the character of Christian marriage is attested to in the beginning of the marriage service when the pastor recites; "Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God and these witnesses, to join together this man and this woman..."(24)

The nature of this covenant relationship is sacred. "The sacredness of marriage is witnessed to by the fact that it instituted in a religious ceremony before the Christian community."(25) A couple promises to make a lifelong commitment to each other in the presence of God. God is not some external attachment added to a wedding ceremony, but is joining the couple in this new adventure. God is not on the outside looking in on the marriage, rather He is on the inside participating within the marriage. God and the couple are now in partnership to see that the covenant is not broken. God will keep His end of the covenant, then it is up to the couple to keep the vows they made at their wedding.

23. Smith, p. 31.

24. The Order for Service of Marriage, The Book of Worship for the Church and Home (Nashville: The United Methodist Pub. House, 1964), p 28.

25. Smith, p. 31.

God's Creation - The Genesis Story

One of God's designs is that man and woman be united in marriage. Genesis 2:18 describes the dilemma that Adam was in; it was a state of aloneness. It was God who said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." God's answer to man's state of aloneness was woman, which He took out of man. His solution was the creation of a different sex, not the same sex, to solve the dilemma of aloneness. It is important to realize that God's design was to create a woman which was "suitable for him." Charles Swindol paints us a picture of what God meant:

She would provide those missing pieces from the puzzle of his life. She would complete him as a qualified, corresponding partner. It is a beautiful picture of a dignified, necessary role filled by one whom God would make and bring alongside the man. In God's original design the plan was to have each partner distinct and unique, needing each other and therefore finding fulfillment with each other.(26)

Man's response was of great joy because God created a companion to share life with him. The creation of man and woman was intended to provide companionship. God prepared the woman to fulfill man's desire for this companionship. Genesis 2:21-22 state this purpose:

So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. The the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and brought her to man.

26. Charles R. Swindol, Stike The Original Match (Portland: Multnomah Press, 1980), p. 19.

God's design includes "four musts" which are foundational guidelines for the marriage relationship taken from Gen. 2:24-25. "For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.(NASV, Gen.2:24-25) Swindol suggest that these verses carry with them "four musts" or direction for marriage, he outlines it this way:

| | |
|--|--------------|
| ... a man shall leave his father and mother | SEVERANCE |
| ...and shall cleave | PERMANENCE |
| ...and they shall become one flesh | UNITY |
| ...they were both naked and were not ashamed | INTIMACY(27) |

First comes severance from parents, then permanence or a bonding together, third an ongoing unity as two people one and finally intimacy. These four ingredients create a Christian marriage. Take one of the ingredients out and the marriage will go flat.

Paul's Theology on Relationships

Marriage, probably, is the most demanding relationship in which a person may enter. It is an opportunity for companionship. This type of companionship demands some common ground and unity. The Apostle Paul gives sound advice for a Christian when he writes:

27. Swindol, p. 31.

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."

"Therefore come out from them
and be separate, says the Lord."(II Cor. 6:14-17)

One of God's designs is that the believer not be yoked together with an unbeliever. As Christians view the possibilities of marriage they must keep in mind God set as one of His principles that a believer should not be yoked with an unbeliever. Living in a world full of unbelievers, Paul gives us a direction that is pertinent in marriage. It is breaking a principle of God to be bound to a person that does not believe. By Paul's standards there should not be any agreement made with the unbelieving world, especially in marriage. A covenant is an agreement, and if marriage is a covenant then marrying an unbeliever will break God's principle for marriage. Single Christians who intend on getting married need to be selective so that the person that they date and who they may eventually marry are believers. Companionship is difficult when one or the other mate does not have the same belief, faith and lifestyle. Therefore one of God's basic design is to be equally yoked.

A Case for Equality

What were the positions in the first marriage. Who was the leader? Or were they equal? Adam and Eve were equals and shared everything including the decision process. The first account of human creation is presented as one event, with the male and female created together in the "image of God."

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

So God created man in his image, in the image of man he created him; male and female he created them.

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground. (Gen. 1:16-28)

In this passage there is no reference to one of the genders being more important than the other. They were co-rulers over the earth. There is no differentiation of power nor is there any divine order or hierarchy made between the man and the woman. God saw all of this and thought that it was all "good."

In Genesis 2 we have another account concerning creation in which some people argue that God intended man to have dominion over women and others argue that this passage gives credence to a matriarchal society. Lets take a closer look at this passage:

And the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being.(Gen. 2:7)

So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beast of the field.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the

place with flesh. Then the Lord God made woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

The man said,

This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called 'woman,'
for she was taken out man."

For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife, and they will become one flesh. (Gen. 2:20-21)

The last part of the passage is the reference for a matriarchal point of view. If the man were dominant then the woman would have left her father and mother but instead the man did the severing. Then the first part of the passage is used to defend the male dominant and the female submissive school of thought. A close examination of the word "helper" or "help meet," may bring a different perspective on this misunderstood word.

In modern English the word helper is someone that is an assistant and lower in status and job description. Patricia Gundry writes a reaction to this in Heirs Together. She writes: "The cumulative impression is that a helpmeet is kind of a glorified gal Friday."(28) The original language does not carry the same meaning as we have purposed over the years. "Ezer, the word translated 'help' or 'helper' occurs repeatedly in the Old Testament. Elsewhere it never refers to a subordinate helper; it is used to identify an equal help or one with

28. Patricia Gundry, Heirs Together (Grand Rapids: The Zondervan Corp., 1980), p. 83.

superior power.(29) In fact the word is often used in describing God.

For example:

I lift up my eyes to the hills-
 where does my help come from?
 My help comes from the Lord,
 the Maker of heaven and earth. (Ps. 121:1-2)

The other word in this passage is the word translated as "meet" in the King James Version to "correspond to" or "fit for."(30) Taking the two words together Eve was an appropriate, corresponding partner for Adam. These words present a more equal position of the woman than many have interpreted over the years. This passage presents a mutual relationship of equals.

Many who believe strongly in the male dominant - female subordinant family will refer to Gen. 3:16, "Your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you," as they argue against the concept of equality in marriage. It is interesting that this verse has been taken more as a must than a prediction of what was in store for the partners following sin. In many ways this is a prediction of what the future holds because of sin. If this is a prediction then there is a possibility for an alternative. That alternative is found in the grace that Christ brought to the world. There is room for grace to change the effect that sin has had on marriage and restore God's original design for marriage. Grace has restored our relationship with

 29. Gundry, p. 83.

30. Gundry. p. 84.

God and therefore men and women can be new creations in God's family. This gives us back what Adam and Eve lost in the Garden, access to God. "God provided a Savior to mend the broken relationship between His human creation and Himself. Now He wants to work through us, His creation, to reverse the bad effects of the Fall."(31) It is about time to work with God on reestablishing His original design for marriage.

Mutual Allegiance

The clearest description of marriage is found in Ephesians 5:21-33. Once stripped of all the years of interpretation this passage can bring a meaningful description of marriage that is relevant for today. It may be that these verses are the most misunderstood verse in the New Testament. The whole idea of the husband dominant and the wife subordinant doctrine is far from what Paul was attempting to convey. Paul was actually calling husbands and wives to equality in an effort to lead Christian marriages out of the pagan and worldly view of marriage where the husband lorded over their mates.

These verses need to be seen as part of the whole letter that Paul sent to the church at Ephesus. In the first three chapters Paul presents the total Gospel, he is emphasizing the redemptive work of Christ. Then in chapters four through six Paul describes the responsibility that comes when a person accepts God's grace. He gives

31. Gundry, p. 86.

details on how to live a life "worthy of our calling in Christ." In Herbert and Fern Miles' book on equality in marriage they write: "From Ephesians 4:1 to 5:20 he gives careful instructions on how the new Ephesian converts should live in Christ." (32) Then verse 21 is a summary on how a believer should live and then it becomes directive for the next section of how a Christian should live at home.

The word submit or subject is a translation of the Greek "hupotasso." Miles writes, "Hupo" means under and "tasso" means to arrange something. (33) This verb, to submit, comes from a military context of a subordinate soldier to a commanding officer. Paul uses this to describe the relationship between Christians. When Paul says to "submit yourself to one another" he is urging believers to "make his or her interests subordinate to those of his or fellow Christians. Batcher and Nida expose that in a number of languages the closest equivalent of submit yourself to one another is to 'be willing to obey one another.' (34) No matter what translation we put on it all Christians should be submissive to each other, whether male or female. The relationship should be parallel and mutual. Paul speaks to the

 32. Herbert J. & Fern H. Miles, Husband Wife Equality (Old Tappan: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1978), p. 31.

33. Miles, p. 31.

34. Robert G. Bratcher & Eugene A Nida, A Translator's Handbook on Paul's Letter To The Ephesians (New York: United Bible Societies, 1982), p.138.

fact that there is no division according to worth. There is no one that is subordinate to any other. In Galatians 3 he writes:

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourself with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.(Gal. 3:26-29)

Paul teaches that all Christian relationships should be reciprocal in nature regardless of sex, class, or race. The husband wife relationship is no different, Paul describes how husbands should be subject to their wives and wives are to be subjected to their husbands. Now this hinges on one important criteria, that the husband and wife are both Christians. There should be mutual allegiance given by each of the spouses in a Christian marriage.

The verses found in Eph. 5:22-6:9 were not meant to be isolated doctrines upon which a theology is to be built but are a part of verse 21. They are examples of how to work out being subject to one another in the home. Miles writes that in "every sentence, every phrase, and every word in these three illustrations must be interpreted in the light of verse 21."(35) In fact it is interesting to discover that the connection between verse 21 and the rest of the section is so strong that verse 22 does not have a verb at all but relies on the verse before for its verb. What Paul was expressing was quite radical in his day simply because it broke with the present custom. The woman was just a mere possession of a man. However, Paul places women equal to

35. Miles, p. 32.

men, but with different functions.

It is important to understand what submission means, especially the meaning of mutual submission. Often the word submission carries with an image of the wife as one who walks five steps behind, is bowing down and doing what ever her husband wants. That would be contrary to what verse 21 is teaching. So what does mutual submission mean? Gundry writes; "Mutual submission is a way of living, an attitude toward others. It is something one does because one wants to not because one has to."(36) The verses following verse 21 speak about how to live a life as a Christian in a very hierachal society. How should a master and slave work out mutual submission for example?

Paul's instructions to wives have been misunderstood in part because those instructions are not understood in the light of verse 21. Verse 22 relies upon the verb in verse 21. Verse 22 is a request for the type of behavior commanded in verse 21. The Greek texts reads: "Submitting yourself to one another in the fear of Christ, wives to your husbands as to the Lord in everything." The participle, 'huiopotassomenoi, is in the middle voice. Used thus, it is not a command to wives to submit, but is a call for a self volitional submission of all believers. The following verse, then, is how to work out this submission in marriage. How does the wife submit to the husband and keep it fitting for the Lord? The answers is that the wife voluntarily decides to be committed to her husband. When there is a

36. Gundry, p. 94.

commitment there is also giving up of ones' self. For the wife that means her husband is more important than she is. She has an allegiance to her husband. It has nothing to do with worth but rather it has to do with an attitude of self-giving.

So often verse 22 is taken as a command which takes away the intent of verse 21. To be submissive is more important than being ordered to be subject. In the days of Paul the wife was already submissive to her husband. This forced action resulted in many hurt feelings. Though wives did not openly disobey their husbands, it is recorded that they did little things to embarrass them. Paul was giving directions to Christian wives to not get involved in this type of behavior but to respect and honor their husbands like they would Christ. Manipulation is not relational and marriage should be a covenant relationship between a man and a woman. Mutual relationships make life worthwhile. If one person domineers over another then there is no relationship. What matters in these two verses is whether the wife and the husband understand that they are both being called to be in submission toward one another. Paul is calling for the wife to live for her husband, putting him first, and the husband is to put his wife first, living for her. In otherwords giving total allegiance to each other.

Then Paul tells us that the husband is head of his wife. What did that mean for men then and what does that mean today? The man was the source of life, the family's provider, and the most honorable member of the family. He had power over his wife, which came from the society

that he lived in. The Greek husbands played up this headship and took advantage of the cultural norm. So how would mutual submission work in the hierarchal system that they lived in? Paul was being quite radical for his day and age. Paul now appealed to the husband to imitate Christ's treatment of the church. Gundry writes, "The husband was to see himself as the savior of the body, as protector and nourisher, and as one who would raise his wife to a level beside him."⁽³⁷⁾ This was a revolutionary statement for Paul to make. He was calling for the husband to love his wife as much as he loved his own body. The godly husband is one that shows limitless love and adoration for his wife. He is more concerned about her than he is about himself to the point that he would die for her. This was a revolutionary teaching because the Greek men did not think of their wives as someone to love. Paul was telling the Christian men that they must not settle for Pagan attitudes when it comes to marriage. Rather, Paul was insisting that the man give his best to his wife. He was to give all that he had. Was that not what Christ had done for the church? The husband is to love his wife as his own body, just as Christ loved and still loves the church enough to give her his best - Himself.

There is nothing in the fifth chapter of Ephesians that would indicate that:

37. Gundry, p. 112.

(1) husbands are dominant and wives are subordinate; (2) that wives should submit to their husbands' decisions; (3) that husbands have the final authority over their wives; or (4) that wives are a secondary authority in the family. The chapter is not discussing human rights or authority, for any individual. It is discussing Christian duties, obligations, and responsibilities, for all individuals within the Christian fellowship.(38)

Summary

Marriages are in competition with alternatives and are suffering from a disposable attitude. Because of these aspects there is a need for the church to speak out concerning marriage. Marriage is not obsolete, but is a viable option to society's trends that question marriage. The church needs to be ready to define marriage for those living at the end of the twentieth century. Pastors need to develop a theology of marriage as they assist couples who are entering into marriage.

There is a need for a reestablishment of God's original design for marriage. God's basic design is simply:

1. Marriage is more than a divine institution, it is also a divine relationship between a man and a woman.

2. Marriage is a three way covenant between the husband (man) and the wife (woman) and God. This covenant has a lasting effect on our society.

3. It is God's basic design that man and woman be united in marriage. God designed that male and female be joined together, not man and man nor woman and woman.

4. There are four "musts" that should occur when a man and woman are joined together in marriage:

- a. Severance from parents
- b. Permanence or commitment
- c. Unity
- d. Intimacy

5. The Christian should be yoked with a Christian in marriage, not a non-Christian.

6. Both man and woman were created in the "image" and the "likeness" of God. Neither are superior but are equal in worth, having a mutual relationship.

A theology of marriage is simply saying that all Christian relationships should be based on a pattern of submission toward one another. There should be an attitude of putting the other person first out of reverence for Christ. This includes both husbands and wives. It calls for equality among all Christians.

A theology of marriage could be centered around mutual allegiance toward one another. It is a persistent effort on the part of two people to create for each other circumstances in which each can become the person that God intended them to become. This can only happen when the needs and desires of the other person comes first. In presenting a theology of marriage to couples who are interested in being married there is a need to present a theology that calls for mutual allegiance.

CHAPTER THREE

Design of the Surveys: Methods and Procedures

Central to this study on premarital counseling is the exploration of the trends in this field. Theory and practice should merge in effective research. This study attempts to weld theory and practice by using historical and descriptive research to determine the relevant and applicable material available in the field of premarital counseling. This chapter describes the instruments and the methods used in gathering the data. The results of these instruments, which illustrate trends in premarital counseling, will be analyzed.

Most states require more training for a hunting or a drivers license than they do for a marriage license. With such a lack of preparation for marriage, there is certainly merit in the hypothesis that marriage problems are partially caused by a lack of preparation. The desire for lasting marriages is a concern of all pastors. Therefore, programs to assist the couple in developing effective marriages are extremely important. This research is built on the desire to develop worthwhile programs for those planning to marry so they might be better equipped for this new adventure.

Design of the Instruments

One major factor that shaped the design of this study was the desire of the writer to determine what relevant materials were available for premarital preparation. Instruments were designed to identify resources currently being used in this field. Through these instruments, some historical trends were discovered and will be analyzed in this chapter.

Three instruments were used in gathering theoretical and practical data for this study. One instrument was developed to survey pastors. A second one was developed to survey lay people. A third instrument surveyed the content areas that were identified by authors of premarital material written over a period of twenty-five years. The purpose of these instruments were: 1) to determine the history of premarital counseling, 2) to discover the most relevant approaches and methods used in premarital preparation and 3) to identify the most prevalent areas discussed in premarital preparation. The instruments were designed to describe resources currently being used in premarital preparation and what has previously occurred in this field.

Description of the Survey Instruments

Pastor's Survey

The participants of this survey were pastors in the Dayton, Pennsylvania Ministerium Association. Included were pastors from the United Methodist Church, Indiana District of Western Pennsylvania Conference, The Church of God - Anderson in Western Pennsylvania, and the Kiskiminetas Presbytery, the United Presbyterian Church of the

U.S.A. Those three churches were represented in the Dayton Ministerium. The population sample in this survey was predominately small town and rural pastors.

The Church of God pastor, Paul Smith, and the United Presbyterian pastor, Malcom Vandervort, wrote cover letters to pastors in their given denominations which accompanied the survey in the mail. The United Methodist District Superintendent of the Indiana District distributed the surveys at a pastors' retreat and requested that the pastors return them before leaving the retreat center. There were 225 surveys distributed to pastors with 96 respondents. Forty-two point six percent (42.6 %) of the surveys were returned providing an excellent base with which to work.

The first instrument surveyed pastors, requesting information about their approaches and the content they used in premarital counseling. A copy of this instrument is found in Appendix A. The first four questions were designed to acquire background information. This information was used to describe the pastors who participated in the study. Questions two and three, which asks the pastors' ages and the number of years in the ministry, were designed to examine possible historical trends among pastors.

Questions six and seven asked whether the pastors required premarital counseling, and if they did, what procedures were being used. The sub-questions provide information concerning the number of sessions, whether the pastor uses a predesigned program and/or denominational aids. The final sub-question determines if the pastor used any inventories or testing tools. There are numerous

opportunities for the pastors to be trained in the use of special tests and inventories designed for premarital preparation. Some of these inventories do not need special training.

Question eight and nine measure aspects related to the historical trends of premarital counseling. The pastors were asked to answer questions about any transitions that have occurred in their use of premarital counseling. These questions determine if there have been changes in the pastors' approaches and content. Question ten asks for the major areas of content that pastors discuss with engaged couples. This part of the survey and the authors list of subjects discussed from the third instrument provide data for computation cited in Chapter Five, Major Content Areas and Approaches of Premarital Preparation.

The next two questions, number 11 and 12 ask the pastor for a personal evaluation of their programs. The final question then provides an opportunity for the pastors to provide any further information that would be pertinent to this study.

Laity's Survey

Another survey instrument was distributed to married couples within the United Methodist Church, the Church of God and the United Presbyterian Churches in Dayton, Pennsylvania. The survey was distributed in the adult church school classes where the laity was asked to fill it out and directed to return it to the teacher of the class. There was an excellent return of 112 respondents out of the 150 surveys that were handed out. Thirty-one laity reported that they had participated in premarital counseling.

The laity survey was designed to compliment the pastoral survey.

The first eight questions requested background information. Questions two through four determine the age of the individuals and the year that they were married. With this information, data concerning historical trends were collected.

Questions nine and ten asked whether the lay person had married in the church, the age of the pastor who performed the wedding ceremony, and whether the lay person attended premarital preparation sessions. Question eleven asked the person to state his/her opinion on whether premarital counseling had been or would be beneficial.

Question twelve asked the people to decide whether they would want their children to participate in a premarital preparation course before they would enter marriage. Many of the people who answered this survey were married before the 1950's and would possibly be parents. For their benefit, question thirteen asked the participants who were married before 1950 and did not participate in premarital counseling, what they thought should be covered in premarital counseling.

Survey Instrument on Literature

The pool of literature compiled was through an exhausted study of the literature available through the libraries of Asbury Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, and Indiana University of Pennsylvania. An examination of the following topics led to the discovery of material for this study: premarital counseling/preparation, marriage counseling, family counseling, premarriage, marriage, sexuality, communications, finances, engagement, theology of marriage, love, New Testament marriage, post-marital counseling and dating.

The procedure used in surveying a literature began with the review of the literature over the past five years. As notes were taken it was evident that a table could be formed of the content areas that authors discussed. A table was formed to collect information concerning the areas that authors addressed in their literature.

