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## The Relationship Of Location To The Effectiveness Of Marriage Enrichment Retreats And Workshops

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The Relationship of Location to the Effectiveness  
of Marriage Enrichment Retreats and Workshops

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A Dissertation  
Presented to  
the Faculty of the Graduate School  
University of the Pacific

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Education

by  
LaVon W. Rupel

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## CHAPTER 1

### THE PROBLEM, HYPOTHESES, AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

The proliferation of marriage and family enrichment programs in the last two decades has drawn considerable interest from professionals working in the area of marriage and family. Otto (1976) considers these enrichment programs to be a form of family life education. Other observers, however, have begun to refer to enrichment as constituting a new professional area (Smith, Shoffner & Scott, 1979) or an emerging field which is related to but not essentially a part of the three existing fields of marriage and family specialists - education, counseling, and research (Mace, 1979).

Parallel to the emergence of enrichment programs as a new professional area has been a ground swell of interest in marriage and family enrichment among religious groups. The most visible of these programs is the Catholic Marriage Encounter which began in 1967 (Gallagher, 1975; Otto, 1976) and which, by now, has been adopted and adapted by several Protestant and Jewish groups. Most Protestant denominations, however, have developed their own marriage enrichment programs congruent with their own theological perspectives beginning with the Methodist Marriage Communication Lab in 1965. On the whole, the Protestant programs tend to be oriented more toward an educational model than are the

Catholic Encounters, have less structure, and use more varied methodologies.

Although marriage and family enrichment takes many forms, there seems to be general agreement among all its proponents that the purpose is to enhance the quality of already good relationships as opposed to treating malfunctional relationships. Marriage enrichment is not intended for troubled couples or couples in crisis, but provides conditions for couples to discover the dynamic nature of their relationship and provides encouragement for them to grow in the direction of personal and relational potential (Mace, 1979). It is a growth model as opposed to a rehabilitation model. That Hof & Miller (1981) report some clinics and family service agencies are experimenting with marriage enrichment programs as an adjunct to counseling is an exception to the prevailing approach that marriage enrichment is designed to enhance healthy, stable marriages.

The merging of several historical trends laid the groundwork for the beginning of the enrichment movement in the early 1960's. Demographic changes in today's family, contrasted with the family of a century ago, reveal that extended life expectancy coupled with fewer children per family will, on the average, give today's husband and wife 23 years of conjugal living after the last child has left home, as compared to seven and one-half years in the last century (Manno, 1980). Burgess and Locke (1945) point out

that as social norms change and the family becomes less a legal and economic entity it can no longer be held together by external forces. The need for internal cohesiveness then makes the quality of the marriage relationship a critical issue.

Other forces have added to the backdrop out of which marriage enrichment has grown. The impact of the women's movement created role changes in the family. Research in the fields of human sexuality, communications, and the development of humanistic psychology all impacted on family functioning as did the fields of values education and adult education (Smith et al., 1979). Another concern often mentioned as leading to the beginnings of the enrichment movement was alarm over the rising divorce rate and the resulting effect on children (Otto, 1976; Hopkins, Hopkins, Mace & Mace, 1978).

Burgess and Locke (1945), as they described the transition from the institutional to the companionship family, indicated the necessity to provide the kinds of resources persons need to make the new companionship pattern function. Beginning in 1961, the enrichment movement emerged to address this need, focusing on strengths already apparent in marriages and families and building on these. Within 15 years, estimates based on survey data reported nearly a million couples had participated in marriage enrichment programs of one kind or another (Gallagher, 1975;

Otto, 1976).

Marriage and family enrichment is offered through religious organizations, community colleges, and community agencies such as Family Service Associations, mental health services, and the YMCA. Many private groups also promote enrichment programs such as ACME (Associated Couples for Marriage Enrichment), Minnesota Couples Communication, and The Marriage Council of Philadelphia (Smith et al., 1971; Hof, Epstein & Miller, 1980). The U. S. military has encouraged and, on occasion, has ordered its personnel to participate in marriage enrichment programs (Mace, 1981). Other public funding has gone into marriage enrichment through the Agricultural Extension Service and through some public school systems. Several universities have incorporated marriage enrichment into their departmental offerings, including specific marriage enrichment training for the PhD program in Family Studies at Georgia State University's Department of Psychology (L'Abate & O'Callaghan, 1977), and at least two medical schools have enrichment programs as a part of their preventive health care education (Smith, et al., 1979).

Marriage enrichment is offered in a variety of formats. The most common patterns are (1) weekend retreats for groups of couples, (2) multi-week training groups for the learning of specific skills (communication, conflict-management, etc.), and (3) support and growth groups. A broad range of

methodologies is used to increase self and other awareness and regard, to enhance the quality of communication, to provide conflict-management skills, and to broaden and deepen emotional and sexual lives (Gurman & Kniskern, 1977). The emphasis is on experimental learning and is provided through couple dialogues, group discussion, and structured group exercises with leader input. (An exception to this is Marriage Encounter, the Catholic model, which uses only couple dialogues following leader instructions [Doherty, McCabe & Ryder, 1978]).

Marriage enrichment programs are seen as drawing from several bodies of theory (Hof & Miller, 1981). Humanistic psychology and Rogerian concepts have provided the primary rationale out of which the movement has grown. Concern for developing untapped human resources, affirming values and subjective experience, facilitating personal and relational growth are emphases that the enrichment movement has borrowed from humanistic psychology and the human potential movement (Rogers, 1972). Threads of behavioral psychology and concepts of conditioning are also evident in marriage enrichment programs as couples are taught ways of increasing behaviors perceived to enhance the relationship and taught to set measurable behavioral goals (Guerney, 1977). Social learning theory, with its emphasis on the reciprocal nature of relationships in person-situation interactions, and its theories of observational, vicarious learning (Hilgard,

Atkinson, & Atkinson, 1975) has also contributed to marriage enrichment.

Further, Communications Theory, Family Systems Theory, and Group Process Theory have fed into the development of marriage enrichment programs as well as research in the areas of conflict resolution and of human sexuality (Otto, 1976; Mace, 1975). There is a determined focus, as proponents develop theory based models, on marriage as a nuclear relationship which determines family quality (Mace, 1975), on health rather than pathology, on marriage as a dynamic process rather than a static contract (Rogers, 1972).

The size of marriage enrichment groups varies. The Encounter model, which uses little or no group process, may accommodate as many as thirty couples in a weekend retreat. Marriage enrichment programs which utilize group process usually limit their group size from four to eight couples per leader couple (Otto, 1975).

There seems to be wide agreement that it is preferable for groups to be led by a married couple team, although there are exceptions. Leaders may be professionally related to the field of marriage and family counseling or may be paraprofessionals trained by the sponsoring agency or institution. Certification standards for leaders have been developed by some groups (Hopkins et al., 1978).

The need for research in the emerging field of enrichment is cited by several authors (Gurman & Kniskern, 1977;

Hof et al., 1980; L'Abate & O'Callaghan, 1977; Mace, 1979). Considering the large number of couples who have participated in these programs, the amount of research is very small (Hof & Miller, 1981). Most of the research to date has tested the outcome of various group methods (Sell, Shoffner, Farris & Hill, 1980) in which positive change was demonstrated on 60% of the criterion measures used (Gurman & Kniskern, 1977). Almost all the studies reported positive change on at least some measure following a marital enrichment experience (Hof & Miller, 1981). Although these results may be cause for optimism for proponents of marriage enrichment, most of the studies have been flawed by one or more of the following: (1) lack of control groups, (2) small number of subjects, (3) failure to control for leader effects including equivalency of training, (4) failure to control group size in group comparisons, (5) failure to provide equal treatment length, (6) lack of follow-up measures, (7) failure to use reliable and valid instrumentation (Gurman & Kniskern, 1977; Hoff & Miller, 1981; Summers, 1982).

In Gurman and Kniskern's (1977) survey of marriage enrichment research, 86% of the studies were conducted on non-church related programs, of which 75% involved volunteers from university communities specifically recruited for the collection of data for research. Summers (1982) has called for more research to be done with the



populations where most of the programs are naturally occurring and to emphasize the field quality of the research. He emphasizes the need for ANCOVA statistics to be run on the data to adjust for differences in non-randomized groups.

Several researchers (Hof & Miller, 1981; Mace, 1975) have encouraged research which would identify the vital and operative components of a retreat. For example, how important is it for couples to be isolated from daily stresses and free of irrelevant interruptions? Many questions remain unanswered in the presentation of marriage enrichment programs because of meager or flawed research.

#### The Problem

Research to date has demonstrated that all marriage enrichment models are not equally effective. This study assessed the effectiveness of a specific research program designed for a population which rarely has been studied. A relationship inventory administered as a pretest, posttest, and delayed test measured marital satisfaction. This study attempted to answer the following questions: (1) Is a retreat location which is removed from the stresses and demands of participants' homes and jobs a significant variable in outcome effectiveness? (2) Will participants make equal gains on a criterion measure if they meet near their homes and sleep and eat at home in the course of the workshop? (3) Will there be a difference in outcome

effectiveness on the criterion measure between men and women? (4) Will any difference apparent at the conclusion of the workshops be sustained at four-week follow-up on the same measure? (5) Is there a relationship between demographic variables on the criterion measure?