Table 3 (Appendix C) is an overview of sixteen authors that have written concerning premarital counseling. This table provides a representative examination of what has occurred in premarital counseling over the past twenty-five years. It is a composite of the major content areas and an overview of the historical development in the field from the 1950's through to the 1980's. Table 3 takes the major topics or subjects discussed in premarital preparation and lists them on the left side of the table. The authors' names which have been abbreviated and the dates that the work was published are listed horizontally at the top. There is a key at the bottom of the table for the author and the title of the material. The percentages given in the right column represent the percent of authors who discussed this particular subject. As the information was gathered a flow chart was kept on the pertinent information that the authors addressed. Table 3 is a synopsis of the material found in a study of the literature.

Compilation of Data

A definition of a fact is that which has existence. Facts are based on data. Data is used as a basis for discussion. Results, then, are things obtained by the investigation of data through logical and scientific reasoning. Human aspects, however, may enter into any

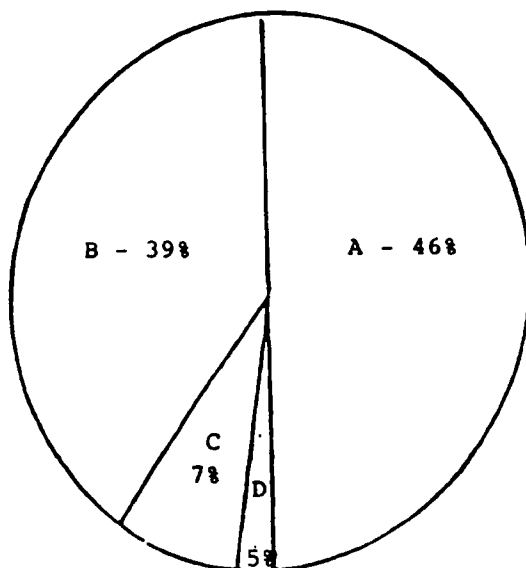
investigation and thus may prejudice the findings. Though biases can be present, there are certain truths that can be ascertained from the results. The data compiled from surveys and the review of the literature will present certain truths and trends that are relevant in a discussion concerning premarital preparation. Some of the results of the surveys are presented in graphs and tables.

Graphs

Graphs one through five are based upon the pastoral surveys and present the reader with information about the pastors in the survey and the number of premarital sessions that they require. There are certain trends that exist within the field of premarital preparation.

GRAPH 1

Number of Sessions Required by Pastors
Doing Premarital Counseling



A - 3 to 4 sessions
B - 1 to 2 sessions
C - 5 to 6 sessions
D - No sessions

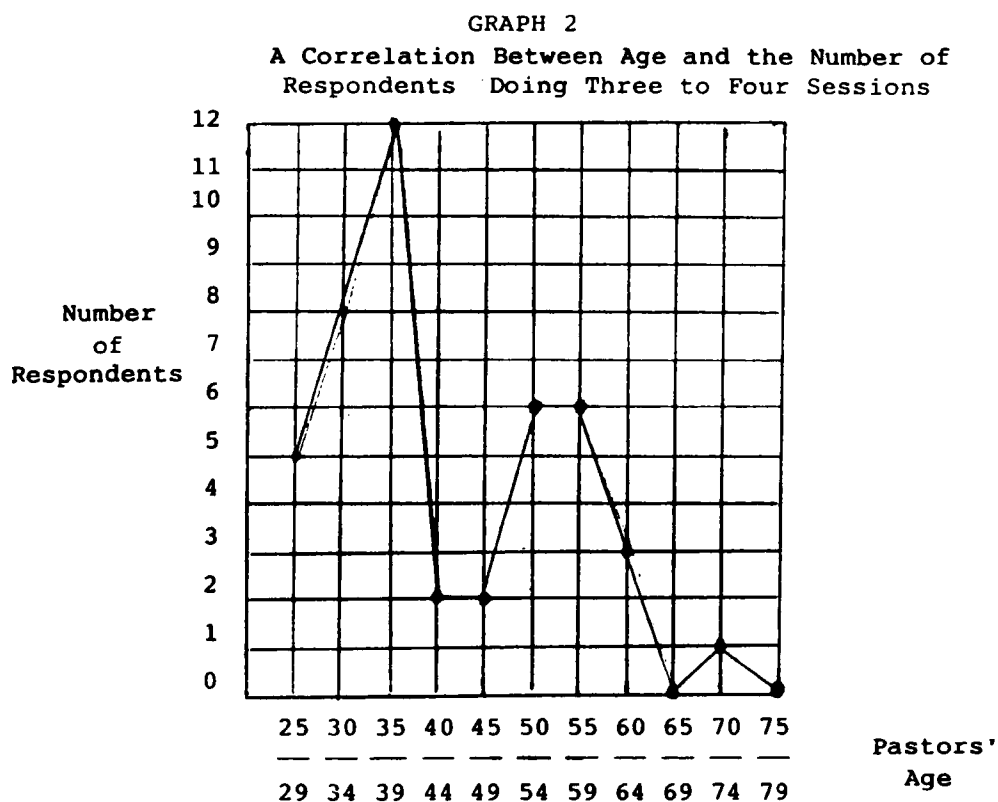
Graph 1 describes the number of sessions that the pastors offer engaged couples. The use of a pie shaped graph provides a visual comparison of the different groupings of session totals. The graph demonstrates that an overwhelming majority of the pastors responding to the survey participated in premarital counseling. There are, also, some statistical variables in this graph. The first variable is that one hundred and twenty-nine pastors did not respond to the survey. There is no way of knowing how they would have responded. Could it be that a majority of the nonrespondants did not do premarital counseling and therefore did not respond to the questionnaire? The other possibility is that the nonrespondants could have escalated the figures of those who did participate in some form of premarital counseling. Since the results showed few pastors did not do premarital counseling, it would appear to point to some prejudice in the findings. The assumption is that of the one hundred and twenty-nine who did not respond, a majority of them do not employ premarital counseling.

The pie graph does reflect some interesting trends. Three to four sessions rank as the most prevalent number of sessions with an engaged couple. The next category was the one to two sessions with the couple. Over eighty-eight percent of the pastors responded that they would invest from at least one session upwards to four. There were four times the amount of pastors who were willing to meet at least five times with a couple before marriage than there were pastors not willing to meet with a couple at all.

Graphs two through five show the trends of the pastors concerning

their age and how much time they are willing to invest in premarital preparation.

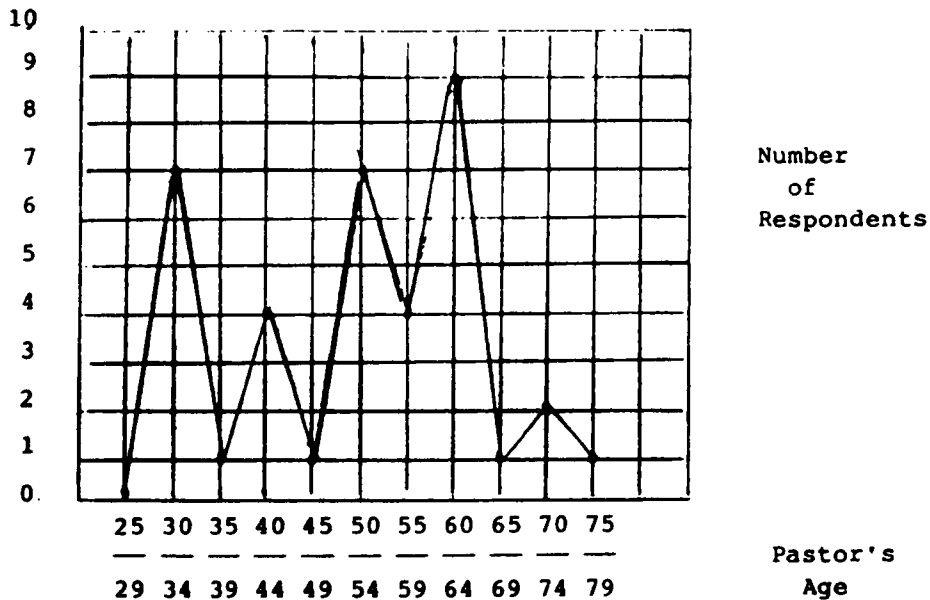
Graph 2 shows that twenty-seven out of the forty five pastors who required three to four session were between twenty-five and forty-four years of age. Another twelve pastors invested three to four sessions with the engaged couple were between fifty and fifty nine. Sixty percent of the respondents were under the age of forty-five. There is some evidence that the younger a pastor is the more time he/she will spend in premarital preparation. It is not an overwhelming statistic because there are many older pastors who are willing to spend that kind of time.



Graph 3 shows those pastors who were willing to spend one to two sessions with the engaged couple. Twenty-four of the thirty-seven pastors (64%) were over the age of fifty. The trend here is that the older pastors are not as willing to spend as many sessions with the engaged couple.

GRAPH 3

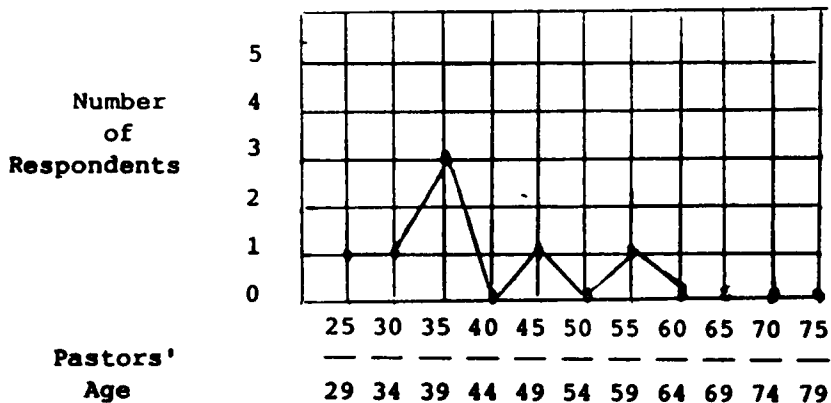
A Correlation Between the Age and the Number of Respondents Doing One to Two Sessions



This same kind of trend carries over into Graph 4 where again the younger pastor is shown to be more willing to invest larger periods of time with the engaged couple. Six of the eight pastors that did five or more sessions were under the age of fifty.

GRAPH 4

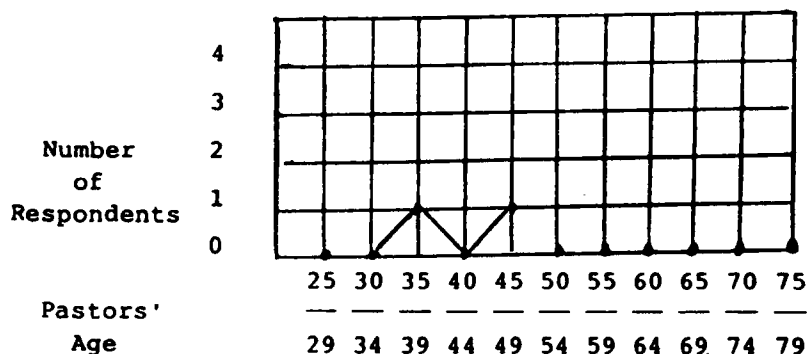
A Correlation Between the Age and the Number of Respondents Doing Five to Six Sessions



Graph 5 does not carry the theory through that the younger pastors are the ones willing to do more intensive work with premarital counseling. Graph 5 demonstrates that those who did nothing with the couple were under the age of fifty. With this graph it would be safe to say that the existing trend found in these graphs is that the younger clergy are more apt to participate in more counseling sessions than their older counterparts. It is significant that only two of the ninety-six respondents reported that they did not do any form of premarital preparation which demonstrates that premarital preparation is attempting to be carried out in the church.

Graph 5

A Correlation Between the Age and the Number of Respondents Who Do No Premarital Counseling



Tables

Table 1 (found in Appendix C) which depicts the topics most covered in premarital counseling compared the amount of sessions requested by the pastor. Table 1 has been designed with the content area on the left that have been used by pastors in premarital counseling. They are compared with the number of sessions that the pastor does with a couple. From this comparison trends emerge.

The most obvious trend that emerges in Table 1 is that when a pastor spends more sessions with a couple, the more in-depth their preparation for marriage becomes. An example of this is in the subject of sex; over eighty-five percent of the pastors, who did five to six sessions, discussed with the couple sex in marriage. The total percentage of pastors covering the area of sex in marriage was only forty percent.

Table 2 (found in Appendix C) does a comparison between the age of the pastor and the subject areas covered. The content areas are on the left and across the top the age of the pastors are divided in five year increments. This is designed so that a person can examine the trends according to the pastor's age.

Age of the pastors did not play a significant part in the areas covered, as initially assumed. Though in some areas the younger pastors embraced some of the subjects that have had recent development

in the field of premarital preparation. Twelve of the fifteen pastors doing some form of psychological testing were under the age of forty-five. Ten of the pastors were under the age of forty. The most commonly used tests recorded were the Taylor-Johnson Temperment Analysis Inventory(1) used by eleven pastors and four other pastors who used the Shepherd Staff's Premarriage Awareness Inventory.(2)

Age is not necessarily a determinant. All pastors, regardless of their age, talked to the couple concerning sex. Most pastors see this as an area that is extremely important to cover. This is also true of the subject area on communications. Most active (those under 65) pastors expressed a need to discuss the area of communications, finances, and sex with the couple. Age did not play an important part other than in the area of inventories and psychological testing.

Over sixty-five percent of the pastors have made changes in their programs over the years. It was the older pastors that have made adaptations in their program rather than the young clergy. Also, the pastors that had more sessions tended to have a more structured program than the ones who had lesser sessions.

Four of the seven respondents who required more than five sessions were under the age of forty. Those that were over forty had recently been trained in the area of premarital counseling and decided to begin

1. The T-JTA material may be ordered through Psychological Publications, Inc., 5300 Hollywood Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90027. You are required to be certified to render this profile.

2. The Premarriage Awareness Inventory may be ordered through Logus Art Productions, Inc., A Shepherd Staff Publication, 3446 Chester Street, St. Paul, MN 55107.

a more intensified program.

Five of the ninety-six respondents did not have any consistent guidelines for doing premarital preparation. Three of the five pastors did premarital counseling only if it was requested of them. One of these three pastors had been retired for ten years and was in his/her mid-seventies. Two pastors were not willing to do any type of premarital counseling. One pastor had been retired for fourteen years and the other was forty-six years old.

A comparison of the top ten categories cited by pastors who are under forty-five and those over forty-five show little difference.

Table of the Top Ten Subjects In Relation to Age

| Pastors Under 45 Years Old | | Pastors Older Than 45 Years Old | |
|----------------------------|--------|---------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Communications | 63.04% | 1. Sex | 38% |
| 2. Sex | 39.13% | 2. Communications | 36% |
| 3. Psy. Test-Inventories | 30.43% | 3. Finances | 36% |
| 4. Spiritual Needs | 30.43% | 4. Spiritual Needs | 36% |
| 5. Finances | 28.86% | 5. Compatibility | 22% |
| 6. Marital Adjustment | 28.86% | 6. In-Laws | 16% |
| 7. In-Laws | 28.86% | 7. Wedding Plans | 14% |
| 8. Theol. of Marriage | 23.91% | 8. Theol. of Marriage | 12% |
| 9. Family Background | 23.91% | 9. Family Background | 12% |
| 10. Wedding Plans | 21.73% | 10. Family Planning | 12% |

The above comparison demonstrates that there are no major differences in the areas covered by the younger and older pastors. The only exception would be in the area of using psychological tests and inventories with the engaged couple. The younger pastors use these inventories more readily than the older pastor. These two tables demonstrate that those pastors who are doing premarital preparation are taking seriously the issue of equipping the couple for marriage.

Laity Survey

The thirty-one laity who responded had participated in premarital counseling. Two thirds stated what the pastor offered was worthwhile, but it was difficult to recall that information after a period of time. Sixteen of the thirty-one had either one or two sessions with the clergy person. The other fifteen varied between three and six. One person reported that they had attended ten sessions. The most often mentioned subject area that was covered or should be covered in premarital counseling was communications. The second most mentioned area was finances, followed by sex in marriage. The choice of these three subject areas are found in the pastoral survey.

Table 3 Content by Authors

Table 3 (Appendix C) summarizes the content for premarital counseling cited by sixteen authors. This summary is relevant to the study of premarital preparation, because it identifies the areas that are most often covered in premarital counseling. The content areas identified in the table are listed on the left with author's abbreviated names and publishing dates of the material across the top of the table. A listing of the top ten subject matters covered in premarital counseling proves be useful in further discussion.

| | |
|-----------------------|--------|
| 1. Sex | 93.75% |
| 2. Finances | 81.25% |
| 3. Compatibility | 75.00% |
| 4. Theol. of Marriage | 56.25% |
| 5. Definition of Love | 56.25% |
| 6. Family Background | 50.00% |
| 7. Family Planning | 43.75% |
| 8. Communication | 43.75% |
| 9. Religion | 37.05% |
| 10. Wedding Plans | 31.25% |
| Marital Adjustment | |

One interesting finding was that the earlier writers tended to cover the same subjects as the later writers. Granted, the later writers have developed some different and maybe better ways of communicating these subjects, but overall, the writers have been very consistent in their coverage of material. Table 3, shows that the subject areas are well covered from the start of premarital counseling.

One example from an early writing, is the material written by the Methodist Church in 1958. The publication of 1958 covers more of the subjects than does the material written in 1970. However, the most recent material written in 1981 by the United Methodist covers more material with more sophistication than the material written by the Church previously. Another is the material written by Aaron Rutlege in 1966. This is an early work in premarital counseling which covered a number of the subjects, including those most often mentioned by pastors. This study found that the earlier writers were as sensitive to the needs of the engaged couples as are the present day writers.

Summary

The study was designed for the purpose of accumulating an understanding of the material and the trends in the field of premarital

preparation. The surveys that were given to both clergy and laity provided information about the trends and the material being used in premarital preparation. The review of literature given in Table 3 also presents the subject areas that are most often used in premarital counseling.

The surveys show that some pastors were willing to spend as many as six sessions with couples who are preparing for marriage. The majority of pastors spend three to four sessions with these couples. Another trend that was discovered is that it is the younger pastors who are more apt to spend greater amounts of time with the couple. As a pastor spends more time with a couple the more in-depth they go in preparing the couple for marriage.

A positive trend is that many pastors are getting additional training in premarital counseling. Because of additional training many pastors have changed their programs in premarital preparation. The areas covered by pastors and authors are virtually the same. The most apparent trend is that premarital counseling has become well developed and well thought out by the pastors.

CHAPTER FOUR

History and Trends in Premarital Preparation

... WHEREAS the church now provides no official marriage manual comparable to the official membership manuals to be used by couples conferring with their pastor in preparation for marriage,

AND WHEREAS such an official marriage manual for use by couples contemplating marriage would strengthen and support the pastor's effort to provide better preparation for marriage,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that such an official manual be prepared under the direction of the Division of the Local Church and the Editorial Division of the Board of Education.(1)

The initial offer of premarital counseling as a significant service came from the medical community. The first article actually written with reference to premarital counseling was published in the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology in 1928. From that time until the late forties - early fifties the primary literature concerning premarital preparation originated from the medical field. By examining dates of books and articles, there can be a documentation of the historical development of premarital counseling (Mace, 1948;

1. The Pastor's Manual for Premarital Counseling (Nashville: The Methodist Pub. House, 1958) p. 3.

Stone 1959; Mudd, 1955,1957; Meschan 1964; Rolfe, 1977; Rutledge 1968b).(2) The Methodists produced their first manual for pastors in 1958 following a directive from the 1956 General Conference, which included the opening quotes of this chapter. This does not mean that pastors and the church were void of concern for marriage.