---

### Hypotheses

The hypotheses investigated in the proposed research were as follows:

#### Hypothesis 1

After adjustments made on pretest data, subjects in both the retreat condition and the near-home condition show greater gains in immediate posttest marital satisfaction than do control subjects.

#### Hypothesis 2

After adjustments made on pretest data, subjects in both the retreat condition and the near-home condition show greater gains on a delayed test of marital satisfaction than do controls.

#### Hypothesis 3

After adjustments made on pretest data, subjects in the retreat condition score higher on immediate posttest of marital satisfaction than do subjects in the near-home condition.

#### Hypothesis 4

After adjustments made on pretest data, subjects in the retreat condition score higher on a delayed test of marital

satisfaction than do subjects in the near-home condition.

#### Hypothesis 5

There is no significant difference between men and women in gains in marital satisfaction in any of the three conditions.

In each of the five hypotheses, marital satisfaction is measured by four subscale scores and the total score on the Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory, as follows:

- (a) Regard
- (b) Empathy
- (c) Congruence
- (d) Unconditionality
- (e) Total

#### Significance of the Study

This research provided a field test for a specific theory-based marriage enrichment program which heretofore has not been tested. The research was needed to provide confirmation of its effectiveness or need for its modification. Testing differential responses between men and women was needed to confirm the program's effectiveness for each group, or to modify the program.

Little research has been done on marriage enrichment in retreat settings. None to date has been found which demonstrates the importance of separating participating enrichment couples from the demands and stresses of home and family as they focus on the growth possibilities in their

relationship. If retreat settings do not provide a more effective learning atmosphere, marriage enrichment planners may want to give more attention to planning weekend workshops near the homes of participants allowing them to save the expense of a retreat setting, the transportation expenses and, perhaps, overnight child care costs. If retreat locations provide more effective settings for marriage enrichment, sponsoring groups may wish to alter budgets to help underwrite couple costs, and may want to develop greater availability of retreat facilities.

In addition to the hypotheses tested, this research covered three areas in which very little marriage enrichment research has been done: (1) comparing two experimental conditions, (2) studying a sample selected from a population that rarely has been studied (i.e., church groups), (3) utilizing a treatment composed of "mixed" content with experimental learning in five major areas.

This research was designed to correct some of the flaws that have cast doubt on some of the conclusions of previous research in the field of marriage enrichment. It included two control groups (one no-treatment, one placebo), it controlled for leader effects, group size effects, and equivalency of treatment length. Additionally, it provided reliable and valid instrumentation, included a follow-up measure, and employed the ANCOVA statistic to partially compensate for potential non-equivalency of groups. It is

hoped that the careful design of this study will make it a credible contribution to the accumulating body of knowledge in a new field where little research has been done.

### Procedures

Sixty-two subjects were studied in two experimental conditions. Twenty-eight subjects composed the retreat group, and 34 subjects were in the workshop group. The experimental groups varied as to location. The retreat group met and stayed for the entire weekend at a retreat site sufficiently distant from participants' homes to isolate them from daily stresses. The participants ate their meals as part of the "group life" of the weekend and couples had private bedrooms. The workshop group met in a church facility or in a home near the church. Couples slept at their own homes and ate only lunches with the group.

Each participant in both groups was given a pretest upon arrival at the marriage enrichment event. Each filled out the same instrument as a posttest at the end of the retreat. A delayed test was administered to each of the subjects four weeks following the marriage enrichment weekend. Subjects were asked to code their three test administrations with their social security numbers in order to allow for confidentiality. The testing instrument was the Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory, a theory based measure of marital satisfaction with four subscales: Empathy, Regard, Congruence, and Unconditionality.

Persons became subjects for this study by volunteering for a marriage enrichment weekend which was offered in the context of regular programming within local churches. Three congregations offered members and friends opportunity for marriage enrichment in the retreat condition and three congregations offered the same marriage enrichment opportunity in the workshop condition. Format, content and leadership of the retreats was the same for both conditions. The groups met for an average of fourteen hours of structured group time beginning Friday night and ending Sunday noon.

Two control groups (no-treatment and placebo) drawn from similar congregations were given a pretest, posttest and delayed test at the same time intervals as the experimental groups. Control subjects were couples who had indicated interest in attending a marriage enrichment retreat but who had not yet attended. The placebo group attended a church conference of the same length as the marriage enrichment weekend.

The congregations represented similar populations in terms of demographic variables. Information was obtained from subjects on the make-up of each group to account for extraneous variables. Age, employment, number of years married, first or second marriage, number of children, number of children in the home, educational level, and income range were tabulated and examined.

### Limitations

There are four major limitations to this study. They are as follows:

1. A self-report measure was the instrument used in this study. Self-report measures are criticized on one hand as being subject to responses affected by social desirability (Hof & Miller, 1981). On the other hand, it is assumed that each person is the best judge of his/her own satisfaction and will disclose such personal judgments honestly on questionnaires if appropriate conditions of confidentiality are provided (Powell, 1977).
2. Subjects volunteering to participate in marriage enrichment retreats/workshops under church sponsorship constituted the sample. Accordingly, the generalization of results is limited to a similar population.
3. Attrition in one cell of the design lowered sample numbers below that desired for that segment.
4. The leaders were assumed to adequately represent the population of marriage enrichment leaders.

### Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definition of terms were employed:

#### Marriage Enrichment

Marriage enrichment is an educational and preventive

approach to relationship enhancement. This is an inclusive term which refers to the philosophy, the process, and the program of this approach to marital growth (Hof & Miller, 1981).

### Marriage Enrichment Programs

Marriage enrichment programs are a group of didactic and experiential exercises designed for couples who have what they perceive to be a fairly well functioning marriage and who wish to make their relationship even more mutually satisfying. These programs are generally concerned with enhancing the couples' communication, emotional life, conflict-management skills, sexual relationship and fostering marriage strengths (Otto, 1975).

### Marriage Encounter

Marriage Encounter is a specific marriage enrichment program begun by the Catholic Church which now has Protestant and Jewish affiliates. A highly structured weekend program, it uses only couple dialogues and leader input and is followed up by ongoing group meetings (Doherty et al., 1978).

### Retreat

A retreat is an intensive weekend experience which provides participants the opportunity to be together as a couple, away from normal routines, commitments and daily stresses in an atmosphere of seclusion and leisure. It provides couples time and space for a continuous look at



their marriage relationship working along with other couples on enhancing their marriage relationship (Mace & Mace, 1974).

### Workshop

A workshop is an intensive weekend experience which has the same program format as the retreat with the exception that couples eat and sleep at home, meet in a church or home in the community and are not secluded from daily routines, commitments and pressures.

### Weekend

A weekend, in this study, refers to the continuous period of time from seven o'clock Friday evening to twelve noon on Sunday.

### Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory

Sometimes referred to as the RI, this self-report was the measuring instrument for the dependent variable, marital satisfaction.

### Summary

Chapter 1 provided a brief overview of the history, theoretical bases, methodologies, and scope of the emerging field of marriage enrichment. The paucity of research was noted along with a brief summary of outcome research done to date. The hypotheses of this study were listed, namely, to test the effectiveness of a specific marriage enrichment program, to measure differences of subjects in marital satisfaction depending on the location of the retreat, and

to test differential responses between men and women. Procedures, limitations, and definition of terms for the study were explained as well as what significance this study will have in adding to the accumulating body of research in field of marriage enrichment.

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The next four chapters present the review of literature, the methods and procedures of data collection, analysis of the data, and discussion of findings.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to measure the effectiveness of a specific marriage enrichment program, the importance of location as a variable in retreat/workshop outcome, and differences in the responses of men and women. This chapter provides an overview of the marriage enrichment literature, its philosophical and theoretical foundations, its applications, and a report on the relevant research to date, including data on the Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory.

#### Marriage Enrichment Philosophy

##### Definition

Marriage enrichment is an emerging professional area in the applied family field (Smith et al., 1979), the aim of which is to aid couples in relationship enhancement (Hof & Miller, 1981). The relative infancy of the movement is demonstrated by the fact that in a survey of 30 professionals conducted by Otto (1975, 1976), 90% conducted their first program in 1973 or later. Born out of the human potential movement of the last two decades, marriage enrichment has at its core a positive, growth-oriented philosophy with an optimistic view of human nature. People are viewed as having a natural drive toward growth, health and personal development. Marriage enrichment is based on the premise

that human relationships, too, have a great many untapped strengths and resources which can be developed (Mace & Mace, 1975, 1976; Otto, 1976). Given the appropriate environment, people can learn how to choose and change behaviors and attitudes which will improve their inter-personal relationships and allow them to experience increased satisfaction in life. Problems and conflicts are affirmed as part of the process of growth and development (Hof & Miller, 1981), a part of the dynamic, constantly changing relationship based on what Sherwood and Scherer (1975) call the dynamic interplay of the unique and changing needs and expectations and the skills of the marriage partners.

Hof and Miller (1981) list four goals of marriage enrichment: (1) to increase couples' awareness regarding the positive aspects, strengths and growth potential of the individuals and the marriage; (2) to increase self disclosure of thoughts and feelings within the relationship; (3) to increase mutual empathy and intimacy; and (4) to develop and encourage skills for effective communication, problem solving and conflict resolution.

#### Theoretical Bases

Although most proponents of marriage enrichment are practitioners with a view toward programming and applications, a theoretical base upon which marriage enrichment programs are built is beginning to appear in the literature.

Guerney (1977) developed a program he calls

Relationship Enhancement Programs, for which he has carefully stated the theoretical elements. He identifies his program as drawing from three large bodies of theory-- Rogerian psychotherapy, behavior modification, and social learning theory.

Rogerian Psychotherapy. Rogerian psychotherapy is based on a view of persons as essentially good in nature, inherently capable of living their lives in a peaceful, productive and creative way. According to this view, persons have the capacity to direct their own destinies and solve their own problems (Belkin, 1975). The central concepts of Rogerian theory--genuineness, empathy and unconditional regard (Rogers, 1967)--create an open and trusting climate in which individuals can value self and others. This climate affirms the importance of the emotional life and affirms the interaction of self concept and interpersonal relationships on the emotional life (Guerney, 1977). It allows for the expression of both positive and negative feelings, of reflective listening, and of self and other acceptance with a non-judgmental attitude. It stresses leader congruence and modeling of empathic behavior while emphasizing the responsibility of each person for his or her own life. Rogerian theory suggests that these conditions create a different reality for persons than what they generally experience, a reality in which change can take place--change of cognitions, attitudes and

behavior which will enhance their personal lives and their interpersonal relationships. Guerney (1977) sees these concepts as foundation stones for marital enrichment. According to Hof & Miller (1981), Rogerian theory, whether expressed or not, appears to form the foundation of virtually all marriage enrichment programs.

Behavior Modification Theory. Behavioral theory, upon which Guerney (1977) also draws, states that individuals are a product of conditioning, that feelings follow behavior. Whereas the humanistic theories are generally portrayed as concerned with the "inside" dimensions of human experience, the behaviorist theories are generally portrayed as interested in the external environment, the "outside" perspective (Thoresen, 1973). As such, marriage enrichment draws on the theory of behaviorism which suggests that environmental conditions, stimuli, responses, and patterns of reinforcement in relationships are responsible for change in relationships. Borrowing from the methodologies and techniques developed out of behavioral theories, marriage enrichment encourages the modification of self and relationship behavior by modeling, behavioral rehearsal, prompting, and reinforcement. Experiences are designed to accelerate behaviors perceived to be desirable and rewarding in a marriage relationship (e.g., positive statements, ownership and expression of feelings, effective negotiation skills) and to extinguish undesirable and dysfunctional behaviors

(Guerney, 1977). Although some marriage enrichment programs are more oriented toward specific and measurable behavioral goals than are others, nearly all employ methods based on behavioral theory (Hof & Miller, 1981).

Social Learning Theory. Social learning theory forms an important base for marital enrichment, affirming that people can learn new interaction skills and can unlearn behaviors that are counter-productive to their objectives. For example, persons who have never learned how to deal with conflict can learn conflict management. Deficiencies in social learning such as the above-mentioned example are viewed as important components in relationship discord, and the learning and practice of appropriate skills is viewed as an important component in marital health. The importance of re-education in the area of cognitive functions is incorporated with the importance of behavior modifications through the employment of similar methodologies, such as modeling, behavior rehearsal, and labeling (Hof & Miller, 1981).

Group Process Theory. In addition to the three theoretical frames of reference which Guerney (1977) outlines as basic to marriage enrichment, Mace (1975) mentions group process theory as one of the foundation blocks of marital enrichment. He stresses the complexity of the group process in that a marriage enrichment group is a group of sub-groups each of which is a pre-existing and on-going social unit. Although marriage enrichment groups are not

therapy groups, Egan (1970) has identified the same curative factors as operative in all growth oriented group experiences that Yalom (1970) identified as operating interdependently in therapy groups. These curative factors as listed by Yalom (1970) are: (1) imparting information, (2) instillation of hope, (3) universality (sense of "I am not alone with this problem"), (4) altruism (helping other group members through support, reassurances, etc.); (5) corrective recapitulation of the primary family group, (6) development of socializing techniques (social learning), (7) imitative behavior (modeling), (8) interpersonal learning, (9) group cohesiveness (sense of solidarity, we-ness, experiencing the group as a source of strength and encouragement, and (10) catharsis (ventilation of positive and negative feelings).

Egan's (1970) list of common elements of growth oriented groups is: (1) opportunity to present and reveal the way a participant perceives and feels, (2) climate of experimentation, (3) feedback, (4) supportive atmosphere, (5) cognitive map, (6) practice, (7) planning application of new learnings to everyday life, (8) relearning how to learn, (9) emphasis on effective communications and emotional or affective learning, (10) participative leadership, (11) normal populations, and (12) the use of structured experiences.

In marriage enrichment, the curative factors provide



the rationale for the group experience. They are present in varying degrees depending on the nature, composition and goals of each specific group or program (Yalom, 1970). For example, at one end of the continuum of group interaction in marriage enrichment programs is the highly structured

Marriage Encounter (Gallagher, 1975) which focuses primarily on dyadic interaction. Minimal group process is limited to leader input sessions, shared meals and a religious service. Even in this experience, the sense of universality and the vicarious support of other participants is often reported by couples as they sense they have gathered for the same purpose.

On the other end of the group interaction continuum is the program used by the Maces (1976) in which there is a minimum of structure and organization. Couples meeting for a weekend experience decide for themselves what the agenda and goals will be. In this unstructured group setting with the leaders serving as models and surrogate parents (Mace, 1975), all of the curative factors of group process are potentially operative.

Communications Theory. Communications theory is also a contributor to the marriage enrichment field. Communication theory's view of persons is that communication is inevitable (i.e., in verbal or non-verbal ways, people are always communicating), that all communication is significant, and that social context changes the meaning of communication

(Watzlawick, Beavin & Jackson, 1967). Satir (1972) describes communication as a huge umbrella that covers and affects all that goes on between human beings. She says it is the largest single factor determining what kinds of relationships a person makes with others and what happens to that person in the world. Communications theory is based on a lengthy list of assumptions which sees communication not as an end in itself, but as a vehicle for creating relationships and as an index of relationships. As a vehicle for creating relationships it can be an effective means of exchanging important information. As an index of relationships, it provides ways of understanding significant aspects of the nature of a relationship, for example, by monitoring time spent in verbal communication, degree of self-disclosure, styles of communication, and the focus of conversations (Miller, Nunnally & Wackman, 1975).

Communications theory takes a dynamic view of people and relationships. It assumes that they are constantly changing, either through changes in the external environment (i.e., education, work, family, community variables) or shifts in the internal environment (i.e., maturation, emerging values, feelings, ideas, dreams). According to Miller et al. (1975), communication is seen as a way of effectively dealing with change, as a means of expressing and demonstrating the unique life and energy of each person in a relationship and the process of the partnership. It

supports and reflects both the life within each person and the life between the marital pair.

Self-disclosure, the revealing of one's thoughts and feelings to another person, is a communications concept which is of central significance to the philosophy and process of marriage enrichment. Self-disclosing communications influence relationships in several ways. First, awareness of one's true self is gained through successful disclosure (Jourard, 1964, 1971). Second, self-disclosure helps an individual discern differences and similarities between self perceptions and feelings and those of others. It also makes it possible to learn directly from others what their specific needs, expectations, and intentions are, avoiding what Satir (1972) calls "communication by rumor". It allows for individualizing rather than assuming stereotypes of role-related choices. Third, self-disclosure and self-esteem appear to be positively related, i.e., the higher the self-esteem, the higher the level of self-disclosure (Jourard, 1964). A climate of trust and acceptance is needed to initiate and maintain the reciprocating cycle.

Family System Theory. Marriage enrichment borrows from many of the theoretical concepts of family systems theory. Family systems theory is based upon the view of the family as an entity, the parts of which co-vary independently with one another and which maintains equilibrium by making

changes in itself (Napier & Whitaker, 1978). Satir (1972) defines the family as a whole made up of many parts which are in constant action, reaction and interaction with each other. Marriage enrichment borrows from the view (Whitaker, 1975) of the marital dyad as a three-unit subsystem of the family system, the three units being the two individuals and the relationship. All the elements of the family systems are present in the marital dyad, i.e., structure, rules, roles, goals, strategies, boundaries, equilibrium. Family systems are described (Satir, 1972) as falling into two categories, open and closed. The aim of enrichment programs is to create and maintain open systems as opposed to closed systems. Satir (1972) described open family systems on four dimensions: (1) self and other esteem is high; (2) communication is direct, open, specific, clear, congruent and leveling; (3) rules are overt, up-to-date, human and flexible; and (4) goals are related to reality, are appropriate and constructive. Closed systems, by contrast, are described as: (1) self and other esteem is low; communication is indirect, unclear, unspecific, incongruent, and scapegoating; (3) rules are covert, out-of-date, inflexible and restrictive; and (4) the goals are accidental, chaotic, inappropriate and destructive.

The aim of enrichment programs is to create and maintain open systems. The viability and continuity of a marriage according to Kantor and Lehr (1975), is directly

related to its ability to be open to and respond productively to change as it occurs within the system, or externally in the environment. Although the goal of marriage enrichment is focused on the openness of the marital dyad, many proponents see marriage enrichment as strengthening the primary subsystem of the family system and thereby creating and maintaining openness in the entire family system (Mace, 1974; Miller, 1975; Otto, 1975; Rogers, 1972).