The church from its very beginning took an active role in marriage. Initially, the early church saw celibacy as the ideal as they waited for the Lord to return. However, as time progressed the church became more concerned with the nature of marriage and its relations to Christ and His teachings. The early Christians viewed marriage as a private, non-institutionalized arrangement normally prepared by the couples' parents without the need of clergy or civil authorities. The state and church was officially involved in the marriage of a couple by 398 A.D., when the Synod of Carthage assumed the use of a priestly benediction in the ceremony. Still, most marriages were arranged by the parents, but several of the early church fathers, such as Polycarp and Ignatius, urged that permission also be granted by the bishop. By the Middle Ages, the policy of requiring a couple to have permission to marry from parents, clergy and overlords was clearly established. Marriage was considered a sacrament by 1164, and thus the clergy began teaching young people about the rite prior to receiving it. The pre-wedding sessions emphasized the nature and meaning of the rite, the Christian nature of marriage, the place

2. Walter R. Schumm & Wallace Denton, "Trends in Premarital Counseling," Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 5 No. 4 (Oct. 1979), 23-32.

of religion in the home, and the rehearsal of the wedding rite or ceremony.(3)

As the field of pastoral care and counseling began to develop in the 1940 and 1950's, so did the concept of premarital counseling. Premarital counseling moved away from the simple rehearsing of the wedding and describing the nature of marriage. One of the surveys revealed that some of the older pastors used service manuals as a springboard for doing premarital preparation/counseling. The service manuals examined for this study dealt with the mechanics of the wedding. A majority of the retired pastors, who were over sixty, stated they did talk with the couple about marital adjustment though none of them had any set course that they used with a couple. As the field of pastoral care became more sophisticated, the approaches to premarital preparation also became more developed. The role or response of the pastor moved from being an informer about marriage to an examiner of emotional readiness and maturity of the couple, and finally to a reactionary to troubled marriages and the high divorce rates.

The history of premarital preparation is as old as the history of the Bible, yet in some ways, it is still in the infant stage. Supported by the recent pastoral care and counseling emphasis, premarital preparation has developed rapidly in a very short time.

3. Rick Terry, "Premarital Counseling: A Proposed Plan," Term Paper. Akron, Ohio. p. 4.

Premarital counseling in its earliest stages merely presented a description of marriage. Today programs have been developed to assist newlyweds in keeping their marriage vows inviolate.

The Purpose of Premarital Preparation

Pastors see premarital preparation as an opportunity to present insights and understandings of marriage to the couple before they enter marriage. The expectation of couples are not always the same as those of the pastors. Some couples are only interested in obtaining the use of the sanctuary, along with making arrangements with the pastor for the wedding. When couples contact the pastor, they often find that they must agree to meet with the pastor if they are to use the church for the wedding service. A twofold purpose of premarital preparation is: 1) to offer, to the couple the total resources of the church at a time when they stand at the largest crossroads of their lives and 2) to make the church available to them in the future. The sub-purposes include: helping a couple assess their readiness to marry, assisting them in identifying areas of possible stress in marriage and how to conquer them, providing sexual guidance, presenting a theology of marriage, and discussing wedding etiquette. Premarital preparation needs to be seen as part of the total pastoral care program of the church. The pastor has both the obligation and the resources to assist the couple in forming a Christian marriage.(4) The church can extend

4. Kenneth R. Mitchell, "Reinterpreting the Purpose of Premarital Counseling," Pastoral Psychology, 18, No. 177 (Oct. 1967), 18-24.

all these resources to a couple as they go through this period and continue to serve them beyond that day. The church can be there to assist a couple during those critical periods of life where careful and sharp judgement have to be made. At this time there may be unpleasant and difficult situations, such as differences of opinions about the wedding itself prior to the wedding ceremony, to which a pastor may be able to give wise counsel.

A current purpose for developing a suitable premarital preparation program has come as a reaction to troubled marriages. Pastors develop the emphasis of their programs to meet the issues that couples face in marriage. One commonly mentioned cause of marital disharmony is faulty communication. Over 53 percent of the pastors interviewed (Table 2 - Premarital Preparation Content in Relationship to the Number of Sessions, Appendix C) dealt with communications in their premarital preparation programs. This suggests that pastors view communications as the central issue in problem marriages. The emphasis in premarital preparation, also, follows closely to what is being dealt with in marital counseling. The issues that are being addressed in marriage counseling become the topics discussed in premarital counseling. Gary Collins suggests the following causes for marital problems:

1. Faulty Communication
2. Defensive Self-centered Attitude
3. Interpersonal Tension
 - a. Sex
 - b. Roles
 - c. Religion
 - d. Values
 - e. Needs
 - f. Money

4. External Pressure
 - In-laws
 - Children
 - Friends
 - Crisis
 - Vocational Demands
5. Boredom (5)

A comparison of the written material on premarital counseling with what the pastors' stated they covered in premarital preparation, shows that premarital counseling and marriage counseling are working together. Most of the areas identified by Collins are, also, included by other authors writing about premarital counseling and by the surveyed pastors as content covered in premarital counseling. Notice that the pastors and authors of premarital preparation both are responsive to the needs of the married couples.

The Pastors' Top Ten

| | |
|------------------------|--------|
| 1. Communications | 53.33% |
| 2. Finances | 47.78% |
| 3. Sex | 40.00% |
| 4. Marital Adjustment | 35.56% |
| 5. Spiritual Needs | 34.44% |
| 6. Compatibility | 21.11% |
| 7. In-laws | 18.89% |
| 8. Psych. Testing | 16.67% |
| 9. Family Planning | 15.56% |
| 10. Theol. of Marriage | 14.44% |

The Authors' Top Ten

| | |
|-----------------------|--------|
| 1. Sex | 93.75% |
| 2. Finances | 81.25% |
| 3. Compatibility | 75.00% |
| 4. Theol. of Marriage | 56.25% |
| 5. Definition of Love | 56.25% |
| 6. Family Background | 50.00% |
| 7. Family Planning | 43.75% |
| 8. Communication | 43.75% |
| 9. Religion | 37.50% |
| 10. Wedding Plans | 31.25% |
| Marital Adjustment | |

The topics cited by the pastors cover the majority of the areas that are causing marital problems. As pastors and authors discover the

5. Gary R. Collins, Ph.D. Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide (Waco: Word Inc., 1980) p. 171-174.

trouble spots in marriage, they apparently develop programs to meet those areas of concern in order to assist engaged couples to be better prepared for marriage. Ninety percent of the top ten subject areas in premarital preparation are also included in Collin's list of marital trouble spots. Premarital preparation has responded to the crisis facing families today by developing programs that speak to the troubled areas in marriage. Pastors are aware of the reasons for strained marriages and are trying to develop ways of answering these conflicts. Premarital preparation is one way pastors are trying to reduce marital discord.

Trends in Approaches and Programs

There are several trends noted in the review of literature and the surveys that can be found in the history of premarital preparation that are relevant to our study. One trend is that premarital preparation is being taken very seriously, evidenced by a great majority of pastors who offer some form of premarital counseling. Out of the ninety-three pastors who responded to the survey (Graph 1, Chapt. 3) only two clergy said they absolutely do not do premarital counseling. Three others only did premarital preparation when requested. Therefore, only 5 pastors of the ninety-three did not have a premarital program that was either required or strongly requested. Only one of those pastors thought it was not worth doing a premarital preparation program. Of the pastors interviewed, ninety-three percent required some form of premarital preparation. The first trend, therefore, is that a majority

of clergy offer programs for the engaged couple.

Another recent trend is the use of inventories. Pastors responding to the survey reported by using different psychological tests and inventories. They included the Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis Inventory, Pre-Marriage Awareness Inventory (Shepherd Staff Publication), and the Marriage Counseling Kit. A little over 17 percent of the clergy who responded to the survey (Table 1, Appendix C) used inventories or psychological tests that assist the couple in evaluating their readiness for marriage. In the written literature this trend is also noticed. Three books refer to inventories or psychological tests. Two of these books were written in the late seventies. The trend is that as pastors become more familiar with the use of inventories and psychological tests, the use will increase. The survey also revealed that among the group of fifteen pastors who used inventories only three were over the age of forty-five. It may be that the younger pastors are more aware of inventories and psychological tests and possibly are more likely to be trained in their use. However it may be that inventories and psychological tests have just recently been made available to the clergy. As approaches change and new ideas arise, the pastor, like an auto mechanic, needs to familiarize him/herself with the new trends and then apply what might be useful.

Another trend that may have a great impact on premarital preparation is the addition of post-marital counseling. The term post-wedding counseling may be a better term for this approach. The meeting or meetings that occur with the married couple normally are

scheduled during the first six months after the wedding. This can be a time for measuring the value of the sessions that were held before the wedding. Others see this as a time for serious growth and learning about marriage. Most of the post-wedding approaches are part of the premarital programs. They are like a warranty check-up or scheduled as follow-up sessions. The movement to post-wedding sessions is not new to premarital counseling. Schumm and Denton write that Westberg (1958) and Dicks (1963) were among the first to consider post-wedding counseling to be a routine and productive follow-up to premarital counseling.(6) This is an ideal time to catch the couple at a very teachable moment. It is quite possible that premarital counseling will eventually include the post wedding or warranty check-ups. In the present literature not much is written about the use of post-wedding approaches. An outline of this approach will be offered in Chapter Five.

The next trend has to do with the approaches that are being used in premarital counseling. An examination of these approaches show developments that have occurred in premarital counseling. What are the approaches that are being used?

Until recently only three approaches to premarital preparation have been utilized (Mudd, 1957; Mash, 1970). The first approach, generalize education preparation, is exemplified by family life education in high schools and colleges, as well as home economic extensions programs... A second approach, identified as therapeutic counseling is designed to meet the needs of couples presenting specific and often distressing problems... The third approach,

6. Schumm & Denton, p. 25.

instructional counseling has been traditionally the province of the pastor, rabbi, and physician. This form of premarital counseling typically has a goal of preparing couple to adjust realistically their expectations of marriage by providing them with information and exposure to a variety of frequently occurring marital problems.(7)

The third approach, instructional counseling, has tended to center in on marital and sexual adjustment, family relationships, religious concerns and wedding plans. Usually couples are counseled privately, though group approaches are being developed by churches and pastors. The group approaches are more formal in format and style than the other programs for individual couples.

In the last few years there have been a number of systematic studies investigating the various approaches to premarital counseling. The first clear picture that we receive from these studies is that the lecture style method, whether from an individual perspective or group encounter for the couple, is unattractive. Being lectured on marriage is dissappointing to those who attend. A study by R.H. Norem and associates in 1980 found that lectures never changed any of the couples' attitudes and had a noticeable negative outcome. The lecture form discouraged couples from considering future marriage enrichment programs and also decreased the couples' willingness to go for marriage counseling at a later time.(8) Therefore, the trend is a movement

7. Schumm & Denton, p. 23.

8. David H. Olson, "How Effective Is Marriage Preparation?" Prevention In Family Services (Beverly Hills: Sage Pub.) p. 69.

away from the lecture type format to an inventory and discussion style. Premarital inventories such as PREPARE or Premarriage Awareness Inventory have been more effective than the traditional sessions with a clergy person or a lecture series.

A study by H. Norman Wright (1981) outlines eight intensive premarital sessions with couples. After surveying 1,000 married couples, he found that those who had at least six premarital sessions felt they had benefitted from the experience. Conversely, those who had few sessions did not find the experience as beneficial.(9) These studies suggest that the large lecture type program is not necessarily beneficial to the couple. Inventories tend to be more effective and assist the couple in making changes that are necessary to have a wholesome marriage. These studies indicate that couples who attend programs that utilize inventories and tests are more beneficial.

Another option to the lecture approach is the enrichment format. Couples are helped to discuss various topics related to marriage and the couples relationship. Schumm and Denton conclude "that equipping couples to deal with their own concerns is more useful to them in the long run than merely conveying information and advice."(10) This type of enrichment program attempts to enhance the couple's commitment to one another, communication, and skills in conflict management. An outline of this approach will be examined in Chapter Five.

9. Olson, p. 71.

10. Schumm & Denton, p. 25.

The trends are quite evident. The predominant one is the serious attention pastors are giving to premarital preparation, evidenced by the many approaches that have been developed and initiated over the past thirty years. The "enrichment" and or "encounter" model is now being adopted as a way of doing premarital preparation. Also, there is a movement toward including a post-wedding session as part of the premarital program. There are even some pastors who are doing the sessions following the wedding rather than before the wedding claiming they are more effective then. The trends in premarital counseling have aided the pastor in becoming better at enhancing the couple's chances for a better marriage.

Analysis of Survey

The analysis of the surveys given to the clergy and the laity reveal patterns and trends that are occurring in the field of premarital preparation. Surveys were distributed to selected clergy and laity of three denominations, the United Methodist Church in the Indiana District of Western Pennsylvania Conference, The Church of God - Anderson in Western Pennsylvania, Kiskiminetas Presbytery of the United Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A. These three denominations were represented in the Dayton Ministerium where this author was a member. This section will first analyze the survey which was given to the clergy. Second, it will examine the survey given to the laity found in Dayton, Pennsylvania.

Sessions Required by a Pastor

A majority of the pastors interviewed required or requested that a couple meet with them for three to four times (Tables 1, Appendix C). Over half of the 47 pastors who required a minimum of three sessions were under the age of forty-five. Even though Wright found that eight sessions with an engaged couple was very beneficial, the majority of pastors surveyed did only three to four sessions. The reason most pastors/clergy spend only three to four sessions with a couple is time, both for themselves and the couple. If a pastor has ten weddings a year, then the pastor participates in 30 to 40 sessions a year which can last an hour to two hours each. With their other duties some clergy may feel that three to four sessions is the best management of time.

The second largest number of sessions offered by pastors was one to two sessions with the engaged couple. Forty percent of the clergy responding to the survey reported that they requested the engaged couple to meet with them once or twice before the wedding. An interesting pattern is evident. Older pastors are more likely to require the one to two sessions. Pastors over forty-five outnumbered the younger pastors in this category almost two to one. What could be reflected in this difference is older pastors have not had the advanced

training that their younger counterparts have had. The younger pastors often have had more opportunities to be trained in premarital preparation.

As a whole, these clergy were concerned about time management. A number of respondents were concerned about the receptivity of the engaged couple who were required to attend a number of sessions. The majority of these pastors seemed to have allowed the engaged couple to dictate the number of sessions. Most of these pastors, then, felt it was not beneficial to keep a couple coming to sessions they did not want to come to in the first place.

Only 7.5 percent, of the pastors (7 total) asked a couple to invest their time in at least five sessions. Why are there so few pastors willing to invest their time in this type of program? First, the engaged couple may resist having to attend these many sessions. Second, pastors who have no formal directive concerning the number of sessions from the church, find it hard to require a couple to attend five or six sessions. Without the backing of the church it is difficult to demand such requirements. Therefore, if a pastor can get a couple to attend a fewer amount of sessions, they may compromise. Many younger couples see five or six sessions as constrictive and restraining. The older pastors find time to be an issue. Another reason is that a couple may give the church and pastor very little time before requesting the pastor to marry them. Many pastors related in interviews that many couples give rather short notices to both the church and the pastor. For a pastor to require this many sessions

necessitates a great deal of preparation and planning on the part of the pastor. To plan that type of strategy may in itself be a deterrent. It may be that pastors really do not want to invest the time in preparing a program and then implementing a program of this caliber.

Four of the seven respondents, who requested more than five sessions, were under the age of forty. This reflects a younger group of pastors who are willing to invest this type of time with the engaged couple. The other three pastors who were older had only begun a more intensified program after receiving training to update them on new methods. One pastor had been in the ministry twenty-seven years and only began doing premarital preparation seven years ago after receiving training in the field. It would appear those who are willing to invest greater amounts of time with an engaged couple are either younger or have been willing to receive new training in the field. This direction among clergy has to do with the availability of receiving help in developing programs and also the availability of training in this field.

Pastoral Changes in Their Premarital Programs

Trends emerge by examining the changes that have been made by clergy in their programs for the engaged couple. In examining the changes that have been made there is a trend for most clergy to readapt their programs as they experience it in their ministry. The younger the pastor, the less change in their premarital program. The more time a pastor spent in ministry the more adaptation was likely to be made by

that pastor.

The reason for less change in the younger pastors' programs may be the result of the additional training that seminaries are now providing their graduates. Another reason for little change is that younger pastors have had only a short time to use their program material and have not spent much time analyzing it. As pastors use and reuse their programs, they may reshape them and change methods to better facilitate their intended desires. This is evident with pastors who were in their thirties. Sixteen of the twenty in this age group, who did three to four sessions, had made changes in their programs. Most cited that new material and new programs were adapted into their own existing programs over the course of their ministry.

This trend to change as a pastor gains more time in the ministry is again evident with the group over forty years old. Fifteen of these twenty pastors had changed their program over the course of their ministry. Most cited that new materials like the Shepherd Staff Program, Taylor-Johnson Temperment Analysis Profile and Gary Collins' work on premarital counseling were behind the changes. Seven clergy stated that new material had changed their premarital programs. Two of them had just recently begun premarital preparation after participating in a training event in the area. A fifty-four year old pastor began doing premarital counseling when he was forty-two; only after receiving training in the use of the Taylor-Johnson Temperment Analysis Profile (which will be reviewed in Chapter Five). The other five pastors averaged over twenty-five years in the pastorate and could not remember

changing their programs. These pastors have either found what they do is very fruitful and see no need to change or they have become set in their programs and find it difficult to make any change.

Older pastors may have streamlined their programs in order to meet their busy schedules. When these older pastors entered the ministry there were less problems in marriage than there are today (may be the same percentage of problem but more divorces). Since the divorce rate has risen consistently over the years there is a new importance placed on premarital preparation. There seems to be an enthusiasm among younger clergy that wane as they get older, and it could be that these older pastors have tempered their zeal a little bit.

Only thirteen of the thirty-eight pastors who offered one to two sessions to the engaged couple had not changed their material or methods of doing premarital preparation. A little over sixty-five percent of the clergy interviewed had changed their program. Most of the changes reflect less paper work, less lectures, less sessions, and less inventories. Most of these sixty-five percent were interested in more discussion and less directives. Some of the pastors did mention adapting some of the new programs, but as a whole it was a less structured approach than the ones doing three to four sessions. It could be speculated that the change occurred in the area of time and formality. Of the thirteen that made no change in their program, their average age was 55.9 years old. It may be that some of the older pastors have not been open to readapting or have found an approach that is useful.

Standards in Programs

Five of the ninety-three respondents said they had no set standard for premarital counseling. Three of the five did use premarital counseling if requested. Of those three, one person was in his mid-seventies and only did counseling when requested, but was unwilling to make it a requirement while in the active pastorate. This particular pastor spent most of his time when he had a request for premarital counseling dealing with the spiritual side of marriage. Two other pastors who were thirty-five years old did premarital counseling only when it was requested by the couple. One of these pastors felt that he was not equipped to do premarital counseling. The other one saw him/herself as a facilitator to help couples assess their readiness for marriage and recognized the usefulness of structured approaches, but did not have a requirement for couples.

The other two pastors, of the five that had no set standards, bluntly stated that they did not do premarital counseling. One pastor had been retired for fourteen years, and that may well be the reason for his/her response. However, the other pastor was forty-six and had been in the ministry for twenty years and viewed premarital counseling as a waste of time. In answering question eleven on the survey, "Cite one or two important values that you see in your program," this pastor responded that the value of not having a program is "it does not waste the time of people whose minds are quite set before they come to me." This person goes on to say that in his/her honest opinion "doing nothing is as valuable as any premarital counseling done by a clergy

person without special training in this area." It would appear that doing nothing or very little in the area of premarital counseling is the minority approach. It may be that these clergy do not see the need to be involved in premarital counseling and/or they see it as having no effect on the couple.

A Survey of Laity from Dayton, PA

In 1978 an extensive marriage and family survey was conducted among Christians. Over eight thousand took part in this survey. Of the 109 questions, several were focused upon premarital preparation. H. Norman Wright gives us some of these statistics.

Prior to your own marriage did you receive premarital counseling from the church or pastor where you were married. Three thousand forty-eight stated yes and 4,921 said no. An additional 571 said they received professional counseling from a professional counselor. A total of 45 percent of those participating in the survey recieved some preparation.