Kantor and Lehr (1975), on the basis of extensive empirical observation of families in their natural settings, contend that the principal activity of family process is distance regulation. It is, in part, a reference to the process of distance regulation in the marriage relationship when proponents of marriage enrichment advocate these programs for couples who have what they perceive to be fairly well-functioning marriages and who wish to make their marriages even more mutually satisfying (Otto, 1976). Within marital systems, recurring patterns of interaction which tend to repeat themselves govern the distance or closeness marriage partners feel with each other. Lief (Hof & Miller, 1981) speaks of this distance even in stable marriages as frustrating and baffling to couples who turn to each other for emotional support often with a seeming inability to give or get what they are seeking from each other. Marriage enrichment experiences are designed to help couples in an atmosphere of trust and support to become

aware of these repetitive distancing patterns and to develop a more satisfactory pattern of relational intimacy through which their emotional needs are fulfilled (Mace, 1977).

Summary of Theoretical Bases. Marriage enrichment is a new and developing field which has not yet firmly established its own theoretical framework. A review of relevant literature discussed six large bodies of theory which serve as foundation stones for this emerging field. These six areas are: (1) Rogerian psychotherapy; (2) behavior modification theory; (3) social learning theory; (4) group process theory; (5) communications theory; and (6) family systems theory. The essential element which is drawn from all six areas and serves as a cohesive force is the positive emphasis which pervades the developing philosophy of marriage enrichment.

### Applications

#### Marriage Enrichment as Education

Otto (1976) identifies as a key issue in the new field of marriage enrichment the importance of presenting enrichment programs in an educational context. To a greater or lesser degree, virtually all marriage enrichment programs follow an educational model. The model is an experimental one which is more dynamic than didactic in nature, focusing on certain areas of content, but emphasizing process (Hopkins et al., 1978).

Guerney (1977) describes an educational model as one in

which attitudes and specific skills are taught in a structured and systematic fashion, behavioral objectives are clearly stated, and appropriate evaluative measures are included in the program. A rationale is provided for what is to be learned along with practice and supervision in developing skills and teaching participants to generalize beyond the learning situation to their everyday life experiences. The focus is on setting goals and reaching them, increasing understanding, and creating a climate of growth and development. There is an emphasis on and identification of individual and relationship strengths.

L'Abate's (1977) view of marriage enrichment is to provide programs that are structured and manual-directed, with the pre-written manual based on a linear model of information processing following an incremental, additive, progressive, and step-wise presentation of information to be used by couples. He describes several program designs for couples in areas such as confronting change, problem-solving skills, sexuality, assertiveness, equality, conflict resolution, effective parenting, and death and dying. His programs have the advantage of recommending specific formats to specific couples since he has classified his enrichment programs according to various approaches. His classifications are: affective vs. cognitive, practical vs. theoretical, simple vs. complex, general vs. specific, and structured vs. developmental.

The Couples Communication Program (Miller et al., 1975, 1976; Nunnally, Miller & Wackman, 1975) and the Relationship Enhancement Program (Guerney, 1977) are two representative programs, both of which are highly structured, short-term, educational models for improving communication, enhancing personal and marital relationships, and preventing problems. All have specific goals, employ experiential learning through exercises, readings, mini-lectures, small group discussions, and repeated skill practice.

Participants in a marriage enrichment program typically are a heterogeneous group of people, according to Hof and Miller (1981), and differ with regard to their strengths and learning abilities. Therefore, for maximum learning to occur, it is important that enrichment programs include experience and exercises that are varied in the type of learning ability emphasized. This will assure that a greater number of participants' learning styles will be compatible with at least some of the exercises. L'Abate (1977) also suggests that it is the combination of experiential, didactic-cognitive, and modeling techniques that is most effective in the teaching of new communication skills.

#### Marriage Enrichment as Prevention

Clark Vincent (1973, 1977) and David and Vera Mace (1975) express the need for preventive services to families to make a shift away from the pathological-remedial



orientation, which is the common approach to families after problems have arisen. It is their hope and one of the major aims of marriage enrichment to prevent the emergence, development and recurrence of interpersonal dysfunction. It is believed by many (Clinebell, 1976; Guerney, 1977;

L'Abate, 1977; Mace & Mace, 1975; Otto, 1976) that by dealing with people in marriages which are basically functional, and by developing the potential and strengths that are there, growth and satisfaction will result. As a positive, growth-oriented base develops, deterioration in the relationship can be prevented. Partners learn how to recognize problems early and how to cope with conflict and change. Along with the preventive emphasis, there is primary attention given to increasing emotional and interpersonal satisfaction and on strengthening marriage and family life.

There are three possible levels of prevention according to L'Abate (1977). Primary prevention consists of promoting health and the building of relational skills. Secondary prevention focuses on early diagnosis and intervention to block further development of dysfunction within the system. In tertiary prevention, there is apparently irreversible dysfunction and the focus is on limiting the spread of the dysfunction and promoting rehabilitation. The majority of marriage enrichment programs fall into the primary prevention category (Mace & Mace, 1975; Otto, 1976).

Hof and Miller (1981) challenge the common assumption

that marriage enrichment is only for couples with a fairly well functioning relationship who want to make their relationship more fulfilling and satisfying. They present a model based on a continuum ranging from excellent marital function to extreme marital dysfunction and suggest ways in which marriage enrichment, with appropriate modifications, can benefit couples at different points along the continuum. From their experience at The Marriage Council of Philadelphia, they have designed marriage enrichment programs for couples who do not have a large core of marital health on which to build. Their experience leads them to postulate that the greater the degree of marital dysfunction, the more an enrichment program needs: (1) a high degree of structure, (2) a well-focused agenda, (3) highly trained and skilled leadership, (4) close attention to screening, and (5) small group size.

There is a widespread recognition by members of the helping professions (Otto, 1976) that a large proportion of marriages are "subclinical" in the sense that, despite the couple's love and dedication to each other and their commitment to continuing the union, they have problems for which they need help. Because their problems are low-level, not severe enough to precipitate a major crisis, the vast majority of couples will never seek help. Proponents of marriage enrichment believe their programs to be preventive of marital breakdown for "subclinical" couples. Further,

Clinebell (1975) believes marriage enrichment retreats help some couples with deadlocked or deeply hurting marriages to gain enough hope to seek marriage counseling.

Hof and Miller (1981) suggest that "subclinical" couples may benefit more from involvement in marriage enrichment programming than either highly functional or highly dysfunctional couples at the ends of the continuum.

#### Marriage Enrichment Methods

Marriage enrichment is offered by many practitioners and groups with a variety of methods and using multiple approaches. The two most common time formats are (1) the intensive retreat or conference, usually held on a weekend, or (2) a series of weekly meetings in the form of either a marital growth group or a communication/skills training program. The intensive weekend experience provides participants with the opportunity to be together as a couple, away from normal routines, commitments, and pressures in an atmosphere of seclusion and leisure (Hopkins et al., 1978; Mace & Mace, 1974b).

Programs with the intensive weekend format vary in their degree of structure and focus on the couple. At one end of the continuum is the Marriage Encounter model (Gallagher, 1975) in which total group interaction is limited to the sharing of meals and religious services. There is no sharing between couples or in the total group except by the leadership couple. A specific dialogue

process is taught to couples and is repeatedly practiced throughout the weekend. At the unstructured end of the continuum is the program used by the Maces (Mace & Mace, 1976b) in which a group of five to eight couples will meet with co-leaders and establish their own goals and agenda for the weekend.

Near the middle of the continuum are a number of programs that address various issues and aspects of the marital relationship through a series of experiential and structured exercises, theoretical input, total group interaction, skill practice, and couple dialogues (Hof & Miller, 1981). This type of structure provides the possibility for the giving and receiving of potentially valuable observer feedback and support. The intention is to create a supportive and trusting environment, with little or no confrontation, so that individuals and couples can feel free to risk self-disclosure. Leadership couples provide modeling for this as well as encouraging the supportive esprit de corps of the total group or weekend "community". The Church of the Brethren marriage enrichment program, the treatment for the current research, follows this middle of the continuum format (Cline-Detrick, 1980) (see Appendix A).

Multiweek programs meet an evening each week over a period of six to eight weeks. They provide the opportunity for spaced learning and continuing reinforcement for a number of weeks. They also provide the opportunity for

doing homework between meetings and for the practice of new skills within the context of an ongoing support group.

The program content of the weekly groups is similar to that of the intensive weekends with modifications made for different time structuring. One of the most widely used and well researched of the weekly training programs is the Couples Communications Program (Nunnally et al., 1975), where two kinds of skills are developed, (1) self and other awareness skills, and (2) communication skills. The context of the Church of the Brethren marriage enrichment program, which is researched in this study, was drawn in part from the Couples Communication Program of Miller, Nunnally and Wackman (1975).

Hof, Epstein and Miller (1980) emphasize the ongoing nature of marriage enrichment, that it is not restricted to participation in weekend experiences or time limited groups. They propose a three-step model for achieving stable, enduring and positive behavioral and attitudinal change through marriage enrichment programming. The first step involves participation in an intensive, broad-based, issue-oriented weekend retreat. This initial experience can generate a high level of positive feeling between partners and a positive attitude toward the relationship. It can increase motivation and contribute to change and can begin the development of relationship enhancing skills. Step two should follow soon and be a sharply focused, time limited,

multiweek communication training program. It is believed that the positive feelings and heightened motivations will contribute to the commitment and discipline needed for effective, intensive communication training. Finally, in step three, couples receive and give continuing support and growth through an ongoing peer-led marital support group.