The number of sessions couples received varried greatly:

| Number of Sessions | Percent That Attended |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | 45 |
| 2 | 18 |
| 3 | 14 |
| 4 | 7.5 |
| 5 | 4 |
| 6 | 4 |
| 7+ | 4 |

A very significant question was, "If you did receive premarital counseling, do you feel it helped you in your marriage?"

| | |
|------------------|------------------|
| Definitely yes - | 29.3 percent |
| Possibly yes - | 45.5 percent |
| Possibly no | 13.2 percent |
| Definitely no - | 11.2 percent(11) |

10. H. Norman Wright, Premarital Counseling (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981) p. 43.

In the laity survey of the Dayton, Pennsylvania area churches only 28.5 percent of the 112 married adults that responded had participated in premarital counseling, with the average number of sessions attended by a couple being three. This Dayton survey figure is much lower than the survey that Wright mentions, probably because many of the respondents were older. Out of those who had premarital counseling in the Dayton survey only two were married before 1970. It appeared that the younger couples were the ones who had participated in premarital counseling. These statistics strongly suggests that premarital programs did not catch hold until the seventies.

Wright continues with this information:

Only 15 percent of those participating in one session stated that it definitely helped their marriage, and 31 percent of those who received two sessions of counseling said it definitely helped. It was significant that of those who received five sessions, 53 percent said that counseling definitely helped their marriage and those who received seven or more sessions, 75 percent stated that premarital counseling definitely helped their marriage.(12)

Summary

An overall analysis of trends that can be gleaned from these surveys could be summarized this way:

1. Olson estimates that seventy percent of the couples getting married will have some form of premarital counseling.(13) Taken into

12. Wright, p. 41

13. Olson, p. 69.

consideration the survey results presented in this document then it can be safely said that a great majority of the pastors in America today are involved in some form of premarital counseling. The trend is toward programs to help prepare couples for marriage. It appears that pastors are taking seriously this endeavor to assist the couple in preparing for marriage.

2. The age of the pastor does not necessarily influence the amount of premarital preparation provided. Many of the older pastors who did not have training in seminary have since acquired training and take seriously the opportunity to assist a couple in making a Christian marriage.

3. The pastoral survey demonstrates, as do some of the authors, that clergy are now using prepared inventories to help a couple learn more about each other. There are more opportunities and programs available so that a pastor may be better equipped to do premarital preparation.

4. According to Wright the majority of the laity felt that a premarital program for the engaged couple was profitable. In the Dayton survey this finding would be true for couples marrying after 1970. The Dayton survey of laity found that a large majority of couples that were married before 1970 did not receive premarital counseling.

5. New programs and approaches are being adapted and reformed by the pastor to fit his/her style of ministry and the church, he/she serves.

CHAPTER FIVE

Major Content Areas and Approaches of Premarital Preparation

Major Content Areas in Premarital Preparation

Authors and pastors list similar areas of content covered in premarital preparation programs. Seven of the top ten areas identified in the survey of pastors are the same topics covered in the premarital preparation literature. The statistics below reflects the similarity between programs used by pastors and what has been written by authors.

A Combined List of the Top Areas Covered in Premarital Counseling by Authors and Pastors

| | |
|---|-----|
| 1. Sex | 66% |
| 2. Finances | 64% |
| 3. Communications | 48% |
| 4. Compatibility | 48% |
| 5. Theology of Marriage Definition of Love | 35% |
| 6. Marital Adjustment | 33% |
| 7. Family Planning | 29% |

Other areas also mentioned include: religion and spiritual needs, family backgrounds and in-laws, wedding plans, and psychological tests or inventories.

As mentioned earlier, the surveyed pastors seem to be a little more relevant than the authors in the areas that are covered in premarital preparation. The pastors are in the trenches working with troubled marriages on a daily basis and are therefore addressing current areas of marital concern in premarital preparation. Pastors

and authors are developing programs for engaged couples. They are designed to assist couples in evaluating their readiness for marriage and aiding them in developing wholesome marriages. A brief summary of key content areas will show the value of these areas to couples preparing for marriage.

Sexuality in Marriage

It is essential to premarital counseling that there be a discussion about sex in marriage for the engaged couple. Attitudes from family backgrounds play a big part in the marriage relationship. It is helpful for the couple to realize that the Scripture is not prudish or negative about sex within marriage. God created human beings as sexual, not only for procreation, but also for unity and for pleasure. Wright suggests that sex "is a means of relating to one another and being close to one another; it is a time of giving to each other."⁽¹⁾ Evidently, sex within marriage is viewed as an important subject, with ninety-three percent of the authors addressing this subject.

Mace, in Getting Ready for Marriage, believes that without sex there is no marriage.⁽²⁾ Mace, like many other authors, emphasizes sexual intimacy for pleasure as well as for procreation. It is an expression of marital unity.

Pastors and authors both mentioned the Sex Knowledge Inventory.

1. H. Norman Wright, Premarital Counseling (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981) p. 123.

2. David R. Mace, Getting Ready For Marriage (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972) p. 75.

The Sex Knowledge Inventory Form X (SKI) was first published in 1950 with revisions in 1968 and in 1979. SKI is a service, rather than a test, "to discover and correct misconceptions concerning sex, and make changes in sex attitudes." (3) This inventory provides openings for discussions concerning items of knowledge and attitudes concerning sexuality.

Two other references cited in the survey and listed by authors were prepared by Dr. Ed Wheat. His book, titled Intended For Pleasure was written with his wife, Gaye. Second, Wheat produced a three hour tape cassette series, "Sex Techniques and Sex Problems." Both are designed for use by the pastor with the couple and are to assist the couple in enriching their marriage. Another book that provides practical suggestions on romance in marriage is Solomon on Sex, by James Dillow, which is a teaching on the Song of Solomon. (4)

Society today tends to be pre-occupied with sex. In this atmosphere the pastor-counselor needs to present a healthy biblical teaching concerning sex. Therefore, it is important that the pastor-counselor feel comfortable dealing with this topic. The use of the published material mentioned can help ease the tension for the couple and pastor so there can be more open communications in the area of sexuality.

3. Gelolo McHugh, Marriage Counselor's Manual and Teachers Handbook For Use With The Sex Knowledge Inventory Form X (Saluda: Family Life Publications, Inc., 1979) p. 1.

4. Wes Roberts & H. Norman Wright, Before You Say "I Do" (Eugene: Harvest House Pub., 1978) p. 73.

Finances - Money Management

One of the contributing factors in troubled marriages is the inability to properly manage money. Individuals often bring to marriage different thoughts and approaches to the meaning and use of money. Pastors must also be aware of their own experience in handling money or they will transmit their own understanding about finances to the couples. Paul tells Timothy in the first letter that the husband "must manage his own family well..." (I Tim. 3:4). This indicates a need for delegation of responsibilities and good management of finances. Almost all the respondents to the survey and the authors suggested that a budget be worked on together and that open communication be present so that both partners are aware of the family financial situations.

Pastors and authors referred to similar material. Material produced by the Christian Financial Concepts, Inc. and authored by Larry Burkett were cited by both pastors and authors. Burkett has written: Your Finances in Changing Times, Christian Financial Concepts, and Family Planning Workbook.(5) In Premarital Counseling Wright recommends a tape series by Larry Burkett, "Christian Financial Management." This series is loaned to the couple and then discussed during an interview. This tape series can be obtained through Christian Marriage Enrichment.(6)

5. These may be ordered through Christian Financial Concepts, Inc., 4730 Darlene Way, Tucker, Ga. 30084.

6. Christian Marriage Enrichment, 1913 E. 17th St., Suite 118, Santa Ana, Ca. 92701, (714-542-3506).

Wright also suggests a pamphlet called Christian Family Money Management and Financial Planning available from Lewis Neebaver Co., Old York Road & Township Line, Benson East, Jenkintown, PA. 19046. In Appendix E, there is a sample forms of how to develop a budget and questionnaires on finances.

Communications

Pastors identify that good communication is the most important area that an engaged couple needs to develop. Most marital problems are rooted in faulty communications. Some pastors deal with this issue in marriage counseling, and it becomes one of the key topics in premarital preparation. Christian material in this area is just beginning to be developed. There were some excellent tools suggested by pastors which are now available. Eyrich, in Three To Get Ready, refers to the passage from Eph. 4:25-32 which sets up four basic biblical rules for communication.(7) It would be beneficial for pastors to familiarize themselves with the sections on communication found in two books by Dwight H. Small Design for Christian Marriage and After You've Said "I Do"(8) and Jay Adam's book Christian Living in the Home.(9) An excellent chapter that would assist a couple on

7. Howard A. Eyrich Three To Get Ready A Christian Premarital Counseling Manual (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981) pp. 66-69.

8. Dwight H. Small, Design For Christian Marriage (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1974) pp. 38-50; After You've Said "I Do" (Old Tappan: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1968) pp. 11-44.

9. Jay E. Adams, Christian Living In The Home (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972) pp. 25-41.

working on good communication comes from Before You Say "I Do" by Roberts and Wright. Another useful tool recommended by Eyrich is "A Mental Communication Inventory," by Millord J. Bienvenue Sr; available through Family Life Publications, Inc. Another excellent resource is Wright's book Communication: Key to Your Marriage.

Most couples begin marriage assuming that they know one another and are anxious to be good communicators. Couples also bring with them defenses that may result in the breakdown of communications. Pastors have an unique opportunity to encourage couples to develop communication skills. Premarital preparation programs include this aspect as one of their top priorities.

Compatibility and Instruments To Test For Compatibility

There are many factors that contribute to compatibility in marriage. Failure to resolve those areas where a couple is not compatible can lead to a damaging relationship. Three authors and another fifteen pastors suggest administering instruments that assist the pastor-counselor in understanding the couple's compatibility. Two of these are the Taylor-Johnson Temperment Analysis Profile (T-JTA) and a more recent tool PREPARE (Premarital Personal and Relationship Evaluation).(10) Family Life Publication has produced an inventory for

 10. The T-JTA material may be ordered through Psychological Publications, Inc., 5300 Hollywood Blvd., Los Angeles, CA. 90027. You are required to be certified to render this profile. PREPARE material can be purchased from Prepare/Enrich, P.O. Box 190 Minneapolis, MN. 55440 (612-331-1661).

the engaged couple called "Marriage Expectation Inventory for Engaged Couples," (Box 427, Saluda, S.C. 28773).

Premarital counseling needs to address this area before it has to be addressed in marital counseling. These are excellent tools for helping a couple adjust to the differences in personality that two people bring to marriage. These instruments do take some training to use and do require some time to evaluate the results of the tests.

Theology of Marriage and The Definition of Love

The fifth most discussed content area is the theology of marriage. This topic usually includes a discussion about the couples understanding of love. If pastors are going to talk about marriage, it is important that they develop a theology of marriage. Pastors in the survey and the authors reviewed thought that there was a need for understanding God's intentions for marriage.

A good worksheet on understanding marriage and love can be found in Before You Say "I Do" by Roberts and Wright. Also, Eyrich's "Outline Of God-Designed Marriage" and "Study Guide: God-Designed Marriage" are excellent springboards for a discussion on Christian marriage and love.(11) Two books by InterVarsity Press, Growing into Love by Joyce Huggett and Longing for Tenderness by Gerhard Hauer, are excellent resources for couples to read during their engagement period.

Understanding God's view of marriage will assist the couple in

11. Eyrich, pp. 44-52.

working toward a wholesome and joyful marriage. In today's society and the church there are many misconceptions and teachings concerning marriage. Therefore, there is a need to develop a healthy relevant concept of what God expects of a Christian in marriage.

Marital Adjustment

There are many differences between the man and the woman who unite in marriage and there are similarities that draw them together. These differences and similarities need to be understood, and couples need to adjust and adapt to them. The references cited in this section on Compatibility are helpful for this topic. A few additional tools were mentioned by pastors. One was "Your Role Concepts Comparison" found in Wright's book on Premarital Counseling(12) or a revision of Hines' work in this field (James R. Hine, Your Marriage Analysis & Renewal) by Eyrich called "Comparison of Role Concepts Inventory."(13) Another helpful tool mentioned was the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, which presents the personality preferences of the individual.(14) The importance of examining the differences in the engaged couple cannot be underscored. It is important for the engaged couple to understand the differences that exist between them and attempt to adjust to them.

12. Wright, pp. 203-204.

13. Eyrich, pp. 63-65.

14. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator may be obtained through Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc. 577 College Ave., Palo Alto, Ca. 94306.

Family Planning

Family Planning is often discussed during the session on sexuality. Dr. Ed Wheat's materials are excellent tools for understanding family planning. A discussion on birth control is part of this area of preparation. However, the percentage of pastors who said they discussed this matter was not very high. This may reflect their own uncomfortableness in discussing birth control methods. Perhaps couples who attend these sessions have already made up their mind on birth control. Eyrich gives two valuable resources for the clergy and the engaged couple to pursue. The first is Tom McGinnis' book, Your First Year of Marriage (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1967) pages 129-138. The second is a journal published under the auspices of the Family Planning Division of Emory University Hospital called Contraceptive Technology. The journal can be obtained from Halsted Press, a division of John Wiley, 605 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y. A pastor-counselor needs to keep up-to-date about recent developments in the area of birth control.(15)

On the other side of birth control is the decision to have children. Wright suggests two helpful books, Help! I'm a Parent by Dr. S Bruce Naramore (Zondervan, 1979); there is a workbook which accompanies this book. Second, he encourages a couple to read a book that he and Marvin N. Inmon authored entitled Preparing for Parenthood.(16)

15. Eyrich, p 91.

16. Wright, pp. 125-126.

Wedding Plans

It was interesting that only 10 out of the 93 pastors mentioned wedding plans, though everyone of them spends some time dealing with the wedding, even if it is at the rehearsal. Many of the pastors assumed that the analyzer of the survey would know they spent time with the couple planning the wedding. When examining the list compiled from the authors, wedding plans are ranked as number ten. Yet, the wedding plans are probably the number one concern of the couple getting married. It is helpful to present a couple with alternative ways of doing the wedding ceremony, the rules of the church, fees for the organist and janitor, and the duties of the wedding party. Eyrich includes the duties of the wedding party in Three To Get Ready(17) or suggests obtaining a reference book on etiquette as helpful. One pastor surveyed responded by sending a complete folder of procedures and etiquette he had developed for weddings in his church. Some of the material will be found in Appendix F.

Other areas that were considered important by authors and/or pastors were family background, in-laws, religion and spiritual needs. None of these ought to be taken lightly. The pastor-counselor should be ready to discuss these areas if the need arises. Family background and relationship with the perspective in-laws can be very important. A few helpful instruments recommended by authors in this area include: Eyrich's "Family and Social Background Questionnaire" (pp 84-85);

17. Eyrich, pp 95-97.

Wright has a questionnaire for the in-laws to fill out called "Becoming An In-law Building Positive Relationships"(pp 106-108). Another important resource is a chapter in Roberts and Wright's book Before You Say "I Do". This chapter is designed for couples too as an exercise.

The area of religion and spiritual needs can be a major adjustment in marriage. Spiritual and religious beliefs are difficult to change and adapt. That is why a few pastors and authors recommended that the pastor not marry unbelievers. Conflict and differences can occur in the couple's life when their beliefs are different.

Approaches to Premarital Preparation

When a couple announces their engagement and sets a date for their wedding, the couple, their family and friends all begin to focus their attention on the wedding, but not necessarily the marriage. Then a well-meaning pastor suggests or strongly recommends the couple attends premarital counseling sessions. The couple in most cases is willing to go along with the procedure so they can have the church on a particular date. Premarital preparation creates the opportunity for the pastor and the engaged couple to explore the nature and the expectations of marriage. If the pastor's intent is to assist the couple in their search for a committed relationship, then this may be a fruitful process for the engaged couple.

Before we examine the approaches to premarital counseling, there is a need to discover what premarital preparation is trying to accomplish. In addition to making plans for the wedding ceremony, what are the other purposes for premarital preparation? This is a prime opportunity for the pastor to build a relationship with a couple, which

could lead to a continuing ministry in the future.(18) Premarital preparation gives directions, providing corrections for faulty views, and to give counsel concerning their relationship in marriage. Providing information will in itself assist in correcting the false assumptions about marriage relationships, communications, money management, family relations, sex, etc. Wright suggests that "one of the main purposes is to help the couple eliminate as many surprises as possible for the impending marriage. By eliminating those and helping them become more realistic about the future, marital conflict will be lessened."(19) The ultimate goal of the pastor is to assist the couple in making the final decision to be married.

There are varied approaches to premarital counseling which assist the couple in making this important step of life. This part of Chapter Five will examine some of the approaches being used in premarital counseling. In the last ten years a number of articles and books have been written in presenting approaches to this area. The problems for the local pastor are first the availability of these writings and secondly the cost factor. This section will present a few of the more popular approaches that are adaptable to a person's on ministry. Four approaches, which were discovered through an examination of the research, will be discussed.

18. Wright, p. 38.

19. Wright, p. 39.

The Pastoral Approach

The basic approach to premarital preparation has been and will continue to be the pastor meeting privately with the engaged couple for a predetermined number of sessions prior to their wedding. The pastoral survey revealed that over half of the responding pastors required three to four sessions. Ideally, though, more sessions with the couple have been proven to be more beneficial. The study of marriages and family, which was referred to in the last chapter by Wright discovered after surveying one thousand couples that those who had a least six premarital counseling sessions felt they benefitted from the experience (Chapter Four). One of the problems that a pastor immediately foresees in doing at least six sessions is that of time management. If a pastor does six sessions with each couple and has ten weddings a year, he or she is spending sixty sessions with couples a year. That number escalates as the number of weddings performed increases. Often this comes down to a matter of priorities and the number of sessions decrease. Is premarital counseling important enough to invest that kind of time in assisting the couple?

There are several ways of approaching this problem. One way mentioned is for the pastor to have more than one couple to attend sessions together. The other possibility is the training of laity to deal with different sections of premarital counseling. For example the pastor would have an accountant or business person share their expertise money management and budget making. If the pastor sees premarital preparation as an important part of his/her ministry, then he/she will work out the time dilemma. Most Protestant pastors have

moderate sized churches that enable them to plan time to spend with the individual couple. The make-up to this approach differs from one pastor to another. There are two approaches in this area that give an idea of the make-up of the pastoral approach.

First is the Mace approach or model, which is a three sessions approach that has a great deal of flexibility. Mace recommends that the pastor begins with separate interviews with the man and the woman. Mace writes that "in each of these individual interviews, which normally occupies an hour, I take a fairly full personal history. Covering normally the following areas: family background; social adjustment; educational development; sexual experiences; love relationships; the present relationship; physical and mental health."(20) Following these two interviews, the couple comes together to discuss the findings that are pertinent to their marriage. If there are problem areas, then further sessions would be held. Mace's approach has the task of coming to grips with the most effective ways of marital adjusting in the shortest possible time frame. The more the couple differs the more there is a need for further sessions. Mace has written a book Getting Ready for Marriage that explains his procedures more fully.(21)

One of the ingredients to Mace's model is the post-wedding or

20. David R. Mace, "Education and Preparation For Marriage: New Approaches, Pastoral Psychology, 24, Fall (1975) p. 14.

21. David R. Mace, Getting Ready For Marriage (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1972).

follow-up session. Mace explains in the Pastoral Psychology article:

In recent years I have adopted the practice of scheduling at least one follow-up interview with the couple and have found this to be very helpful. Ideally, I plan one interview three months and another nine months after the marriage.(22)

As premarital preparation develops the post-wedding approach will continue to grow in popularity and use. Later in this chapter there will be further discussion on the post-wedding approach.

The Five to Seven Model

Another pastoral approach is one that spends five or more sessions with the engaged couple. There are two manuals available through most Christian bookstores that describe this extensive premarital preparation approach. Wright, in Premarital Counseling, and Eyrich, in Three to Get Ready, have detailed programs in their books on premarital counseling. There are a number of workbook-manuals for the engaged couples. Two of those are: Growing Love in Christian Marriage by Joan and Richard Hunt, which is the official manual for the United Methodist Church and Before You Say I Do by Roberts and Wright, which can be used in conjunction with Wright's Premarital Counseling. Wright and Eyrich use similar tools to assist them in presenting a program on premarital preparation.

In this type of approach the pastor normally meets with the couple in the first session to establish an understanding of the course.

22. Mace, p. 14.

Also, this may be a time to administer inventories such as the Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis, the Sex Knowledge Inventory or the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. The pastor-counselor must be certified to render the Myers-Briggs and the T-JTA profiles. The individuals take the T-JTA on themselves and then on each other, which is called criss-cross. The information derived from the perception of the individuals helps the pastor-counselor evaluate the emotional temperaments of the couple. The Myers Briggs Indicator is a set of questions that share how the couple looks at things and how they go about deciding things. It determines their preferences in life. There are alternatives to the T-JTA if the pastor does not desire to be certified, such as the Trait Factor Inventory (23). PREPARE and PREPARE II, for couples who were previously married is an excellent tool that requires some training. Wright has the couple complete PREPARE (PREmarital Personal and Relationship Evaluation), which is an instrument designed to assess the relationship of the couple. It is a 125-item that assesses that attitude and personal issues such as communication, conflict resolution, sexual relationship, financial management, religious orientation, family and friends, etc.