### Marriage Enrichment in the Church

Otto (1976) suggests that the church is a natural context for enrichment and growth groups because its membership is from all generations and it deals generally with a non-clinical population. He further quotes Pattison (1972) to make the point that the church has valuable contributions to make to marriages and to families because of its four unique functions as a socio-cultural subsystem:

1. As a valuing center, the church as experience in assisting families to clarify and explore life meanings and values, including the developing of a normative view of the family from a theological perspective.

2. As a lifelong learning-growth center with values and traditions related to human growth, the church can enable family members at all stages of the life cycle to develop their latent intrapersonal, interpersonal, and spiritual resources.

3. As a sustaining-maintaining center, the church can enable families to care for one another within intimate nourishing communities.

4. As a reparation center with rich experience in restoring relationships, the church can enable families to resolve conflict through a reconciliation model.

A caution is added by Otto (1976) that the church must avoid attempting to impose a narrowly specific core of values upon couples, but should aim to create a climate of spontaneity and freedom in which families can grow in self-chosen directions. He also recommends that the church offer its enrichment programs to the total community and work in close cooperation with other community agencies.

Suggesting that marriage enrichment programs in churches are, in part, an answer, Clinebell (1975) lists frequently asked questions by pastors:

1. How can we develop an effective program to prevent marriage disasters?
2. How can we encourage couples to get the counseling they need sooner--before they are "coming apart at the seams"?
3. How can our church give better support to young couples during the rough first five years of marriage?
4. How can we help couples discover there's much more to marriage than they have found so far?
5. In the pressure-cooker of our jobs, what can we do to nurture our own growth and enliven our own

marriages?

6. How can we cope, and help our parishioners cope, with painful crises constructively?

In a directory of National Marriage Enrichment Organizations (Hopkins et al., 1978), twenty programs are listed which are national in scope. Of these, fifteen are sponsored by churches or are church related.

A review of materials on marriage enrichment in denominational publications shows them to be primarily interpretational and promotional in nature, encouraging couples to "put the zest back in tired marriages" or to "discover unappropriated resources in the marriage relationship". Programs in churches emphasize that marriage enrichment is not therapy, but is designed for couples with stable and healthy marriages (Mace, 1982). Although most sponsoring groups promote an out-of-town weekend retreat where couples will have an uninterrupted, quiet time to concentrate on their relationships, some church groups also promote the multi-week growth group (Turner & Turner, 1981). There is increasing interest in some denominations in experimenting with in-town retreats, meeting in a church facility or available home using the same Friday night to Sunday noon time frame and format as out-of-town retreats (Kissee & Kissee, 1981). The in-town workshop is seen by some (Hopkins et al., 1978) as having some of the advantages of both the retreat and the multi-week group, i.e., couples



can enjoy an intensive, continuous enrichment experience and not expend the cost of time involved in leaving the home environment for a weekend retreat. Others (Clinebell, 1975; Cline-Detrick, 1981), however, believe that a more remote motel, retreat center or church camp has advantages that offset the usually higher costs, allowing participants to slow down enough to collect themselves, center on relationship tasks without the usual home and in-town interruptions and demands, and experience a freshness in their marriage.

Costs. Costs for marriage enrichment weekends vary widely. For a residential retreat, the costs usually are combined in a "package" which includes a private bedroom for each couple, a meeting room for the group, all meals, supplies and an honorarium or fee for the leader couple. Although most groups or agencies promoting marriage enrichment retreats include a leader's fee ranging from \$100.00 to \$300.00 for the weekend, many well-trained leader couples volunteer their leadership to the sponsoring churches or organizations with which they are affiliated. Costs for a retreat weekend may range from \$60.00 - \$250.00 per couple (Otto, 1976). Multi-week or in-town workshop weekends, where couples stay in their own homes and meet in a church, may range from no fee to \$25.00 (Hopkins et al., 1978).

Leadership. Although some marriage enrichment programs permit a variety of leadership options, the Associated Couples for Marriage Enrichment (ACME) and most church

related programs make it a practice to have leadership provided by a married couple. According to Mace (1975), the best facilitators for marriage enrichment programs are married couples who play a fully participative role and model the behaviors specified by program goals. Leadership selection by sponsoring churches gives special attention to the qualities of the persons and relationship of the leader couple, their ability to create an atmosphere of mutual trust in a group and their enthusiasm for growth and change in themselves and others (Otto, 1976).

Leader couples often include at least one professional, but this is not considered necessary (Mace, 1975b). A leader in the training of nonprofessionals, Carkhuff (1969) indicates that trained lay helpers function as effectively or more effectively than professionals in the helping role. Hof and Miller (1981) suggest that the use of nonprofessionals could conceivably lead to the dissemination of important growth-oriented services, at a reduced cost, to a larger portion of the population than would be reached if leadership were restricted to professionally trained persons.

Most national organizations that provide marriage enrichment programs have training guidelines and clearly defined standards for leaders. A combination of skill development, didactic learning and actual supervised experiences as a leader appear to be common elements of

all training programs (Mace & Mace, 1976b).

### Marriage Enrichment Research

In calling for more controlled research, Lief (Hof & Miller, 1981) has stated that if the marriage enrichment field is in its infancy, then marriage enrichment research is like a two-week old infant. Following is a review of marriage enrichment research which is relevant to the hypotheses of this research.

Gurman and Kniskern (1977) reviewed the research outcomes of 29 marriage enrichment programs and found positive change to be consistently demonstrated on approximately 60% of the criterion tests following completion of the enrichment experience. Fourteen percent of these studies had been conducted in church related programs. Approximately three-fourths of the remaining 86% involved volunteers recruited from university communities. Programs were carried out in a group setting and averaged 14 hours of actual meeting time. Only about one-quarter (24%) were conducted as weekend retreats. Twenty-three studies used untreated control groups. The outcome measures for these studies Gurman and Kniskern (1977) separated into three general categories: (1) overall marital satisfaction and adjustment; (2) relationship skills, i.e., communication and conflict resolution, empathic ability and self-disclosure; (3) perceptual and individual personality variables such as perception of spouse, self-esteem, and self-actualization.

In a review of literature they did four years later, Hof and Miller (1981) used Gurman and Kniskern's (1977) categorization of outcome measures and included 27 of the same 29 studies. Hof and Miller's (1981) review included 13 additional studies. Fifteen of the studies reviewed by Hof and Miller (1981) used measures of marital satisfaction as criteria. Measures of relationship skills were used 28 times and perceptual/personality measures were used 29 times. Ninety-two percent of the studies used self-report measures. Hof and Miller (1981) caution researchers to use instruments of demonstrated reliability and validity.

Thirty-three of the 40 studies reviewed by Hof and Miller (1981) used a waiting list or no treatment control group. The general finding for these studies was that significantly greater change occurs for the marital enrichment group than for the control group. Only one study used a placebo control group. Roberts (1975) formed a placebo condition by placing five couples in an unstructured group setting in which issues could be discussed, but where the various enrichment experiences and exercises were not presented. Roberts (1975) reported that greater changes occurred in the placebo group than in a waiting list control group. The marital enrichment group was, however, superior to both control groups. Hof and Miller (1981) call for more consistent use of control groups to control for passage of time and placebo effects.

Only four of the aforementioned 40 studies were weekend events. Of those four, only two included a follow-up measure. Only eight of the entire 40 studies reviewed included some type of follow-up assessment. Most measures in these studies with follow-up show stable and enduring changes over periods ranging from ten days to six months. In studies using multiple measures, some changes were not maintained at follow-up, while significant improvement for some variables did not emerge until follow-up testing. More studies need to be done with follow-up measures before conclusions can be drawn that marriage enrichment does lead to stable changes in relationships (Gurman & Kniskern, 1977; Hof et al., 1980).

The 40 outcome studies reviewed by Hof and Miller (1981) were largely programs focused on communications training and behavior exchange. Only ten of the studies were reports of mixed experiences and exercises. Although nine out of ten of these mixed programs showed positive results, none used a placebo control group, and follow-up measures were used in only four. Additionally, the results of some studies are in question because of the small number of subjects in the experimental groups, a serious shortcoming when measuring instruments are admittedly crude (Hicks & Platt, 1970).

Few research studies have compared two types of marital enrichment programs. Wieman (1973) contrasted a

relationship enhancement program, a behavioral exchange program and a waiting list control group. Both enrichment programs resulted in significant increases in marital adjustment, in communication skill, and in target behaviors, and there were no measurable differences between the two programs. Kilmann, Moreault and Robinson (1978) compared two formats of the same program and a no-treatment control group. In both studies, the sequence of treatment experiences did not affect outcome, both treatment formats showed greater gain than no-treatment.

Guldner (1977) reports on a three-year research project which compared eight different approaches (including no-treatment control). He used the Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis and structured evaluative interviews. Only one group showed significant and enduring gains. That group was designed to cover particular content areas, each having specific purposes and goals, was briefly presented and followed by couple or small group interaction and exercises. This group still showed improvement at one-year follow-up. From this research, Guldner drew several conclusions about the presentation of enrichment programs: (1) they must include both content and process, information and tools that will apply to various problems that emerge in the course of marriage; (2) they should utilize a balance of the three modes of thinking, acting and feeling; (3) groups work best if they include a variety of age range and marriage

duration; (4) they should be viewed developmentally as having value at all stages of the marriage life cycle, not as an isolated experience; (5) homework is an important bridge from the marriage enrichment experience to the home environment; (6) they should include eight important content areas: (a) exploring the marital system; (b) actualizing the self system; (c) communication in marriage; (d) handling conflict creatively; (e) intimacy in marriage; (f) creative sexuality; (g) spirituality, values and goal setting; (h) marriage in the broader context, i.e., extended family and community. Guldner's research and conclusions provide a base for the treatment model used in the current research.

According to Hof, Epstein and Miller (1980), little controlled research has been done on the effects of varying leadership in marriage enrichment retreats. In virtually all studies reviewed, the programs have been led by the person doing the research. The contamination or confounding produced by the experimenter being a part of the experimental manipulation has been well documented in the research literature (Summers, 1982). Additionally, according to Summers (1982), when multiple leaders have been used in comparative studies, lack of equivalency in training has also been a confounding variable.

Roberts (1975) examined differences in outcome as a function of leader's experience level, using novice paraprofessionals, experienced paraprofessionals and graduate

students. Groups led by more experienced leaders had better outcome. More research needs to control for leader effects (Mace, 1975; Summers, 1982).

Do men and women make equivalent gains as a result of marriage enrichment programs? The results of research to date are mixed. Hof and Miller (1981) cite only two studies of the 40 they reviewed that measured a differential response to treatment between men and women. In a study of a Marriage Encounter experience (Huber, 1977), only husbands showed a significant positive change on Shostrom's (1967) Caring Relationship Inventory. Wives scores did not change. Beaver (1978) found similar results in a couples' communication group. Only males showed significant changes on communication and empathy measures. Davis (1982) compared a weekend retreat with a five-week marriage enrichment group and found that wives showed a greater degree of improvement on measures of marital adjustment than did husbands. More research is needed before it can be determined whether enrichment programs have a differing effectiveness depending on gender of participant (Hof & Miller, 1981).

Although the importance of the physical setting is often identified as a major variable in enrichment retreats (Hof, et al., 1980; Hopkins et al., 1978), in a search of the marriage enrichment literature, no study was found to consider retreat location for its impact on the outcome measure. Because the daily noises and annoyances, duties



and demands, are seen as distracting and stressful, many businesses and organizations seek retreat conditions for their executive seminars. A search of organizational development literature (Campbell & Dunnette, 1968; Mangham & Cooper, 1969) revealed no controlled research on the importance of location. A search was also made of the sensitivity training/T-group literature (Mussen & Rosenzweig, 1973; Smith, 1975), of the literature of environmental psychology (Proshansky, Ittelson & Rivlin, 1976), and of marriage and family studies (Miller, 1973-1980). Although many references were made to the importance of location in these fields of study, research comparing various locations for retreats and workshops was not found.

#### The Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory (RI)

The criterion measure used to test the hypotheses of this study is the Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory (Appendix B). It is a reliable and valid instrument, theory based, appropriate for different types of couples and sensitive to small changes in the relationship process (Wampler & Powell, 1982).

The Relationship Inventory was developed originally to measure those therapeutic conditions identified by Carl Rogers (1957) as necessary for client change to occur during therapy. First used as a measure of marital satisfaction in 1960 (Thornton, 1960), the Barrett-Lennard

Relationship Inventory has since been used by several researchers (DeMers, 1971; Epstein & Jackson, 1978; Gurman, 1975; Powell, 1978; Wampler & Sprenkle, 1980; Wells, Figurel & McNamee, 1975, 1977) to assess outcomes in marital counseling and marriage enrichment. In 1964, Barrett-Lennard (1978) developed an improved 64-item revision which is highly recommended as a sensitive measure of marital satisfaction (Beck, 1975; Wampler & Powell, 1982). Four subscales, developed out of Rogerian theory, measure Empathy (E), Congruence (C), Regard (R), and Unconditionality (U). Each subscale contains eight positively worded and eight negatively worded items.

Empathic Understanding (E) is defined as "the extent to which one person is conscious of the immediate awareness of another". Level of Regard (R) is "the composite 'loading' of all the distinguishable feeling reactions of one person toward another, positive and negative, on a single abstract dimension". Congruence (C) is "the degree to which one person is functionally integrated...with another, such that there is absence of conflict or inconsistency between his total experience, his awareness, and his overt communication". The Unconditionality of Regard (U) subscale measures how much variability or consistency there is in one person's affective response to the other individual (Barrett-Lennard, 1962).

Gurman (1977), in a review of the Barrett-Lennard

Relationship Inventory, reported mean internal reliability coefficients of the subscales as: E, .84; R, .91; C, .88; and U, .74. The mean test-retest reliabilities of all studies reporting such coefficients were: E, .83; R, .83; C, .85; and U, .80. Gurman (1977) further reported substantial evidence for the validity of the instrument including support for Barrett-Lennard's contention that the subscales do measure four separate dimensions.

Wampler and Powell (1982) enumerate several advantages of the Relationship Inventory as a sensitive measure for marital satisfaction, advantages they feel recommend it over instruments which are used more often. These advantages are:

1. The reliability and validity are well-established.
2. The RI contains four identifiable subscales, which are frequently identified as important aspects of the marital relationship.
3. The items are counterbalanced for response set.
4. The items in the RI are not distorted by the length of the relationship. For example, the longer a couple has been married, the more likely they will respond negatively to item 20 on the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976), "Do you ever regret that you married?".
5. The RI taps directly into the spouses' perception and feelings about each other in order to assess levels of satisfaction. There are no questions that may be valued or

interpreted differently by different couples, cultures, or generations. For example, no questions pertain to the frequency with which couples kiss, fight or engage in outside activities together.

6. The RI appears to be an appropriate measure of satisfaction and is not tied to the concept of stability as are more commonly used instruments that were developed expressly to distinguish between divorced and married couples (Locke & Wallace, 1959; Spanier, 1976).

7. The RI assesses the process aspect of the relationship. Content of the RI items is focused on the immediate awareness of the relationship.

Several studies have used the RI with another measure of marital satisfaction and report that the RI is highly correlated with the Burgess and Cottrell Marriage Adjustment Scale (Thornton, 1960), the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test (Griffin, 1967; Wells et al., 1975, 1977), and the Kelly-Thorpe Marriage Role Questionnaire (Quick & Jacob, 1973). Wampler and Powell (1982) conclude, after extensive factor analyses, that only one general factor underlines the RI and these other commonly used measures of marital satisfaction, that they share approximately 50% common variance.

In summary, the Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory which is used for the current study as the pretest, posttest and delayed test instrument, is a reliable, valid,

theory-based, and sensitive instrument which taps directly into the process dimension of a relationship. Several of the advantages of the RI are listed which make it preferable to other measures of marital satisfaction.

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### Summary

The objective of this chapter was to review the marriage enrichment literature. Six theoretical foundations of the emerging marriage enrichment field were elaborated: (1) Rogerian psychotherapy, (2) behavior modification theory, (3) social learning theory, (4) group process theory, (5) communications theory, and (6) family systems theory. Additionally, applications of marriage enrichment were presented as, (1) educational, and (2) preventive. Marriage enrichment methods were reviewed as well as a review of marriage enrichment literature specific to churches. Further, a summary of findings resulting from controlled research in the marriage enrichment field was presented. Finally, information pertaining to the Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory was given.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHOD

The purpose of this study was to measure the effectiveness of a specific weekend marriage enrichment program, the importance of location as a variable in outcome and to measure differences between men's and women's responses. The objective of this chapter is to describe the population and sample, the research design and data collection procedures, the experimental treatment, the measuring instrument and the statistical treatment used.

#### Population and Sample

##### Population

The population from which the samples for this study were drawn is the 36 congregations that make up the Church of the Brethren in California and Arizona. The Church of the Brethren is a small, Protestant denomination which had its roots in the Anabaptist movement of Germany in the early 18th century. Upholding the principle of freedom of belief, it is a noncredal church and highly pluralistic in its membership. As a denomination, it emphasizes the value of reconciliation and is active ecumenically at all levels of society attempting to foster reconciliation between and within persons and groups (Durnbaugh, 1971). Marriage Enrichment programs offered through the Church of the Brethren are seen as a part of this larger context,

designed to strengthen marriages and, therefore, family life, as the basic building block of society (Glick-Rieman et al., 1975).

This population has not been heretofore sampled for marriage enrichment research. It represents a large and growing population of church-related couples who have become a part of the marriage enrichment movement, a population upon which very little controlled research has been conducted (Gurman, 1977).

### Sample

The sample for this study consisted of 43 married couples. These couples volunteered for a marriage enrichment weekend which was offered in the context of regular programming within local Churches of the Brethren in California and Arizona.

The method by which subjects volunteered for this study was kept as close to field conditions as the limitations of the research would allow. Of the 36 Churches of the Brethren in California and Arizona, approximately half were contacted by letter and encouraged to hold marriage enrichment weekends in their local churches. The other half were contacted by letter asking them to sponsor marriage enrichment programs at retreat sites within easy weekend access for married couples. The research component of these proposed weekends was explained in the letters (Appendix C). In the case of small congregations, they were encouraged to

cooperate with other small Churches of the Brethren in their immediate area in sponsoring a marriage enrichment weekend. The letters were sent to pastors and/or directors of Christian Education. Nineteen of these congregations responded with interest, nine of which eventually held a retreat or workshop, six of which chose to participate in this study.