In the second session the pastor explores the results of the inventories. Wright goes over the inventories with the individuals by themselves before sharing the results together. The pastor should answer questions and explain the test or tests thoroughly. It may be necessary to spend more time with one or the other, or both people

23. Eyrich, pp. 52-57.

after going over the test.

The next sessions cover the areas of communications, in-laws and family relations, sexuality and the decision to or not to have a family, finances and a discussion on the theology of marriage. Most pastors give assignments between sessions if they are investing this amount of time in premarital preparation.

Session three builds from the information discovered in the inventories. For example, Wright deals with the couples expectations of marriage and discusses information gathered through the computer read out of PREPARE. Eyrich deals with role comparisons and communication in which he uses the "Four Laws of Communication" taken from Eph. 4:25-32. If the couple has some difficulty with communications, an excellent tool that might be made available for the couple to read is Wright's book on communication, Communication: Key to Your Marriage.

Session four primarily deals with the personal relationship of the couple. Discussions on sex, family planning and in-laws. Questions need to be asked concerning the relationship between the individual and his/her perspective in-laws. Some helpful handouts can be given concerning the relationship between the newlyweds and their perspective in-laws. Wright recommends a questionnaire be given to the parent-in-laws to be, to develop an understanding of their expectations, which is shared with the couple. A copy of this questionnaire is found in Appendix D.

The second part of this session deals with sex. Sex is often distorted and misunderstood. Most couples have experienced a form of

sex education from their high school. Good premarital sex counseling can prevent relational problems early in their marriage. The Sex Knowledge Inventory is an objective instrument which can be used as a springboard for profitable sex counseling. Another excellent tool is for the couple to listen to the tapes by Dr. Edward Wheat, Sex Technique and Sex Problems in Marriage which were mentioned in the last chapter.

In session five, Eyrich continues the discussion on sex and birth control, paying close attention to Wheat's tape. Wright, in the fifth session, (Eyrich deals with this in the beginning of the fourth session) has a discussion on money management. Found in Appendix E are copies of different handouts and homework assignments to facilitate a discussion on money management. This may be an ideal time to bring in a person that has expertise in the area of investments and money management.

In the sixth session, Eyrich discusses the spiritual side to marriage and finally deals with specifics about the wedding ceremony and etiquette. This is a time to make sure that specific rules concerning the use of the church are presented. Eyrich recommends that no date be set for the wedding until after the engaged couple has attended the premarital preparation sessions. During this last session, the pastor and couple agree on a post-wedding visit and set the date for it. Eyrich writes concerning the post-wedding interview: "One of my criteria for agreeing to perform a wedding is a firm

commitment to a post marital session."(24) This is also a time to encourage the couple to come back to see the pastor if they need help in any area of their marriage.

The Post Wedding Approach

After premarital counseling/preparation has been completed, all the pastor has to do is give the vows at the wedding ceremony and he/she is done. Right? The responsibility should not end at the altar in church after the pastor pronounces the couple husband and wife. It is important for the pastor to discuss the possibility of having at least one or more sessions following the wedding during the next year.(25) The post-wedding check-up is now becoming more accepted and used among pastors. Pastors are finding that it is helpful to establish the date at the final premarital counseling sessions.

There are two avenues in pursuing this approach. The one way of doing a post-wedding approach is to schedule a set number of sessions prior to the wedding and a set amount of sessions following the wedding. This can be a very formal type session, or sessions done in the church office. Or this can be an informal type session with the pastor visiting at the couple's home, but both have the purpose of discussing marital adjustment. The other avenue is one that is primarily a post wedding approach. After meeting with the couple in the first session the pastor schedules sessions for the couple

24. Eyrich, p. 105

25. Robert F. Stahmann & Wm J. Hiebert, Premarital Counseling (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1980) p. 114.

following their wedding. This latter approach has not had the print that other approaches have.

An article by Claude A Guldner speaks to the post-wedding alternative. He cites that premarital counseling has not had the impact on the recipients, so he designed a study to test the results of doing a post wedding approach. The program contracted with a group of couples to participate in six sessions following their wedding. Twenty three participated in this program. They began one group of seven couples after one month of marriage. A group of eight couples started three months after their wedding, and another eight couples started after six months of marriage. The study found that the couples who participated after only a month were least ready to handle counseling. Those that entered in the third and sixth month after their wedding were open to look more honestly at their relationship.(26)

The advantage to the post-wedding approach is that it can focus on some areas that cannot be discussed adequately without experiencing them. Areas such as role expectations, conflict and problem solving, the outside influences of friends and family, and sexual adjustment can be discussed with open understanding. By the third, or at least by their sixth month, most couples have experienced some difficulties in their marriages. By the sixth month most couples are willing to talk about their feelings and are looking for ways of coping with some of the problems.

26. Claude A. Guldner, "The Post-Marital: An Alternative to Pre-Marital Counseling," The Family Coordinator, (April, 1971), p. 115.

Post-wedding session or sessions may become an essential part of the pastoral approach to premarital preparation. The most accepted way of doing the post wedding session is to have a set number of premarital preparation sessions and then set a post-wedding session approximately three to six months following the wedding. This session should be flexible. It may enhance the discussion if the pastor visits the couple in their home. Eyrich suggests that an observant pastor-counselor can gain insights of marital adjustment by observing in the home, and listening to the everyday conversation between the couple.(27)

After socializing with the couple, the pastor should express his/her desire to discuss their marital adjustment. The pastor ought to have reviewed the notes that he/she had taken on the couple before meeting with them. The pastor should question both mates concerning how they feel they are adjusting to one another. The pastor may ask the couple to discuss any problems that they might be having. The pastor may recommend that further counseling should be considered. Eyrich pieced together suggestions of Christian medical doctors and devised the following check-up schedule for couples that a pastor marries.

A tri-monthly session during the first year of marriage.
 A check-up session after the third anniversary.
 A check-up session 6 to 12 weeks after the birth of each child.(28)

A schedule like this is certainly ambitious. It may be feasible

27. Eyrich, p. 106.

28. Eyrich, p. 106.

by a multi-staffed church or with an active lay ministry. Another possibility would be if the check-up sessions were done with a group of couples who were married around the same time. The post wedding approach has a great deal of merit.

The Group Encounter Approach

The group encounter emerged from marriage weekends that have been very successful. Many of these weekend approaches are available through the local churches, and/or denominations. The example studied in this research was the Engaged Encounter offered and endorsed by the United Methodist Church. This program is affiliated with Worldwide Marriage Encounter, which has its roots in the Roman Catholic Marriage and Engaged Encounter Programs. The Engaged Encounter promotional material describes the event this way: "This weekend is presented by a young married couple, a senior couple and a clergy couple thus combining peer-relatedness, maturity and spirituality to this "in depth" program that leads couples to decisions that will affect the rest of their lives."(29)

Throughout the weekend twenty presentations are given with time for couples to reflect on each of the presentations and the questions that are given for discussion. The couples are to share openly and honestly together. Some of the topics shared are:

29. Clergy Precis, Engaged Encounter United Methodist (Tuscon: Engaged Encounter, n.d.), Cover.

| | | |
|-----------|-------------|-----------------|
| careers | friendship | in-laws |
| finances | budgeting | death and loses |
| sexuality | differences | family planning |
| church | daily life | God |
| attitudes | feeling | limitations(30) |

The program is designed to encourage honesty and openness as couples share privately. The weekend begins on Friday and ends Sunday mid-afternoon. It is designed for engaged couples who are to be married within the next year. The couples will receive practical advice about marriage and explore God's design for marriage.

In the "Clergy Precis" there is a section that explains the work of the local pastor. It says: "Engaged Encounter" is not intended to eliminate a pastor's role in counseling, but to enhance it and aid in developing an open and trusting relationship with the pastor and the Christian community."⁽³¹⁾ The group encounter approach is becoming more available, and an offer that is a viable alternative to premarital preparation by the local pastor.

Summary

Material in the field of premarital preparation is available for the local pastor if he/she is interested in developing a program for the church. The material is constantly being updated so that it remains relevant to the marriages of today.

To do a valid program, the pastor must be willing to invest time in developing a worthwhile program. Second, the pastor must be willing to spend time with the couple. The review of the material presented in

30. "Clergy Precis," p. 2.

31 "Clergy Precis," p. 2.

this chapter is for the benefit of those interested in doing premarital preparation. The material needs to be used in conjunction with serious preparation.

The trends that are evident in premarital preparation are:

1. The material on the market and available to clergy has followed the needs which have come out of marital counseling. There has been a response to the concerns raised in marital counseling in premarital counseling/preparation. The areas covered in the content section give evidence that there is a sensitivity to developing a program that prepares a couple for marriage and the troubles that may occur.

2. The use of inventories and predeveloped programs are becoming more prevalent and accepted. The new programs and inventories are being adapted and used by pastors.

3. The varied approaches give evidence that premarital preparation is an important part of the church's ministry. The church is developing ways to assist the couple in creating a Christian marriage that is happy and fulfilled. These approaches are a means of better equipping the couple in attaining a good marriage.

4. The approaches vary from meeting the couple for a few times to meeting with the couple five or six times. The approaches, other than the group encounter, see the need to meet with the couple following the wedding to do some sort of check-up.

5. Premarital counseling is an important facet of the pastoral ministry and must not be ignored. It is beneficial to the marriages of tomorrow, and must be taken seriously.

CHAPTER SIX

A Bilateral Approach to Premarital Preparation

After examining the trends of premarital preparation it is evident that pastors are concerned about better marriages. This chapter will share two approaches of a pastor who is concerned about marriages: the first approach is a program developed by the author for teenagers, as the contextual project, and the second approach is the approach used by the author with the engaged couple.

The Adolescence Approach

Adolescence is a frightening, bewildering, exciting and chaotic time that a person goes through. Adolescence is a phenomenon of the twentieth century that only occurs in industrial societies where the age of economic independence and marriage is delayed past puberty.(1) Adolescence does not occur in preliterate and agrarian cultures. Adolescence might best be described as a creation of the American culture.

A program for adolescents must be sensitive to their needs and

1. Kevin Leman, Smart Girls Don't and Guys Don't Either (Ventura: Regal Books, 1982), p. 7.

must be willing to understand where they are in their lives. The church must take the first step in entering the private world of adolescents. It is important for the church to have a spirit of cooperation. The church also must have a spirit of equality. The church needs to be open so that the teens will be heard.

This section will present an outline of a program that was developed by the author for the contextual project at Asbury Theological Seminary as a partial fulfillment of the Doctor of Ministry Degree. This particular program can be adapted to the local church's youth fellowship over a period of a few months or can be adapted for a weekend retreat. A schedule for a weekend retreat will be included in this chapter.

Parents' Meeting

When this program is presented in the local church it is advisable to have a meeting with the parents of the teenagers. At the time of this meeting the youth may have a normal youth fellowship meeting or they may take the Taylor-Johnson Temperment Analysis Profile for high school students. The T-JTA should be used only on the older high school students. A letter to the youth's parents is sent out to explain the program and invite them to the first session.

At this meeting a challenge should be given to the parents to remember their teen years. During this session there is a description given about the characteristics of being a teenager. It is helpful to keep this session humorous, since there is a good possibility that parents and the teenagers are presently experiencing some relational

difficulties.

Adolescence is divided into three periods. Early adolescence begins around ten or eleven years old and continues through junior high school. The onset of adolescence has been arriving earlier and earlier in the life of a youth. Girls and boys are developing quicker and quicker with the first menstruation and first emission of semen coming at an earlier age. This is a period of awkwardness, self consciousness and dissatisfaction with physical appearances.

Middle adolescence has fewer drastic physical changes, but it is a time of adapting for the teenager to his or her new identity. Peer pressure increases and desire to be accepted plays great importance in the youth's actions. It is time when communication begins to be strained at home. There are three great influences during this period: sex, drugs/alcohol and cars.

Later adolescence are those days following graduation from high school. The main task of a young person now is to move into the adult society. Questions of the future are being answered, like career choices or the decision to go for further education. This is also a time to find a mate for the future years.

Time also should be spent in a discussion on dating. Dating is an important part of growing-up, but it is also very traumatic. A discussion format might be fruitful at this point in talking out ideas of when and what kind of dates are acceptable to the parents and the youth. Teenagers need guidelines, and it is good for the parents and the teenager to work out those guidelines together.

A discussion may occur concerning how parents obtain respect. It is the opinion of the author that this must be done earlier than in the teen years, but the most helpful tool for the parents is to keep open communications. A useful handout is Dr Lemans' "Twenty Steps to Keep Open Communications With your Teenager." Another handout from Leman is "A Teenager's Ten Commandments to Parents." A copy of these handouts is found in Appendix D.

The parental session ought to close with a summary of what has been discussed and a reminder of some of the key aspects of understanding a teenager. Parents need to love their children unconditionally. If parents love their children unconditionally then their children are going to feel good about themselves. A teenager needs parents whose marital relationship is one of stability, respect, love and good communication.

First Session - Self-Confidence

The first session with the youth deals with their self-esteem. Most youth struggle with confidence and esteem. Many youth evaluate themselves through the eyes of other youth. It is a struggle for those that are not real popular to feel great about themselves.

The leader needs to give the youth a handle on understanding how their self-esteem is formed. A rather unfair value system has been set-up by the youth of today. Even though it is not written, youth evaluate other youth in three categories: appearance, performance, and status.

Puberty plays cruel tricks on youth when it comes to appearance.

A youth can go to bed one night with a clear face and the next morning can have a face full of pimples. There are few perfect "ten's" in a world of mediocre people and yet that is what many youth strive to be. School creates a sense of worth or the lack of worth by how well you perform. We divide students by their athletic abilities and their academic achievements. The better you are the higher you rise in the social ladder of acceptance. Also, youth evaluate each other by their status. Even the kind of clothes you wear determines the acceptance of a person.

A good self concept is essential for the well being of a teen. It is the foundation of having good relationships with people, including a spouse in the future. If a youth develops a negative self-image, or if the youth is denied a positive self-image long enough, that youth will react. A possible reaction to that state is withdrawal. Some youth climb into a shell and never come out for fear of being rejected by their peers. Another reaction is that of fighting back to compensate for their lack of popularity. If they are unable to be accepted as an athlete they may excel in academics. Some youth will work very hard in one area to over-compensate for their failure in another area. Other youth make their low self-concept a joke, clowning around about their inadequacies. They become the class clown and the laughter is at their own cost. Others conform to the masses. They try to fit in even if they are uncomfortable with that type of behavior. Another reaction is escaping in drugs or alcohol, so that they may be numb to the fact of their low self-esteem.

This session is to assist the youth in their struggle for a healthy self-esteem. After helping them understand their feelings, the leader may have a discussion on Christian perspective on life. The love of God found in His Son, Christ, is an expression of God's love. His love is a sign of worth. The message ought to include the opportunity for the youth to accept the gift of salvation.

There are a number of simulation games and exercises that might be used in this section. To kick off a discussion about self-esteem, ask the youth to write down a person that they would most like to model their life after. Then ask the following questions:

1. What are the most important characteristics of your model?
2. Does Christianity have any contemporaries you would like as a model?
3. Do your models affect your life? If so, how?

Another simulation game comes from The Youth Ministry Leader's Library, which shows the results of discrimination on people.(2) This is an excellent tool for a retreat setting. A picture can be handed out that has two figures on it, depending on how a person perceives it (Appendix D).

A lesson on self-esteem sets the stage for the rest of the sessions. A healthy concept is important for interpersonal relationships. The remaining material builds on having a healthy self-esteem.

 2. Retreats Youth Ministry Leader's Library (High Point: Nido Quibein & Associates, Inc., 1980) p. 17.

Second Session - Dating

A youth needs to think through the reasons for dating. Dating is not just a social practice that youth must go through to eventually find a mate to marry. A teenager needs to think through the reasons why he/she is dating. What is the purpose for dating?

A discussion on the purpose of dating should have input by the youth and not just a lecture on dating. The author normally kicks this session off with a skit about kissing. It is called the "Hobby Game."

The leader has three volunteers leave the room and direct the rest of the youth to remember that for every question asked about the person's hobby that they are to think their hobby is kissing. The leader has the three volunteers return and asks them to think of their hobby. Then the leader asks about ten questions concerning their hobbies. Some examples of these questions are:

When did you first learn to do your hobby? Where do you do or perform your hobby? What sound does your hobby make?

The leader should talk about the purpose of dating. Dating's initial purpose is for socialization. Dating is a way of helping a person develop interpersonal relationships, communications skills and an understanding of their personality traits. Dating serves to cultivate and sharpen a person's ability to recognize the characteristics and personalities which best mesh with their own.

The question of whom a person should date is one of the most crucial issues that needs attention. An examination of II Cor. 6:14-15 can be used as a discussion starter. As a Christian Paul directs the young person not to be in relationship with a non-Christian.

Dating should be examined from a positive stance instead of emphasizing what a youth should not do on a date. The author believes

that a positive approach emphasizing communication skills, friendship, being ones self and learning how to say no to your physical and emotional desires need to be covered.

There needs to be a time spent on setting standards for dating. A standard of how far a person will go sexually or physically with their date should be set before a person ever starts dating. The Apostle Paul writes in I Cor. 7:1 that: "...it is good for a man not to touch a woman." The word "touch" refers to the igniting of ones' passions. The leader should remind the youth of the standards that have been set or are going to be set and stick to them. The leader needs to help the youth realize that loving someone of the opposite sex does not mean that you have to be physical with that person. A further discussion of this will be made in another section.

Third Session - Love

The word love has been used for many other words, including sexual intimacy, and yet is a very difficult word to define. The best definition that the author has found and used in this program comes from Josh McDowell's tape on Maximum Love.(3) He takes the word love and defines it as "love if," "love because of," and "love, period." This tape is in a three set tape that is an excellent resource tool.

3. Josh McDowell, Maximum Love, cassette, (Lubbock: Liberation Tapes, 1983). May be ordered through Liberation Tapes, P.O. Box 6044, Lubbock, Texas, 79413; 800-858-4621.

The author takes McDowell's concepts and develops a discussion on these three types of love. Time is given to discussing practical ways of expressing love to one another.

Fourth Session - Responsible Sexuality

Most teenagers by the time they reach their seventeenth birthday have had ample opportunity to engage in sexual intercourse. In many ways the church has not responded to this new sexual freedom with candor and openness. The church has either made no response or the response that it has made has been one of chastisement with a lack of understanding. A possible reason for a lack of response is that the church does not feel comfortable discussing something as intimate as sexuality with teenagers. The church has allowed the public school system to do the job of training their children on the issue of sexuality. The church, on the other hand, needs to be careful that it does not come across with puritanical or stern description of sexuality. The church needs to learn how to communicate the principles of the Scripture in a way that is less stern and more appealing.

The author's attempt in this section is to create a desire on the part of the youth to wait until marriage to have sexual intercourse. Sex cannot be tried out. This section presents a number of reasons for waiting until marriage, but the main reason presented is that God designed that sexual intercourse for marriage. A handout might be appropriate during this discussion. H. Norman Wright has an excellent summary for youth and young adults on the reasons for waiting until marriage before having sex. A copy of this is found in Appendix D.

A tool for a discussion starter is the story called The Island Affair, found in Way-Out Ideas For Youth Groups.(4) This has the youth evaluate the actions of a group of people on two islands. The story has two lovers who are separated by shark infested waters, and it shows how they get together. It is a discussion on morality and helps a young person look at the plight of casual sex.

Fifth Session - Christian Marriage

This session examines God's design for marriage in the Bible. Marriage has more to it than two people coming together for sex. So often youth have a limited understanding of marriage. The author offers his theology of marriage to the youth. Each pastor needs to develop his/her own theology of marriage so that a sharing of it can be done with the youth. It is important to be able to answer questions that might arise. The preconceived ideas of marriage that the youth have is from the example that they see at home.