Arrangements for the three retreats and three workshops which were part of this study were completed by subsequent personal contacts, by letters and by telephone. As soon as dates were confirmed and the parameters of the research were clear to the participating churches, a leader couple was assigned by the researcher to finalize arrangements and to contact by letter the couples (Appendix D) who had volunteered to attend the weekend enrichment event.

As previously stated, these marriage enrichment weekends were offered as part of the regular church programming, and couples registered for them in response to verbal announcements in church meetings, written announcements in church bulletins and newsletters, or by personal encouragement by the pastor or local retreat coordinator. Churches were encouraged to register the maximum number (8) of couples to allow for last minute illness or attrition for other reasons. In order to preserve the field quality of this study as much as possible, research aspects of the weekends were minimized in relating to the couples



themselves except to elicit their cooperation in completing the pretest, posttest, and delayed test.

Twelve of the 43 couples served as controls in two different control groups. All were couples who had indicated an interest in attending a marriage enrichment weekend but as yet had not done so.

Demographic information was obtained from each subject on a form devised by the researcher (Appendix E). From this information, demographic variables were analyzed and are reported on Table 7.

### Research Design

The original research design called for two experimental conditions plus one control group. The design included three leader couples with each couple leading one weekend in each experimental condition, and five to eight couples in each group.

### Experimental Conditions

Two groups made up the experimental conditions. The retreat condition was composed of three separate retreats. The workshop condition was composed of three separate workshops.

The Retreat Condition. This program specified that all couples would spend the entire weekend at a location which would be sufficiently removed from their homes, work, daily demands, routines and distractions to create a sense of separation and seclusion. It further specified that the

setting be pleasant and comfortable so as to create a relaxing atmosphere, and that it be without interruptions alien to the retreat process. The retreat site provided a comfortable, private bedroom for each couple and a meeting room large enough for the entire group. All meals were provided for the weekend as part of the retreat "package", with all couples eating together as a part of the "group life" of the weekend.

Of the three retreats which were part of this study, two were held at a retreat site near Twain Harte, California, and one was held at a motel on the outskirts of Phoenix, Arizona. Both of the Twain Harte retreats were sponsored and planned by the Modesto Church of the Brethren. Both included couples from at least two other congregations. The retreat facility at Twain Harte is a luxurious "cabin" in a mountain setting. It was built especially for marriage enrichment and similar events. It accommodates six couples comfortably. The Phoenix motel is several miles distant across Phoenix from the Phoenix Church of the Brethren which sponsored the retreat. The motel provided the comfortable, relaxed, and secluded atmosphere specified for the retreat condition.

The per couple cost of the retreats ranged from \$65.00 to \$90.00. Leadership time was donated and some retreat costs were underwritten by sponsoring churches.

The Workshop Condition. This program specified that

couples stay in their own communities, meeting as a group at the local church or in an available home near the church. Couples slept and ate in their own homes, meeting together as a group only for the 14 hours of workshop time distributed from Friday evening to Sunday noon. An exception to eating meals at home was made on Saturday noon when a simple lunch was provided and on Sunday noon following the retreat when couples ate together at a nearby restaurant. No attempt was made to shelter couples from daily stresses or interruptions. Neither was emphasis given to providing comfortable facilities, only available facilities.

The three workshops which were part of this study were held in the California communities of Pasadena, Fresno and LaVerne. The Pasadena workshop met in the Pasadena Church of the Brethren located in a middle-class residential area of that city. The Fresno workshop was held in a home near the Fresno Friends Church. Planned, originally, to be held in the church facility, other church activities made it necessary to meet in a house nearby, the home of one of the participating couples in a previous retreat. The LaVerne workshop was held at the LaVerne Church of the Brethren, located near the downtown in a middle-class residential area. The group met in the church library except on Sunday morning when they met in the lounge of a nearby retirement facility.

The cost of the workshop weekends varied from \$10.00

to \$25.00. Leadership time was donated.

Leadership. In order to control for leader effects, three leader couples were assigned to lead one weekend in each experimental condition. They were assigned on the basis of a match between available weekends in their own personal schedules and available weekends in local church calendars.

The leader couples were recruited on the basis of five criteria:

1. All had been screened and selected by the denomination for marriage enrichment training and had received the same training from the same denominational trainers.
2. All three couples were perceived to be relatively equivalent in their leadership skills and expertise.
3. All six persons were judged to be warm and empathic in relating to people.
4. All three couples had stable marriages themselves.
5. All three couples were willing to volunteer their time and to cooperate with the researcher in leading retreats and workshops within the limitations of the research design.

Each leader couple was asked to report in writing any variance from the plan for the weekend, and to also submit to the researcher a short paragraph describing their experience of the retreat/workshop location.

Group Size. In order to control for group size effects, the research design specified five to eight couples

in each of the six groups. These specifications were met all except one group. In that group, two couples cancelled on the day the retreat began, leaving three couples who completed the weekend. Table 1 shows the research design with the numbers of couples who participated in the study and their distribution across groups.

Control Groups. Twelve couples constituted two control groups in the final design. Five couples (from two congregations) who had planned to attend a retreat but were unable to do so because of scheduling problems made up a no-treatment control group. At the request of the researcher, they volunteered to take the pretest, posttest, and delayed test at the same time intervals as the couples in experimental groups. These tests were administered by mail.

An additional control group was added to the original design which met many of the conditions of a placebo control group. Seven couples made up this group. These couples all indicated interest in attending a marriage enrichment weekend, but were members of congregations which had as yet not sponsored retreats or workshops. These seven couples took the pretest and posttest at a Church of the Brethren district conference. Volunteers were contacted by way of a sign posted at the registration desk. The time frame of the conference was identical to that of the marriage enrichment weekends, Friday evening through Sunday noon. Similar to marriage enrichment couples, these couples were away from their homes together participating in a program with another

sample of the same population from which the sample for this study was drawn. The program for the conference consisted of business meetings, small group discussions and worship services. Table 1 shows the research design with sample sizes.

Table 1  
Research Design With Sample Sizes

	Leader Couple #1	Leader Couple #2	Leader Couple #3	
Workshop	5 couples (Pasadena)	7 couples (LaVerne)	5 couples (Fresno)	17 couples n=34
Retreat	3 couples (Phoenix)	6 couples (Modesto I)	5 couples (Modesto II)	14 couples n=28
	8 couples n=16	13 couples n=26	10 couples n=20	
Control Group	5 couples (no treatment)			
Control Group	7 couples (placebo)			
	12 couples n=24			

#### Procedures

Data was collected with the assistance of the leader couples and the local retreat coordinators. The measuring instrument was the Barrett-Lennard Relationship

### Inventory.

Leader couples were given packets of the testing instrument which they administered to participating couples upon their arrival at the first meeting of the marriage enrichment weekend. Brief written instructions for leaders and subjects accompanied the pretest (Appendix B). Leader couples had only to distribute the questionnaires, which take approximately 20 minutes to complete, and collect them when subjects had finished their responses. Subjects were asked to date questionnaires and to code them with their social security numbers. This allowed for matching each subjects's pretest, posttest, and delayed test while assuring anonymity.

Immediately following the last activities of the weekend, couples were asked to fill out an evaluation form specific to the activities in which they had participated in the course of the preceding weekend. At this time they also filled out the posttest and the information form which provided demographic data. All these papers were returned to the leader couple who kept the evaluation form for their own feedback, and sent the testing instrument and the demographic form to the researcher.

At the time of the posttest, leader couples facilitated the scheduling of a brief group meeting four weeks hence at which time subjects filled out the delayed test. Three weeks following the end of the retreat/workshop, the

researcher sent packets of the testing instrument to the local pastor or retreat coordinator who administered the delayed test to the subjects on the following weekend, four weeks from the time of their participation in the marriage enrichment. These were returned to the researcher by mail.

#### Church of the Brethren Marriage Enrichment Program

The treatment for all six groups who were part of the experimental conditions of this research was a specific Church of the Brethren marriage enrichment program. The rationale for this program, its format, and the components of the model are described on the following pages.

#### Rationale

The rationale for the Church of the Brethren marriage enrichment program, as developed by denominational leadership, grows out of the theoretical roots which are common to virtually all marriage enrichment programs which were reviewed in Chapter 2. Briefly reiterated, Rogerian theory emphasizes the assumption that an empathic environment in which participants can express their feelings freely will increase self-acceptance, self-knowledge and acceptance of and from others, especially their spouses. This contributes to cognitive, attitudinal and behavioral changes which enrich the marital relationship (Guerney, 1977). For example, in this research, throughout the entire weekend the leadership couple, in an open, caring and appropriately



vulnerable way, attempted to demonstrate the kind of interaction and caring that was requested of the couples. This modeling began upon initial contact with the participants and was conveyed, in part, through friendly greetings, appropriate attention to details, clear instructions and other minor acts of attentiveness. Coffee, tea and nourishing snacks were provided as part of the nurturing atmosphere.

Secondly, the Church of the Brethren program includes the opportunity to learn and practice specific behavioral skills such as conflict management. Thirdly, it is assumed that repeated practice and reinforcement helps correct deficiencies in social learning. The program used in this research provided emphasis on learning new behaviors and increasing other behaviors perceived to be desirable, helpful and rewarding in the marriage relationship (e.g., positive statements, ownership and expression of feelings).