Retreat Setting for the Adolescent Program

This program can be used in a weekend retreat setting for the local church or for a district wide retreat. An outline of how this might be accomplished follows. There is a tendency to use a more

4. Mike Yaconelli & Wayne Rice, eds., "The Island Affair" in Way-Out Ideas For Youth Groups (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1971), pp 82-84.

lecture type format in a retreat setting; the author advises that the large group be broken down into groups of ten for discussion and interaction whenever possible.

Schedule for a District-Wide Retreat

Friday Night

- 7:00 - 8:00 - Registration and room assignments.
- 8:15 - 9:00 - Organized games which assist youth in getting to know one another.
- 9:15 - 10:30 - Session One - Self Esteem
Forty-five minutes should be spent in small groups using material from Serindipity on Self-Confidence(5) or use material appropriate for discussion on self-esteem. At the close of the session the resource person needs to address the youth on Christ-centered self-esteem.
- 10:30 Snack
- 11:00 - 11:45 Afterglow - A time to sing and discuss with the resource person and the counselor, an informal rap session (elective).

Saturday

- 8:00 - 8:30 Breakfast
- 9:00 - 10:15 Session Two - Dating
Open the session with group singing. This might be a good time to do the "Hobby Game." Following the "Hobby Game" the resource person speaks on the purpose of dating. Following the presentation have the youth break up into small groups for a discussion on dating.

5. Lyman Coleman, "Self-Confidence," in Encyclopedia of Serendipity (Littleton, Co., Serendipity House, 1980) pp. 140-141

- 11:00 - 12:00 Free time
- 12:15 Lunch
- 1:15 - 2:15 Session Three - Love
Opening with group singing.
Then break up into small groups for fifteen minutes to discuss ways of showing love. Resource leader presents the concept of love. Josh McDowell's three loves are useful for this session.
- 2:30 - 3:30 Planned recreation - for example, the group game Pony Express.
- 3:30 - 5:30 Free Time
- 5:30 Dinner
- 7:00 - 9:00 Concert
- 9:15 - 10:30 Fourth Session - Responsible Sexuality
The first half an hour spent in small groups discussing the "Island Affair."
The resource leader then presents a talk on responsible sex. This session should express the reasons for abstaining from sexual intercourse until marriage.
- 10:30 - 11:00 Snack
- 11:00 - 12:00 Afterglow

Sunday

- 8:00 Breakfast
- 9:00 - 10:00 Fifth Session - Christian Marriage
This session examines God's design for marriage.
- 10:30 - 10:45 Worship with the Lord's Supper
- 11:00 - 12:00 Rooms cleaned and clothes packed - free time.
- 12:00 Lunch
- 12:30 Friendship Circle and closing prayers.

The Engaged Approach

A second approach to premarital preparation deals directly with the engaged couple. Engagement is a time for discovering and a time of preparing. Many couples soon after becoming engaged begin to plan for their wedding. If the date for their wedding is within the year most couples will contact the church to see if the pastor and the sanctuary are available. It is at this time that a pastor may inform a couple that premarital preparation or counseling is requested or required. The author requires an engaged couple to attend premarital counseling sessions before he will perform the wedding. Many of the material that the author uses have been discussed in the previous chapters. Following is an outline of the program that the author uses with the couple.

First and Second Sessions

The first session is for developing a rapport with the pastor and the engaged couple. It is a time too for exchanging ideas concerning the wedding and a time to go over known plans for the wedding. At this time the pastor needs to explain what will occur in the following sessions. This session can be very informal and should hopefully make the couple at ease with meeting the pastor. A form will be filled out by the pastor asking about the wedding and their plans. A copy of that form is found in Appendix E.

The second session is for the purpose of taking the Taylor-Johnson Temperment Analysis and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. It has been the finding of this author that it is better to take the T-JTA under the supervision of the pastor. If a pastor has a number of weddings to perform it is wise to have all the couples come and take the test together. The second session may be combined with the first session if the time between the sessions and the wedding is shorter than three months.

Session Three

Session three is devoted to examining the results of the T-JTA and the Myers Briggs Indicator. This can be a fruitful opportunity for the couple if they remain open to the results of the inventories. The inventories may bring to the surface some areas that need further attention. If there are patterns that need to be worked on this is the time to discuss ways of improving that behavior. There may be times that the pastor deems it necessary to meet with a person on a one to one basis for further counseling.

At the close of session three home work assignments are handed out to the couple for the next session. The couple are given the following homework assignments that should be handed back to the pastor before session four:

1. History of Your Relationship
2. Definition of Marriage and Love
3. Your Role Concepts Comparison
4. What Is Your Opinion
(copies found in Appendix E)

Session Four

Session four goes over the homework assignments that were given out at the prior session. Spend time looking at the role comparisons and what their opinions are concerning values. After discussing these comparisons have the couple define marriage and have them explain why they are coming to church to be married. Why is the church important to them? The pastor then shares his or her theology of marriage.

Homework assignment for the next session is handed out. It includes:

1. Finances Questionnaire
2. You Paid How Much For That
3. Your First Year Budget
(copies found in Appendix E)

Session Five

In the first half of this session the pastor and couple discuss the homework assignment and other questions concerning finances. If you have a financial investor in the church it may even be good to have that person come in and explain good financial management.

The second half of this session deals with communication. The pastor has been observing how the couple communicates for the last four and a half sessions and therefore may be able to share some insights that he or she might have. A game that might be useful is to have a couple sit back to back on the floor and give each person the same identical Legoes. Have one person giving directions and the other building what their partner to be is building. All the person

receiving the information can say is: "Yes, I understand" or "No, I do not understand." This is a good ice breaker for a discussion on good communications. This discussion may include why communications break-down and how to have better communication especially, in conflict.

The homework assignment for the next session is to listen to the cassette tape by Ed Wheat "Sex Technique and Sex Problems in Marriage."

Session Six

Session six discusses the tape by Dr. Wheat and other information that the pastor might feel important for couple concerning sexuality. The pastor needs to be willing to discuss this topic openly without embarrassment.

This is the last session with the couple before the rehearsal; so it is good to go over the plans that have been made and check who is responsible for the different tasks. A time ought to be set for the couples follow up visit three months after the wedding. The author has found that it is good to set this date now even though it may need to be changed.

It is appropriate to close in prayer for the final session. The pastor may feel it is appropriate to close in prayer at each session. This is up to the discretion of the pastor.

Follow-Up Session

The author recommends that the pastor set a time at the last premarital session for the three of them to get together three to six

months following the wedding. It may be good to set up a time to meet in the newly weds home. Another way is to have the couple over for dessert and an informal discussion on how the first months of marriage are going. This is a time for the couple to discuss any possible problems that might be occurring.

Summary

Premarital preparation needs to begin at a much earlier age than when a couple decides to marry. In fact, it begins in the home as a child watches the example of his or her parents. The positive and negative experiences are both brought with a couple as they enter into their own marriage. This is why it is important to teach about Christian marriage to the church's children early on.

The teaching process can begin with teenagers. An approach needs to be developed to communicate essential areas before a young person becomes seriously involved in dating. Whether the program mentioned earlier is followed or another program that a pastor or denomination develops, it is important for the youth to have a Christian perspective on dating and marriage.

The pastor secondly needs to be sensitive to needs of his congregation in developing a program for couples who plan on marrying. A program that is suitable for discussion and dialogue is the most useful and successful. In this particular chapter the author has compiled a variety of programs to meet the needs of his congregation

and his style of ministry. A couple needs to be searching during their engagement period. Premarital counseling ought to be an instrument in that journey toward having a fulfilling Christian marriage.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Summary

The author was led to study the topic of premarital preparation by doing marital counseling and seeing how ill-prepared couples were in getting married. Therefore, the purpose of this study, as stated initially, was to identify the formats and topics covered in premarital preparation.

The methodology of this study had two parts. Evidence for this study was compiled through two surveys; one of a selected group of pastors and second a survey of selected laity that provided valuable information. The second method was a review of literature that collaborated with the material gathered through the surveys to identify and define the principle characteristics and approaches in Christian premarital preparation.

Premarital preparation, a preventive approach, has emerged as a valuable answer to problems facing our marriages today. This study provides interested pastors with a resource for premarital preparation. Premarital preparation is not an alternative but rather a supplement to marriage counseling. The church has much to offer in assisting couples

and families in having worthwhile marriages and premarital preparation is just one avenue that can be offered by the church.

A summary of this study includes the following:

The church must be prepared to communicate what a Christian marriage is in the twentieth century. A theology of marriage is essential for assisting any couple in marriage, whether in marriage counseling or premarital counseling.

Each pastor needs to develop a theology of marriage that is biblically sound and theologically relevant. It is essential that church communicate to the youth and young adults such a theology. Marriage is not an institution, but rather a three way covenant relationship between the couple and God. A biblically relevant theology of marriage should be centered around mutual allegiance toward one another. This theology is what makes Christian premarital preparation different than its secular counterpart. All areas of premarital preparation should be permeated with this theology.

The review of literature and the compiled data from the surveys identify and define the characteristics of premarital preparation. The basic characteristics of premarital preparation discovered in this study are:

1. Pastors are willing to invest more time and energy receiving additional training in the area of premarital counseling. With this training pastors are requesting and or requiring more sessions or time with the engaged couple so as to discuss their readiness for marriage.
2. A majority of pastors spend at least three or more sessions

with the engaged couple. Many pastors have not limited their sessions to pre-wedding but are requesting the couple to participate in a post-wedding session or sessions.

3. Premarital preparation has become a tool to examine the readiness of the couple for marriage. Premarital preparation has developed instruments to assist the couple in examining their readiness for marriage. Tools such as T-JTA or the The Premarriage Awareness Inventory are now being used by the clergy as ways of assisting the couple in evaluating their compatibility. In the past premarital counseling was more for the purpose of planning the wedding and discussing any areas that a pastor felt a need to discuss with the couple.

4. The areas that are discussed and examined by the couple have come from marriage counseling. The results of troubled marriages have led to the development of a preventive approach in areas that marriage counseling has been addressing and now premarital counseling is addressing. For example, a premarital preparation course for the engaged couple will examine the areas of sexual adjustment, finances and budget making, communication techniques, compatibility and other related areas in marriage.

5. Premarital preparation is not being limited to the engaged couple, but it has broadened its boundaries to include the youth and single young adults of the church.

New approaches, such as group encounters, and new ways of dealing with content areas, like tapes and videos concerning marriage, will

continue to be developed as long as pastors are open for new training and couples are serious about their vows they make to one another. It is the task of the church and the pastor to assist the youth in developing Christian relationships. The church needs to continue to help couples in developing wholesome, healthy Christian marriages.

APPENDIX A

PREMARITAL COUNSELING SURVEY - PASTORS

I am presently involved in compiling information toward a dissertation concerning premarital counseling for a Doctor of Ministry Degree at Asbury Theological Seminary and would deeply appreciate your help in this project. This dissertation will identify, define, and evaluate the characteristics of Christian premarital counseling or preparation. You could aid me greatly by spending a few moments filling out this survey and giving it back to me or sending it back to me. If you desire information on the results of this survey, please contact Rev. Jay P. Cook, Box 336, Dayton, PA 16222; office phone (814) 257-8951.

Thank you,

Jay P. Cook
Jay P. Cook

1. Denomination _____
 2. Your age _____
 3. No. of years in the ministry _____
 4. No. of years in present Pastorate _____
 5. How many weddings do you perform a year, on the average? _____
 6. Do you meet with the engaged couple prior to the wedding? YES ___ NO ___
 7. Do you do premarital counseling? YES ___ NO ___
 - a. If so, how many sessions do you have with the couple? _____
 - b. Do you have a set course or teaching series? YES ___ NO ___
 - c. Do you use an already prepared aid, such as a denominational course?
YES ___ NO ___
 - d. If yes, what course do you use?
 - e. Do you use inventories and testing tools, example is the Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis. YES ___ NO ___
If yes, what inventory or test do you use?
 8. How long have you been doing premarital counseling? _____
 9. Have you changed the program during those years? YES ___ NO ___
If so, share briefly some of those changes such as materials, methods, and frequency. _____
-
-

10. What special emphasis do you cover with engaged couples during these sessions? (for example communication skills) _____

11. Cite one or two important values that you see in your program.

12. In your honest opinion, is what you do valuable? Explain.

13. Any other information that you wish to share would be helpful.

APPENDIX B
PREMARITAL COUNSELING SURVEY - LAITY

Male _____ Female _____ Today's Date _____

1. What church are you affiliated with _____
2. Your date of marriage _____
3. How many years have you been married _____
4. Your age when married _____
5. Are you presently
Married _____ Widowed _____
Divorced _____ Single Parent _____
6. Your present age _____
7. Have you ever been divorced _____
8. If so, are you remarried _____
9. Were you married in a Church? YES _____ NO _____ If not, by whom
were you married (example: Justice of the Peace)? _____
If yes, what was the approximate age of the Pastor? 20-30 _____
30-40 _____; 40-50 _____; 50 and up _____
10. Have you ever participated in Premarital Counseling or Preparation?
YES _____ NO _____
 - a. If yes, how many sessions did you attend? _____
 - b. What topics were discussed during these sessions? (example:
Finances, Communications, etc.) _____

 - c. Were these sessions mandatory? YES _____ NO _____
 - d. Were these sessions helpful or worthwhile? YES _____ NO _____
Explain _____

11. Whether you had Premarital Counseling or not do you feel that having
sessions with a pastor before marriage is beneficial? YES ___ NO ___
12. Would recommend that your children attend Premarital Preparation or
Counseling YES _____ NO _____ Explain _____

13. What topics do you feel should be covered in Premarital Counseling
sessions? _____

APPENDIX C

TABLES

TABLE 1
 PREMARITAL PREPARATION CONTENT IN
 RELATIONSHIP TO THE NUMBER OF SESSIONS

| CONTENT AREAS | 1-2 Sess. | | 3-4 Sess. | | 5-6 Sess. | | Total Response | |
|-------------------------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|----------------|-------|
| | NO. | PCT. | NO. | PCT. | NO. | PCT. | NO. | PCT. |
| 1. Psych. Tests | 2 | 5.26 | 10 | 17.78 | 5 | 71.43 | 17 | 17.70 |
| 2. Theol of Marriage | 5 | 13.16 | 7 | 15.56 | 1 | 14.29 | 13 | 14.44 |
| 3. Family Background | 3 | 7.89 | 5 | 11.11 | 2 | 28.57 | 10 | 11.11 |
| 4. Compatibility | 4 | 10.53 | 14 | 31.11 | 1 | 14.29 | 19 | 21.11 |
| 5. Sex | 13 | 34.21 | 17 | 37.78 | 6 | 85.71 | 36 | 40.00 |
| 6. Family Planning | 7 | 18.42 | 6 | 13.33 | 1 | 14.29 | 14 | 15.56 |
| 7 Defn. of Love | 4 | 10.53 | 3 | 6.67 | 2 | 28.57 | 9 | 10.00 |
| 8. In-Laws | 5 | 13.16 | 9 | 20.00 | 3 | 42.86 | 17 | 18.89 |
| 9. Communications | 19 | 50.00 | 24 | 53.33 | 5 | 71.43 | 48 | 53.33 |
| 10. Marital Adjustment | 10 | 26.32 | 18 | 40.00 | 4 | 57.14 | 32 | 35.56 |
| 11. Finances | 14 | 36.84 | 24 | 53.33 | 5 | 71.43 | 43 | 47.78 |
| 12. Wedding Plans | 3 | 7.89 | 5 | 11.11 | 2 | 28.57 | 10 | 11.11 |
| 13. Roles Male/Female | 3 | 7.89 | 5 | 11.11 | 2 | 28.57 | 10 | 11.11 |
| 14. Religion | 3 | 7.89 | 5 | 11.11 | 3 | 42.86 | 11 | 12.22 |
| 15. Virginity God's Exp | 0 | 0.00 | 1 | 2.22 | 0 | 0.00 | 1 | 1.11 |
| 16. Premarital Sex | 0 | 0.00 | 1 | 2.22 | 0 | 0.00 | 1 | 1.11 |
| 17. Career/Education | 3 | 7.89 | 2 | 4.44 | 0 | 0.00 | 5 | 5.56 |
| 18. Politics | 1 | 2.63 | 0. | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 1 | 1.11 |
| 19. Spiritual Needs | 16 | 42.11 | 14 | 31.11 | 1 | 14.29 | 31 | 34.44 |
| 20. Choices of Partners | 2 | 5.26 | 2 | 4.44 | 0 | 0.00 | 4 | 4.44 |
| 21. Common Interests | 3 | 7.89 | 3 | 6.67 | 2 | 28.57 | 8 | 8.89 |
| 22. Conflict Management | 4 | 10.53 | 4 | 8.89 | 1 | 14.29 | 9. | 10.00 |
| 23. Divorce | 0 | 0.00 | 1 | 2.22 | 0 | 0.00 | 1 | 1.11 |
| 24. 6 mth Warranty | 0 | 0.00 | 1 | 2.22 | 0 | 0.00 | 1 | 1.11 |

TABLE 2

PREMARITAL PREPARATION CONTENT
IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE AGE OF THE PASTOR

| CONTENT AREAS | 25-29 | 30-34 | 35-39 | 40-44 | 45-49 | 50-54 | 55-59 | 60-64 | 65-69 | 70-74 | 75-79 | |
|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| | # | PCT | # | PCT | # | PCT | # | PCT | # | PCT | # | |
| 1. Psych Tests | 2 | 33% | 3 | 18% | 5 | 27% | 2 | 28% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| 2. Theol of Mar. | 0 | 0% | 3 | 18% | 6 | 33% | 2 | 28% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| 3. Family Bckgr. | 0 | 0% | 3 | 18% | 2 | 11% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| 4. Compatibility | 1 | 16% | 3 | 18% | 2 | 11% | 1 | 14% | 3 | 23% | 0 | 0% |
| 5. Sex | 2 | 33% | 5 | 31% | 8 | 44% | 3 | 42% | 3 | 50% | 1 | 7% |
| 6. Fam Planning | 0 | 0% | 3 | 18% | 7 | 38% | 1 | 14% | 2 | 15% | 0 | 0% |
| 7. Defn of Love | 0 | 0% | 2 | 12% | 3 | 16% | 1 | 14% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 100% |
| 8. In-Laws | 1 | 16% | 4 | 25% | 3 | 16% | 5 | 71% | 1 | 7% | 0 | 0% |
| 9. Communications | 5 | 83% | 10 | 62% | 9 | 50% | 5 | 71% | 2 | 33% | 4 | 30% |
| 10. Mar. Adj. | 3 | 50% | 4 | 25% | 5 | 27% | 1 | 14% | 2 | 33% | 1 | 7% |
| 11. Finances | 3 | 50% | 5 | 31% | 11 | 61% | 5 | 71% | 1 | 16% | 6 | 46% |
| 12. Wed Plans | 0 | 0% | 3 | 18% | 4 | 22% | 3 | 42% | 2 | 33% | 2 | 15% |
| 13. Roles M/F | 1 | 16% | 2 | 12% | 2 | 11% | 2 | 28% | 0 | 0% | 3 | 23% |
| 14. Religion | 1 | 16% | 1 | 6% | 2 | 11% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| 15. Virginity | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 5% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| 16. Premarital Sex | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 16% | 0 | 0% |

TABLE 2 Continued

PREMARITAL PREPARATION CONTENT
IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE AGE OF THE PASTOR
(CONTINUED)

| CONTENT AREAS | 25-29 # PCT | 30-34 # PCT | 35-39 # PCT | 40-45 # PCT | 45-49 # PCT | 50-54 # PCT | 55-59 # PCT | 60-64 # PCT | 65-69 # PCT | 70-74 # PCT | 75-79 # PCT |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 17. Career/Ed | 1 16% | 1 6% | 0 0% | 1 14% | 1 16% | 1 7% | 2 18% | 1 7% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 0 0% |
| 18. Politics | 0 0% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 1 50% |
| 19. Spirit Needs | 1 16% | 5 31% | 7 38% | 1 14% | 3 50% | 5 38% | 3 27% | 6 46% | 1 100% | 0 0% | 0 0% |
| 20. Choice - Part | 0 0% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 1 9% | 1 7% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 0 0% |
| 21. Com Interest | 2 33% | 3 18% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 1 7% | 1 9% | 2 15% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 0 0% |
| 22. Conflict Mang | 1 16% | 3 18% | 5 27% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 1 9% | 1 7% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 0 0% |
| 23. Divorce | 0 0% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 1 16% | 1 7% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 0 0% |
| 24. 6 mt Warranty | 0 0% | 2 12% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 1 16% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 0 0% |

KEY

1. All percentages have been rounded off.

2. Abbreviations: Psch Tests = Psychological Tests and Inventories

Theol of Mar. = Theology of Marriage

Family Bckgr. = Family Background

Virginity = Virginity God's Choice

Spirit Needs = Spiritual Needs

Com Interest = Common Interest

Defn of Love = Definition of Love

Mar. Adj. = Marital Adjustment

Wed Plans = Wedding Plans

Career/Ed = Career Education

Choice - Part = Choice of Partner

6 mt Warranty = Post Wedding Check-up

TABLE 3

PREMARITAL PREPARATION CONTENT BY AUTHORS

| CONTENT AREAS | Authors | | M1 | Ey | Rg | Ls | M2 | Bm | Mc | Wt | Gr | Fg | R-W | Ds | Eh | Wd | M3 | Ht | TOTAL | PCT. |
|------------------------|---------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|--------|
| | Year | 58 | 64 | 66 | 68 | 70 | 72 | 72 | 72 | 77 | 77 | 77 | 78 | 78 | 78 | 79 | 81 | 82 | | |
| 1. Psych Tests | | | | x | | | | | | x | | | x | | | | | | 3 | 18.75% |
| 2. Theol of Marriage | | x | | x | x | | | | | x | | x | x | x | | | | | 10 | 62.50% |
| 3. Family Background | | x | | x | | | | | | x | x | | | | | | x | x | 8 | 50.00% |
| 4. Compatibility | | x | x | x | | x | | | | x | | | | | | | x | x | 12 | 75.00% |
| 5. Sex | | x | x | x | x | | | | | x | x | x | x | x | x | | | | 15 | 93.75% |
| 6. Family Planning | | x | | x | x | | | | | x | | | | | | | x | x | 6 | 37.50% |
| 7. Defn. of Love | | x | x | x | | | | | | x | x | | | | | | | | 9 | 56.25% |
| 8. In-Laws | | | | | | | | | x | | | | | | | | | | 5 | 31.25% |
| 9. Communications | | | | x | | | | | | x | | x | x | x | | | | | 8 | 50.00% |
| 10. Marital Adjustment | | x | | x | | x | | | | x | x | | | | | | | | 6 | 37.50% |
| 11. Finances | | | x | x | x | | | | | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | 14 | 87.50% |
| 12. Wedding Plans | | | | x | | | | | | x | | | | | | | | | 6 | 37.50% |

KEY

M1 = Pastors Manual For Premarital Counseling (Meth. Pub. Nashville, Tenn.: Meth. Pub. House, 1958); Ey = W. Clark Ellzey, Preparing Your Children for Marriage (New York: Association Press, 1964); Rg = Aaron L Rutledge, Pre-Marital Counseling (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Pub. Co. Inc., 1966); Ls = Judson & Mary Landis, Building A Successful Marriage (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall Int. Inc., 1968) M2 = To Love And To Cherish (Nashville, Tenn.: Meth. Pub. House, 1970); Bm = David Belgium, Engagement (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia, 1972); Mc = David R. Mace, Getting Ready For Marriage (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1972); Wt = H. Norman Wright, Premarital Counseling (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981); Gr = Claude A Guldner, "Marriage Preparation and Marriage

TABLE 3

PREMARITAL PREPARATION CONTENT BY AUTHORS
(CONTINUED)

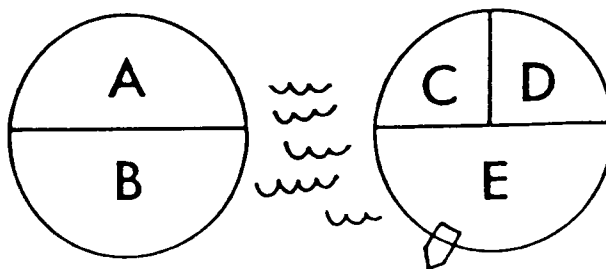
| CONTENT AREAS | Authors Year | M1 58 | EY 64 | Rg 66 | Ls 68 | M2 70 | Bm 72 | Mc 72 | Wt 77 | Gr 77 | Fg 77 | R-W 78 | Ds 78 | Eh 78 | Wd 79 | M3 81 | Ht 82 | TOTAL | PCT. |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------|--------|
| 13. Roles Male/Female | | | | x | | x | | | | | | x | | x | | | x | 5 | 31.25% |
| 14. Religion | | | | x | x | | x | | | | | x | x | x | x | | | 6 | 37.50% |
| 15. Virginity God's Exp. | | | | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | 2 | 12.50% |
| 16. Premarital Sex | | | | | | | | | | x | | | | | | | x | 2 | 12.50% |
| 17. Career/Education | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | | | x | 2 | 12.50% |
| 18. Politics | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | 0.00% |
| 19. Spiritual Needs | | | | | | | | | | | x | | x | | | | | 2 | 12.50% |
| 20. Choice of Partners | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | 0.00% |
| 21. Common Interests | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | 0.00% |
| 22. Conflict Management | | | | x | | | | | | | | x | | | | | | 3 | 18.75% |
| 23. Divorce | | | | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 6.25% |
| 24. 6 mth Warranty Post-Wedding | | | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | | 2 | 12.50% |

Enrichment: The Preventive Approach, Pastoral Psychology, 25 (Sum. 1977); Fg = Alice & Robt. Fryling, A Handbook For Engaged Couples (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter Varsity Press, 1977); R-W = Wes Roberts & H. Norman Wright, Before You Say "I Do" (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Pub., 1978); Ds = Richard Dobbins, Pastoral Psychology Workshop Vol. 1 (Akron, Ohio: EMERGE Ministries, 1978); Eh = Howard A. Eyrich, Three To Get Ready (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presb. & Reformed Pub. Co., 1978); Wd = Charles A. Wood, Premarital Counseling: A Working Model, Journal of Pastoral Care, 33 March 1979); M3 = Antoinette and Leon Smith, Growing Love in Christian Marriage (Nashville, Tenn.: United Meth. Oub. House, 1981); Ht = Joyce Huggett, Growing Into Love Before You Marry (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter Varsity, 1982).

APPENDIX D
TEEN PROGRAM HANDOUTS



The Island Affair*



The two circles represent two islands surrounded by shark infested waters. As a result of a shipwreck only five survivors landed on the islands.

A - teenage boy who is seperated from his girlfriend.

C - the girlfriend who is seperated from her boyfriend, A.

B - another teeage boy who is not aquainted with A.

D - Girlfriend's mother

E - older man who is kind of a loner.

The situation is this: C loves A very much and visa-versa. but there is one big problem. C can't get to A without a boat. This made C very unhappy and one day while walking around the island she discovered that E had just finished making a boat. Immedaitely C asks E to let her use the boat to get A but E refuses. "After all," he reasons, "I have worked very hard and long to build this boat. My time is worth something. Give me all the money that you have I will let you use the boat." Unfortunately C doesn't have any money. E then offers to let C uses the boat is she will make love to him. C asks for time to think and asks her mother, D, for advice. Her mother says something

like this, "I know how much you love A and I know it seems hopeless that you'll ever see him again, but sometimes if we do what we know is wrong to get what we want, we end up losing what we wanted. I think it would be best for you to wait and turn down E's offer. Something will come along, I'm sure."

After many days of soul searching C decides to accept E's offer and she makes love to E. E keeps his part of the bargain and rows C to A's island. A and C are very happy and embrace and laugh and talk. After a while, C sits down with A tells him of the hopeless situation she was in. She confesses that she made love to E but emphasizes that it was because of her deep love for A. A is deeply hurt. He tries to understand but after a long discussion and thought tells C that although he loves her very much he could not continue their relationship knowing that she loved another man. C tries to change his mind but to no avail.

However, while all this was going on B was listening from behind the bushes. When A finally departs B quickly comes to C's side and tells her he does understand why she made love to E and would be willing to accept her and love her in spite of what she did. C accepts and B and C go off together. (End of Story)

Give each participant a piece of paper and pencil and have them list the people in the story from the best to the worst using 1 as the best and 5 as the worst. Their paper would look like this: 1-A, 2-D, 3-E, etc. Have the papers handed in without names.

Discussion Questions:

The Girl (C)

1. Was she justified in what she did to get A?
2. Should she have accepted B's proposal?

The Boy (A)

1. Should he have accepted C anyway since she loved him so much?
2. Was his decision right or wrong?

The Mother (D)

1. Was her advice good or bad?

The Man (E)

1. Was what he did right or wrong?

The Other Boy (B)

1. Why did he accept C?

* Compiled by Mike Yaconelli and Wayne Rice in Way-Out Ideas for Youth Groups

Family Communication Guidelines

Job 19:2; Proverbs 18:21; 25:11; James 3:8-10; I Peter 3:10

1. Be a ready listener and do not answer until the other person has finished talking. (Proverbs 18:13; James 1:19)

2. Be slow to speak. Think first. Don't be hasty in your words. Speak in such a way that the other person can understand and accept what you say. (Proverbs 15:23, 28; 21:23; 29:20; James 1:19)

3. Speak the truth always, but do it in love. Do not exaggerate (Ephesians 4:15, 25; Colosians 3:9)

4. Do not use silence to frustrate the other person. Explain why you are hesitant to talk at this time.

5. Do not become involved in quarrels. It is possible to disagree without quarreling. (Proverbs 17:14; 20:3; Romans 13:13; Ephesians 4:31)

6. Do not respond in anger. Use a soft and kind response. (Proverbs 14:29; 15:1; 25:15; 29:11; Ephesians 4:26, 31)

7. When you are in the wrong, admit and ask for forgiveness (James 5:16). When someone confesses to you, tell him/her you forgive him/her. Be sure that it is forgotten and not brought up to the person. (Proverbs 17:19; Ephesians 4:32; Colosians 3:13; I Peter 4:8)

8. Avoid nagging. (Proverbs 10:19; 17:9)

9. Do not blame or criticize the other but restore him/her, encourage him/her and edify him/her. (Romans 14:13; Galatians 6:1; I Thesalonians 5:11). If someone verbally attacks, criticizes, or blames you, do not respond in the same manner. (Romans 12:17, 21; I Peter 2:23; 3:9)

10. Try to understand the other person's opinion. Make allowances for differences. Be concerned about their interests. (Phillipians 2:1-4; Ephesians 4:2)

Taken from Premarital Counseling by H. Norman Wright

The Difference Between Immature
Love and Mature Love

Immature Love

1. Love is born at first sight and will conquer all.
2. Love demands exclusive attention and devotion, and is jealous of outsiders.
3. Love is characterized by exploitation and direct need gratification.
4. Love is built upon physical attraction and sexual gratification. Sex often dominates the relationship.
5. Love is static and ego-centric. Change is sought in the partner in order to satisfy one's own needs and desires.
6. Love is romanticized. The couple does not face reality or is frightened by it.

Mature Love

1. Love is a developing relationship and deepens with realistically shared experiences.
2. Love is built upon self-acceptance and is shared unselfishly with others.
3. Love seeks to aid and strengthen the loved one without striving for recompense.
4. Love includes sexual satisfaction, but not to the exclusion of sharing in other areas of life.
5. Love is growing and developing reality. Love expands to include the growth and creativity of the loved one.
6. Love enhances reality and makes the partners more complete and adequate persons.

Taken from Premarital Counseling by H. Norman Wright

GOD'S WORD: WAIT UNTIL MARRIAGE

A. Both adultery (sexual intercourse between a married man and a woman not his wife, or between a married woman and a man not her husband) and fornication (sexual intercourse between any two people not married to each other) are condemned in Scripture.

1. Adultery is prohibited expressly in the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:14) and is condemned in many other passages in the Old Testament. (See Gen. 20:3; Prov. 6:32-33; Jer. 5:7-8.)

2. Jesus repeated the commandment prohibiting adultery (Mark 10:19) and even added that looking upon a woman to lust after her amounts to the commission of adultery with her in one's heart (Matt. 5:27-28). He condemned both adultery and fornication in Mark 7:20-23. (See also Mark 10:11-12).

3. One of the few "essentials" that the apostles felt necessary to touch upon in their letter to the Antioch Christians was that abstain from fornication (Acts 15:28-29).

4. Paul speaks out strongly against sex outside of marriage in many of his letters.

a. I Corinthians 6:9-20. Paul warns us that those who continue to practice fornication or adultery "shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (vv. 9-10). He adds that "our bodies are not for sexual immorality, but for the Lord" (v. 13). Indeed, our bodies are "members of Christ" (v. 15) and "temples of the Holy Spirit" who is in us (v. 19). Accordingly, we are to glorify God in our bodies (v. 20) by fleeing sexual immorality (v. 18).

b. Galatians 5:19-21. Sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, and carousing are all included in Paul's list of "deeds of the flesh," the doers of which "shall not inherit the kingdom of God." We are to display the fruit of the Holy Spirit, which includes love, patience, faithfulness, and self-control (vv. 22-23).

c. Ephesians 5:3-12. Paul urges the Ephesians Christians not to let sexual immorality or impurity "even be named" among them (v. 3). Moreover, they are not to participate in the "unfruitful deeds of darkness," and they are to expose and reprove them (v. 11).

d. See also Romans 13:9; I Corinthians 5:9-11, 10:8; II Corinthians 12:21; Colosians 3:5-7; I Thessalonians 4:1-8; II Timothy 2:22.

5. Other New Testament authors were equally emphatic in condemnation of sex outside of marriage. Hebrews 13:4; James 2:11; II Peter 2:9-16; Jude 7; Revelation 2:20-22, 9:21.

B. A biblical figure who "fled" from sexual immorality is Joseph (see Gen. 39:7-12). His master's wife asked him repeatedly, day after day, to lie with her, but Joseph refused each time: "How then could I do this great evil, and sin against God?" (v.9). One day when he was doing his work around the house, she caught him by his garment and asked him again. Understanding the seriousness of this temptation, Joseph "left his garment in her hand and fled, and went outside" (v.

12).

BENEFITS OF WAITING UNTIL MARRIAGE

A. No guilt. God tells us to wait until marriage. Not waiting will create guilt that will hamper your relationships with Him, with your sexual partner, and with everyone else. By waiting you can know, because God says so, that Jesus Christ smiles on your marriage bed.

B. No fear. Waiting insures that you will never have to be afraid, not even to the extent of fleeting thought, of having to build a marriage on an unexpected pregnancy.

C. No comparison. Waiting insures that you will never fall into the devastating trap of comparing your spouse's sexual performance with of a previous sexual partner.

D. Spiritual growth. On the positive side, waiting will help you subject your physical drives to the lordship of Christ, and thereby develop your self-control, an important aspect of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Also, if you get married and are later separated temporarily (e.g., for a business trip), then this discipline early in your relationship will give both of you the confidence and trust in each other during that time of separation.

E. Greater joy. Waiting insures that there will be something saved for your marriage relationship, for that first night and for many nights thereafter. The anticipation of the fulfillment of your relationship in sexual union is exciting. Don't spoil it by jumping the gun.

HOW FAR SHALL WE GO BEFORE MARRIAGE?

Given our conviction to refrain from sexual intercourse until marriage, the question remains: How far shall we go, short of sexual intercourse, before marriage?

A. The answer to this question depends upon how far along you are in your relationship together (first date or engaged) and upon the abilities to withstand the very strong temptation to have sexual intercourse.

B. However, a general principle which we feel applies to everyone is the following: That which has its natural end in sexual intercourse should be held to your wedding night.

1. This means, at the very least, that heavy petting, direct stimulation of each other's sexual organs, and mutual masturbation should be out. Don't build up your sexual drives and desires to the point of no return, lest your physical relationship become a source of frustration rather than that of joy for you.

2. This also means that you should not engage in any physical activity which will build up the other person's sexual drives to the point of no return. In the context of a different problem, that of eating certain types of food, Paul puts forth the general exhortation that we not do anything which causes our brother (or sister) to stumble (see Rom. 12:12, 21). Thus, both

persons must be sensitive to each other and must place the other's spiritual health ahead of their own desire for physical fulfillment now. When in doubt, don't! For "whatever is not from faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23). Pray, alone and together, about your physical relationship. If you can't visualize Jesus Christ smiling at the two of you, the Holy Spirit may be urging you to pull back the reins a little, for the sake of your love for Lord and each other.

C. This does not mean that the two of you are not going to relate physically before marriage, nor does it mean that your sexual drives will not increase as you do relate physically. And it certainly does not mean that you will not want to go to bed with each other. But it does mean that the two of you will make Jesus Christ the Lord of your sexual life and that you are going to wait to the green light from Him.

Taken from Premarital Counseling by H. Norman Wright

APPENDIX E

PREMARITAL COUNSELING HANDOUTS
FOR THE ENGAGED COUPLE

PRE-MARITAL INFORMATION

Bride _____ Address _____
 Myers Briggs _____ Phone _____
 Parents Living _____ Age of Bride ___ Date of Birth ___
 No. of Brothers _____ No. of Sisters _____
 Names: _____ Names: _____

Groom _____ Address _____
 Myers Briggs _____ Phone _____
 Parents Living _____ Age of Groom ___ Date of Birth ___
 No. of Brothers _____ No. of Sisters _____
 Names _____ Names: _____

Occupation of Groom _____ Bride _____
 Religious Affiliation Groom _____ Bride _____
 Address after Wedding _____ Phone _____
 Date of Wedding _____ Time _____ Place _____
 Best Man _____ Maid/Matron of Honor _____
 Ushers _____ Bridesmaids _____

 Ring Bearer _____ Flower girl _____
 Who will give the Bride away _____ Soloist _____
 Florist _____ Photographer _____
 Bulletins _____ Number _____ Is the Church to do them? _____
 Double or single ring _____ Organist _____
 Reception _____ Place _____ Time _____
 Rehearsal Date _____ Time _____
 Any special instructions

History of Your Relationship

1. When did you first meet or how long have you known each other?
2. When did you first start going together?
3. What strong points attract you to the other person? (Name at least 3)
4. Have you decided to marry?
 - a. How confident are you about the wisdom of your decision?

Very much so _____ Pretty confident _____

Have some doubt _____ Very unsure _____
 - b. What reactions have your parents had to your decision?

Very positive _____ Positive _____

Neutral _____ Negative _____
5. Have you ever called off your plans to marry?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please answer the following questions

- a. When did this happen?
- b. What was the cause?
- c. How did you resolve the situation?

Conflict and Communications
An Exercise for Engaged Couples

All of us have times that we are involved in conflict and because we are it is helpful for us to learn how to deal with conflict.

One of the areas that suffers during conflicts is communications. Especially in marriage where there is conflict there is some difficulty in communications and visa versa. If there are a number of couples at this session you may be able to do the first exercise.

Exercise One: Five Squares - Each envelope contains pieces of paper for forming squares. Your task is to form five squares of equal size. The task will not be completed until each individual has before him/her a perfect square of the same size of all the others. Specific instructions include:

- a. No member may speak.
- b. No member may ask for a piece of paper or in any way signal for a piece of paper from another participant.
- c. But members may give pieces to other members of the group.

Exercise Two: Communication Blocks - Two persons sit on the floor back to back, each with the same number and kinds of blocks. One person builds whatever he/she desires and at the same time tells his/her partner how to build what's in front of him/her. The object is for both people to have the "projects" the same when they are finished.

The only rule is that the receiver of the communications concerning the design cannot ask questions but only respond: "Yes, I understand your instructions" or "No, I do not under-

stand your instructions."

Communication

Obstacles to Listening

1. Defensiveness is a fairly common problem in family conflicts. These conflicts can be called "duelogues" rather than dialogues.

- Each person is busy thinking up an effective way of shooting down the other person.

- Some individuals resort to meek agreement or silence. Inside, however, he/ she might carry on a personal conversation, denying what the speaker is saying, and justifying his/her own stand.

2. Interrupting is a learned habit. It may be stimulated by our impatience with others.

3. A Speaker's Problem of talking far too long. A person may become so enthusiastic that they dominate the conversation.

4. Overcrowded Thinking is when a person has a lot on their mind and has a hard time listening to the other person.

- Internal distractions like thoughts, worries or maybe a disturbing comment.

- External distractions like the radio or TV.

5. Over Tiredness can block good communication.

6. There are individuals that turn you off when you hear them speak. Myron Cope (local Pittsburgh Sports caster) might do that to you. Ethnic biases might have the same effect.

Five Ways to Remove Listening Obstacles

1. Identify the obstacle: What is the specific obstacle that hinders me from listening?

2. Identify who controls the obstacle. Is it you the listener or is it the person speaking?

3. Determine the level of commitment that you have in being committed to listening. Do I really want to be a better listener?

4. Develop a sensitivity to defeating the situation. If I know that I do not like to be disturbed at a particular time then I have to prepare myself to listen to the person or if I have a difficult time with a person then I need to be sensitive to that fact and work harder at listening.

5. Work out a practical plan. Usually there is some practical steps to move from an obstacle to an opportunity.

What is Your Opinion?

Agree Disagree

- | | | |
|-------|-------|---|
| _____ | _____ | 1. It is all right to modify the truth to avoid unpleasantness in the home. |
| _____ | _____ | 2. An argument is a destructive force in married life. |
| _____ | _____ | 3. Quarreling is always wrong for a Christian couple even though insights are gained thereby. |
| _____ | _____ | 4. Every couple should have friends with whom they can talk over their marital problems and adjustments. |
| _____ | _____ | 5. The wisest course to take when an argument seems to be developing is to remain silent or leave the room. |
| _____ | _____ | 6. When a Christian couple are at an impasse in their discussion or communication, the best solution is to pray together about their differences. |
| _____ | _____ | 7. It is sometimes necessary to nag another person in order to get him to respond. |
| _____ | _____ | 8. There are certain matters about marriage that are best not discussed by a couple. |
| _____ | _____ | 9. The Bible teaches that we should avoid people who get angry much of the time. |
| _____ | _____ | 10. Only positive feelings should be expressed in the marriage relationship. |
| _____ | _____ | 11. If we are married and something our mate does bothers us, we should go ahead and tell him or her and try to change him or her. |
| _____ | _____ | 12. It is a sign of spiritual and emotional immaturity for a person to be angry at another individual. |

Your Role Concepts Comparison

Answer Key:

1. Strongly agree 3. Not sure 5. Strongly disagree
 2. Mildly agree 4. Mildly disagree

| | Wife | | | | | Husband | | | | |
|---|------|---|---|---|--|---------|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | The husband is the head of the home | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | The wife should not be employed outside the home | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | The husband should help regularly with the dishes | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | The wife has the greater responsibility for the children | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Money that the wife earns is her money | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | The husband should have at least one night a week out with his friends | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | The wife should always be the one to cook | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | The husband's responsibility is to his job and the wife's responsibility is to the home and children | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Money can best be handled through a joint checking account | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Marriage is a 50-50 proposition | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Major decisions should be made by the husband in case of an impasse | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | The husband should babysit one night a week so the wife can get away and do what she wants | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | A couple should spend their recreation leisure activities with one another | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | It is all right for the wife to initiate love-making with her husband | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| Wife | | | Husband | | | | | |
|------|---|---|---------|---|---|--|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | The husband and wife should plan the budget and manage money matters together | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | Neither the husband nor the wife should purchase an item costing over fifteen dollars without consulting the other | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | The father is the one responsible for disciplining the children | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | A wife who has special talent should have a career | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | It is the wife's responsibility to have the house neat and clean | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | The husband should take his wife out somewhere twice a month | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | The wife is just as responsible for the children's discipline as the husband | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | It is the husband's job to do the yard work | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | The mother should be the teacher of values to the children | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | Women are more emotional than men | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | Children should be allowed to help plan family activities | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | Children develop better in a home with parents who are strict disciplinarians | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | The wife should always obey what her husband asks her to do | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | The husband should decide which areas each should be responsible for | 4 | 5 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | Neither husband nor wife should bring their parents into the home to live | 4 | 5 |

Taken from Premarital Counseling by H. Norman Wright

THOUGHTS AND PRINCIPLES ABOUT IN-LAWS

The main facts about in-law tensions are as follows:

1. The person who causes most of these conflicts is unfortunately the mother-in-law. One study found that she initiated as much trouble as all the other in-laws put together.
2. Victims of in-law interference are nearly always the daughters-in-law. Often the mother-in-law is jealous of her daughter-in-law for dividing the affection of her son and tries to win back the central position of his life by alienating him from his wife.
3. Competition and conflict between these two women reaches its most violent form when they have to live together in the same house.
4. Rearing of the children is frequently another area in which the mother-in-law interferes.
5. A mother-in-law who acts in these ways can be very troublesome. But she deserves your pity more than your hostility. What this person really needs is the love of those around her, but since she seems unable to get it she tries instead to gain her ends by manipulation and intrigue. Unfortunately she usually does not realize that she is completely defeating her own purpose.

Principles to follow with in-laws:

1. No in-law interference can damage a sound marriage. In-laws cannot drive a wedge between husband and wife who stand firm together.
2. The policy to adopt is to make it clear that you want to be friendly and you want to work for harmony between the generations, but you will not tolerate unwarranted interference in your marriage. This must be clear with no compromise.
3. A confrontation or discussion should be followed up by sincere and genuine attempts to be friendly and conciliatory. You can behave lovingly towards them even

if you don't feel loving, and the action tends to promote the feeling. It will help and encourage your spouse if you make a real effort in this direction. Experience shows that this policy can, in time, achieve a surprising degree of success.

4. If you and your in-laws really have very little in common, short visits from time to time are best.
5. Remember family ties cannot be broken, and they last throughout a lifetime. Even if your relationships with your in-laws are not as they should be right now, a time may come when you may need their help or they may need yours.

From Premarital Counseling by H. Norman Wright

DEALING WITH IN-LAWS

The following suggestions by Landis and Landis could provide guidelines for couples in relation to their in-laws:

1. Treat your in-laws with the same consideration and respect that you give to friends who are not in-laws.
2. When in-laws take an interest in your life and give advice, do just as you would if any friend gave advice: If it is good, follow it; if it is not good, accept it graciously and then ignore it.
3. Remember that many times when the in-laws appear to be too concerned with your affairs, they are not trying to interfere in your life but are sincerely interested in your welfare.
4. Look for the good points in your in-laws.
5. When you visit your in-laws, make the visits reasonably short.
6. When visiting in-laws, be as thoughtful, courteous, and helpful as you are when you are visiting other friends.
7. Accept your in-laws as they are; remember that they would probably like to make changes in you, too.
8. Mothers-in-law have been close to their children before marriage; give them time to find new interests in life.
9. Go into marriage with a positive attitude toward your in-laws--you believe it is a good family to marry into and you intend to enjoy your new family.
10. Give advice to your in-laws only if they ask for it; even then, use self-restraint.
11. Discuss the faults of your spouse only with him, not with your family.
12. Do not quote your family or hold them up as models to your spouse.
13. Remember that it takes at least two people to create an in-law problem. No one person is ever entirely to blame.

For a married couple to handle relationships with parents and in-laws on a positive basis, they need to:

1. Be mindful of the fact that family ties are normal, necessary, and important and that a brusque rejection of them can only bring unhappiness to all;
2. Make the process of separating themselves gradual rather than abrupt;
3. Accept the spouse's concern for his parental family;
4. Accept the fact that parents cannot automatically stop being interested in, and concerned about, their children just because the latter get married, and parental help can sometimes be a wonderful thing to have;
5. Present a united front to any attempt by parents or in-laws to interfere; firmness is more effective than hostility.

From Premarital Counseling by H. Norman Wright

Becoming An In-law - - Building Positive Relationships

Parents please complete these questions and return the questionnaire to the pastor. The purpose of this questionnaire is two-fold:

1. To build positive concern
 2. To help eliminate potential problems that might occur
- I will be sharing your answers with your son and daughter-in-law to be or your daughter and son-in-law to be.

1. How would you describe your relationship with your parents and in-laws during the early years of your marriage?

Parents:

In-laws:

2. Would you like your married children to approach you in the same way you approached your parents and in-laws? Why or why not?
3. What would you list as some major needs of your soon-to-be married son or daughter? Could those needs be best met (1) with your help, (2) by himself or herself, or (3) with the new marriage partner?
4. Are there some unique needs of your mate related to the leaving of your child? How might you help him or her in these areas?
5. What will be the greatest adjustment that you will have to make as your son or daughter leaves home?

6. If you could ask your son or daughter to pray for you as you make this transition, what would you ask them to pray?
7. Will you expect the new couple to visit you often? How do you define "often"? How will you go about suggesting they visit you?
8. When the newlyweds choose something that is not your choice, what do you think your response will be? (Can you think of an example?)
9. Do you expect the newly married couple to call before visiting you and vice versa? Can there be spontaneous "drop ins"?
10. What plans, secrets, and problems do you expect the new couple to share with you? If that does not happen, what do you think your reaction will be?
11. In what way do you think and speak of your son-or daughter-in-law as a positive addition to your family?
12. In what way are you taking into consideration the feelings of the other family (Parents-in-law) in making wedding plans?

Scheduling holiday visits?

Giving gifts?

Seeing the grandchildren?

13. Please describe six expectations that you have for the couple after they are married.

14. Please take another piece of paper and together compose a letter describing in detail why you are looking forward to your son's or daughter's fiance' becoming your son-or daughter-in-law.

This should be addressed to that person. Please write at least three paragraphs.

Taken from Premarital Counseling H. Normal Wright

FINANCES QUESTIONNAIRE

Circle the answer describing how you feel about the following:

E - Extra
D - Desirable
U - Useful
N - Necessary

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Life Insurance | E | D | U | N |
| A Color TV | E | D | U | N |
| New Furniture | E | D | U | N |
| A Stereo Set | E | D | U | N |
| A Wig | E | D | U | N |
| Having a Car | E | D | U | N |
| Having Two Cars | E | D | U | N |
| Owning a Boat | E | D | U | N |
| Planning a Family Budget | E | D | U | N |
| Owning your Own Home within Five Years | E | D | U | N |
| Giving 10% to the Church | E | D | U | N |
| A Dishwasher | E | D | U | N |
| A Blender | E | D | U | N |
| Laundry Service | E | D | U | N |
| A Camper | E | D | U | N |
| Pets | E | D | U | N |
| A Complete Set of China | E | D | U | N |
| Donations to Charity | E | D | U | N |
| A Working Wife | E | D | U | N |
| Vacation Once a Year | E | D | U | N |
| Air Conditioner | E | D | U | N |
| Continued Formal Education After Marriage | E | D | U | N |
| Long Term Savings Plan | E | D | U | N |
| Medical Insurance | E | D | U | N |
| Credit Cards | E | D | U | N |
| Installment Buying | E | D | U | N |
| A Motorcycle | E | D | U | N |
| Beauty Shop Once a Week | E | D | U | N |

Taken from Premarital Counseling by H. Norman Wright

YOU PAID HOW MUCH FOR THAT?

Secret thought of a husband: "I just can't understand why my wife is always short of money. Now if I took over, things would be more efficient and there would be money to spare."

A wife broods: "I don't know why my husband says he can't take me out more often. His expenses aren't that high."

Do you confess to thinking like that occasionally? Here is your chance to show how much you know about the day-to-day money problems your spouse faces. This quiz for married couples is divided into two sections, one for each partner. Each of you is asked the approximate cost of twenty-five items or services that the other usually pays for. Here are the rules:

Wives ask their husbands the questions headed "For Men." Husbands ask their wives the questions headed "For Women." In some cases a price range rather than the approximate cost may be allowed.

Score four points for each correct answer. Don't be too strict. Give your spouse credit for a correct answer if he or she comes within, say, 10 percent of the right amount.

If you want to compare scores, go ahead. But that's not the point of the quiz. The idea is simply to show you how well you understand your mate's side of the spending. And maybe the quiz will teach you a lesson: Don't beef about somebody's spending habits until you know what you are talking about.

For Men

How much would you have to pay for these?

1. A ten-pound turkey _____
2. A five-pound bag of potatoes _____
3. A chocolate cake mix _____
4. A chuck roast for six _____
5. A week's supply of milk _____
6. A broom _____
7. A large box of detergent _____
8. A two-quart ceramic casserole with lid _____
9. A set of eight water-glasses _____
10. A set of six steak knives _____
11. A fake fur coat _____
12. A pair of pantyhose _____
13. A three-piece polyester pants suit _____
14. A woman's swimsuit _____
15. A girl's blouse _____
16. A pair of kid's jeans _____
17. A pair of children's shoes _____
18. A nylon lace half-slip _____
19. A king-size no-iron sheet _____
20. A machine-washable, drip-dry tablecloth _____
21. 3 1/2 yards of double-knit fabric _____
22. A pair of steel sewing shears _____
23. A pair of sheer Dacron window curtains _____
24. A permanent wave _____
25. A tube of lipstick _____

For Women

How much would you pay for these?

1. A quart of motor oil _____
2. A chassis lubrication _____
3. A set of shock absorbers _____
4. A pair of first-line tires _____
5. A 20 inch power mower _____
6. Fertilizer to cover the lawn _____
7. A 6-foot aluminum stepladder _____
8. A set of four screwdrivers _____
9. An adjustable wrench _____
10. A gallon of latex paint _____
11. A fiber glass fishing rod _____
12. A boy's baseball mitt _____
13. A haircut, including tip _____
14. The home heating bill for a year _____
15. The yearly federal income tax _____
16. Your husband's annual life insurance premiums _____
17. An 'off-the-rack' worsted suit _____
18. A man's raincoat _____
19. A medium-priced pair of shoes _____
20. A pair of knit slacks _____
21. A wash-and-wear shirt _____
22. Ten shares of American Tel & Tel _____
23. Dinner for four at a good restaurant, including tip _____
24. A businessman's lunch for two _____
25. Two tickets to a football or baseball game _____

From Premarital Counseling by H. Norman Wright

YOUR FIRST YEAR BUDGET

(Try to figure out your expenses for the first twelve months of marriage)

Flexible Expenses

| | |
|--|----------|
| Clothing | \$ _____ |
| Furniture and Equipment, including repairs | _____ |
| Medical and Dental Care | _____ |
| Contributions to Charity | _____ |
| Gifts, Entertainment, Recreation, Hobbies | _____ |

Day-to-Day Living Costs

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| Food and Household Supplies | _____ |
| Laundry and Cleaning | _____ |
| Books, Papers and Magazines | _____ |
| Drug Store Sundries | _____ |
| Car Upkeep | _____ |
| Personal Allowances | _____ |
| Total Flexible Expenses | \$ _____ |

Add all flexible expenses and divide by 12. This is the amount you need to set aside each month to take care of flexible expenses.

Fixed Expenses

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Paycheck deductions for Taxes | \$ _____ |
| Social Security | _____ |
| Other | _____ |
| Housing - Rent | _____ |
| Mortgage Payment | _____ |
| Taxes, Special Assessments | _____ |
| Utilities - Gas | _____ |
| Electric | _____ |
| Water | _____ |
| Phone | _____ |
| Church Support - Sunday Collections | _____ |
| Special Collections | _____ |
| Union or Professional Dues | _____ |
| Membership Fees in Organizations | _____ |
| Insurance Premiums | _____ |
| Vehicle Licenses | _____ |

| | |
|--------------------------|----------|
| Regular Payments - Loans | _____ |
| Installments | _____ |
| Christmas Savings Club | _____ |
| Other | _____ |
| Regular Savings | _____ |
| Add Total Fixed Expenses | \$ _____ |

Then divide by 12 - this is the amount you will need to set aside each month to take care of fixed expenses.

- (1) Figure out your total income for your first year of marriage. (Total Annual Income) \$ _____
- (2) Add your yearly flexible expenses and fixed expenses. (Total Annual Expenses) \$ _____
- Deduct (2) from (1) to find out if you are in the black or red \$ _____

Taken from Premarital Counseling by H. Norman Wright

A CHECK LIST FOR USHERS
AT A CHURCH WEDDING

G.E. Hoffman

To be selected to serve as an usher at the church wedding of your friend is one the signal honors that comes to young men. It is an honor because the Bride and Groom have chosen you to perform a very important function in their wedding. Your selection indicates the Bride and Groom trust in your judgement, they admire your conduct, and are confident you will be well groomed for the wedding day.

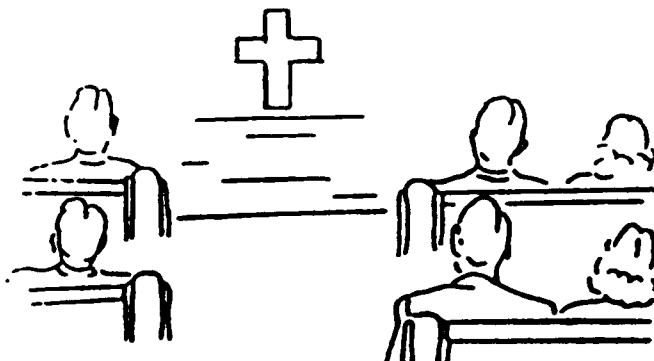
To help you in this important function we are making the following suggestions.

Ushers should assume the responsibility to seat guests, oversee the pre-wedding preparations of the Sanctuary, and escort the members of the wedding party at the proper times.



ARRIVAL at the church, except in case of a very small wedding should be scheduled for one hour before the appointed time of the wedding.

After arrival the ushers should make sure the lighting is correct, the candles are lit, and the boutonniers for the men are distributed to the proper places. Each usher will usually have a boutonniere to wear.



The Ushers should organize themselves to decide which entrances they will serve. The bride's family and guests are always seated on the left side of the Sanctuary as you face the Altar. The groom's family and guests are seated on the right side. In the event that one side seems severely out of balance these rules may be relaxed with late arriving guests seated on the side having the most room.

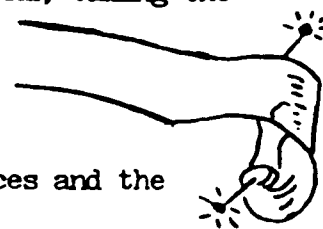
The Usher offers his arm to the lady asking, "Are you friends of the bride; or the groom?" If he knows the family he does not need to ask.

The lady is escorted to the proper seat and her husband and children will follow and enter the pew after her.

When the time for the wedding approaches and it is clear that most of the guests have arrived, the mother of the groom is seated in the second pew from the front, right side. Her husband may have already been seated there. In some cases he may wish to enter with her.

Then the mother of the bride is seated in the pew on the left side.

Two ushers should then process down the center aisle and, taking the white runner by each of the corners, they pull it behind them down the aisle until they have it all unfolded and snug. It should be pinned at the entrance to the center aisle.



The ushers should then proceed to their appointed places and the organist will begin the Wedding March.

When the ceremony is completed, the ushers will escort the bridesmaids down the center aisle, unless there is an exception made at the time of rehearsal.

When the wedding party has reached the exit from the sanctuary, the ushers will return to complete their function.

One usher will escort the bride's mother and her family to the exit to the Sanctuary.

Another usher will then escort the groom's mother to the exit.

Two ushers should stand at the center aisle -- end of the first occupied pew and dismiss those guests. As the guests move to receiving line the ushers continue dismissing one pew at a time until all have been dismissed.

These acts will help everyone in the wedding, and all the guests to have a pleasant and happy experience.

REMEMBER:

1. SMILE - it is contagious.



2. BE POLITE - Guests arriving from out of town are frequently early. It is embarrassing or all if they are here before you.

3. BE HELPFUL - Anything can happen when good friends get together. Be ready to help when there is an emergency, a misunderstanding or a problem.
4. BE REVERANT - Your friends have chosen a church wedding. We should all respect their choice and the traditions of the congregation of the church.
5. THANK YOU - You will be a real help to all, and your friends will remember your help for many years.



Gilbert E. Hoffman
1969

THE RECEIVING LINE

We are often asked by members of the Wedding Party about the proper line-up for the Receiving Line. The final decision should be made by the bride and groom. To assist you we are repeating here a suggestion from an issue of Bride Magazine, (fall 1968)

The bride's father seldom participates in the receiving line, but stands between the two mothers when he does. The inclusion of the groom's father is optional.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------|-------|------------------|-------|
| Mother of Bride | Mother of Groom | Father of Groom | Bride | Groom | Maid of Honor | Maids |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------|-------|------------------|-------|

NOTE: Usheres and best man are not included in this receiving line.

Written by Gilbert E. Hoffman, 1969

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