Fourth, there was an emphasis on the use of group process to provide an environment of trust in which various curative factors (Yalom, 1970) and growth factors (Egan, 1970) could be experienced (e.g., sense of universality, supportive atmosphere, climate of experimentation). In addition, couples had opportunity to observe alternative models of relating, particularly in leader couple modeling, and to give and receive appropriate feedback (Hof & Miller, 1981). These facets of group process were an integral part

of the entire weekend, apparent especially at leader input times prior to couple exercises and at group debriefing times following some of the structured exercises. The use of structured exercises encouraged greater involvement of participants and facilitated group development needs while at the same time focusing upon various issues of importance to marital growth and development (Kurtz, 1975).

Fifth, communications theory permeates the treatment model emphasizing that all communication, whether verbal or non-verbal, is significant. All modules of the treatment are an exercise in awareness with a focus on improving the communications that enhance the marital relationship. The back-to-back exercise, self-responsible statements and shared meanings are examples of applications of communications theory in this structured treatment format.

Sixth, viewing the marital dyad as a three-unit subsystem of the larger family system (Whitaker, 1975), the Church of the Brethren marriage enrichment program which comprises this treatment, gives opportunity to couples to look at the structure, rules, roles, and goals of their marriages and to change them if they wish (Satir, 1972). In these retreat/workshops, leader couples provided a broad base of affirmation for the unique relationship each marital pair had developed. Encouragement and tools were provided for the creation and maintenance of an open system. The checker game, belt-line exercise and love letters are

examples of the treatment with these goals implied.

(Appendix A.)

#### Format of Marriage Enrichment

The marriage enrichment model used by the Church of the Brethren has a varying format of structured exercises in order to take advantage of the fact that different individuals vary in their preferred learning styles. Four kinds of learning abilities, as identified by Kolb (1979), are taken into account by this format. They are (1) concrete experiences in which persons are openly involved in new experiences (e.g., the conflict/affection ranking exercise where couples push each other with their hands to heighten awareness of individual differences); (2) reflective observations where persons view their own experiences in new and different perspectives (e.g., the symbolic statement of marriage exercise with art materials); (3) abstract conceptualization in which persons create concepts that integrate their observations (e.g., learning the difference between over-responsible, under-responsible and self-responsible statements); and (4) active experimentation where theories are used to make decisions or attempt solutions to problems (e.g., theories of conflict resolution as applied through the checker game). All parenthetical examples of the above mentioned learning modes can be found in Appendix A.

The Church of the Brethren enrichment model is one in which experienced facilitators are encouraged to select the

elements and modify them to suit the special needs of a particular group of couples. This allows for differences in couples' psychosocial and cognitive levels of development (Widick & Cowan, 1977), the different levels of individual and relationship function, and for leadership preference.

Although the overall pattern and use of exercises is relatively consistent between groups, there is freedom and variation within the model.

#### Experimental Treatment

For the purposes of this study, in order to keep treatment constant across groups, the three leader couples met together and developed a consistent weekend design without variation. Selecting from the above mentioned treatment model, they agreed on specific structured exercises to be offered in the same sequence and in the same time frame (Appendix A). This design did not allow for leader freedom and variation except in one regard. When leaders were giving instructions to participants, any examples they gave to illustrate the material were drawn from their own marital experience with appropriate self-disclosure and attention to modeling the exercises presented. These examples from their own lives were given briefly, tastefully, and authentically. For example, leader couple #1, after leading the Phoenix retreat, reported that they failed to change their watches when they went from California to Arizona, changing time zones. This resulted in their oversleeping and being late

to the first morning session. They used this incident to illustrate their own under-responsible, over-responsible and self-responsible statements in the first exercise on communication.

Components of the Program. The treatment used in this research was composed of five two and one-half to three hour blocks of time for a total of 14 hours in the course of the weekend. These sessions are described here by the goals each segment was designed to achieve. The particular exercises which made up each block are found in Appendix A.

The component blocks of this marriage enrichment program combined into five sessions the eight major content areas which Guldner (1977), as reviewed in Chapter 2, deemed as important to couples. These five blocks are:

I. Creating a warm atmosphere. Exploring the self system and marriage system.

- Goals:
- (1) to get acquainted,
  - (2) to begin to develop group spirit,
  - (3) to help each person affirm his/her own individuality,
  - (4) to provide opportunities for affirming spouse,
  - (5) to help couples reflect on and affirm the unique history and strengths of their own marital relationship,
  - (6) to provide information about marriage

enrichment and share expectations about the weekend,

(7) to have fun.

II. Communication on marriage. Saturday morning.

Goals: (1) to recreate group spirit from night

before and continue to build group trust,

(2) to practice non-verbal communication through touch,

(3) to increase ability to listen attentively and accurately,

(4) to increase ability to give accurate feedback,

(5) to learn to own and articulate one's own feelings, increasing self-disclosure between partners,

(6) to learn to identify and use self-responsible statements.

III. Conflict and affection. Saturday afternoon.

Goals: (1) to identify some individual differences,

(2) to explore more modes of communication through body language and writing,

(3) to affirm conflict as essential to a growing and loving relationship,

(4) to become more aware of own methods of

decision-making,

(5) to risk disclosure of some tender areas, to share wants, needs, fears,

(6) to practice communication skills learned in previous block in coping

with conflict.

IV. Intimacy and sexuality. Saturday night.

Goals: (1) to desensitize topic,

(2) to provide information,

(3) to view sex as communication and become more aware of the interaction and interdependence of sexual expression and communication,

(4) to increase a sense of intimacy within marital relationship,

(5) to affirm self and other's sexual identity,

(6) to identify differences in sexual feelings and responses.

V. Celebration and commitment. Sunday morning.

Goals: (1) to affirm and celebrate spouse and relationship,

(2) goal setting: review, revise, renew commitment,

(3) to identify spiritual resources,

(4) to identify sustaining resources and

support networks,

- (5) to provide opportunity for affective expressions in the group: closure,
- (6) evaluate the weekend experience.

These five components comprised the treatment for this research: (1) exploring self and marital systems, (2) communication, (3) conflict and affection, (4) intimacy and sexuality, (5) commitment and couple resources.

The leader couple alternated between individual, couple and group interaction using structured exercises. Instructions for some exercises were posted on newsprint as well as given verbally.

#### Instrumentation

The Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory (Barrett-Lennard, 1978) which tests for emotional satisfaction with the marriage relationship was used as the testing instrument. It is a self-administered, 64-item questionnaire where a subject is asked to indicate the degree to which he or she feels that a statement is true of his/her spouse. Ratings are done on a six point scale from -3 to +3 and are combined into subscales, RI Regard, RI Empathy, RI Congruence, and RI Unconditionality. Literature and research pertaining to the Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory was reviewed in Chapter 2.

Wampler and Powell (1982) recommend the RI as a sensitive measure of marital relationship which responds



to the process dimensions of a relationship and records immediate changes as a result of intervention strategies. The reliability and validity of the instrument are well established, and it is highly correlated with commonly used measures of marital satisfaction.

Two forms of the RI were used for this study, one for each sex. These forms were identical except for pronouns referring to sex of partner. The scores of one spouse indicated the degree of empathy, regard, congruence, and unconditionality he/she perceived in the other spouse. Thus, if a husband's score on the RI Empathy scale was high, he perceived his wife as being very empathic. The higher the Total score on the RI, the more closely the relationship approximated the Rogerian ideal of an emotionally intimate process.

#### Statistical Treatment and Hypotheses

Following are the research hypotheses developed from a survey of the literature. Five hypotheses were tested. All hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance.

Hypothesis 1: After adjustments made on pretest data, subjects in both the retreat condition and the workshop condition show greater gains in immediate posttest marital satisfaction than do control subjects.

Hypothesis 2: After adjustments made on pretest data, subjects in both the retreat condition and the workshop condition show greater gains on a delayed test of marital

satisfaction than do controls.

Hypothesis 3: After adjustments made on pretest data, subjects in the retreat condition score higher on immediate posttest of marital satisfaction than do subjects in the workshop condition.

Hypothesis 4: After adjustments made on pretest data, subjects in the retreat condition score higher on a delayed test of marital satisfaction than do subjects in the workshop condition.

Hypothesis 5: There is no significant difference between men and women in gains in marital satisfaction in any of the three conditions.

Statistical Treatment. The design of the study was quasi-experimental. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedure was used to account for any differences in the three pretest conditions. Two-way analyses of covariance (ANCOVAS) were used to adjust the differences in pretest means and analyze the data gathered in the test and delayed test. A multiple comparisons procedure, Fisher's Modified LSD, was used to determine which pairs of means were significantly different at the .05 alpha level. Tables and graphic displays were made to present the statistical treatments and to show the results for the RI Total and the four subscales of the testing instrument in each of the three conditions.

### Summary

Chapter 3 described the population and sample, the research design and procedures for data collection, the experimental treatment, the measuring instrument and the statistical procedures used.

The sample consisted of 43 couples from a church population who volunteered for a marriage enrichment weekend offered as a part of regular programming within local churches. The design was a non-randomized, pretest, post-test, delayed test design with a no-treatment and a placebo control group. Subjects were tested in two experimental conditions, a residential retreat setting away from the home community and a workshop in the local setting with participants living at home. The treatment was a marriage enrichment program which was consistent across groups. The Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory was the instrument used, testing for marital satisfaction. A one-way ANOVA tested for differences in the pretest conditions and two-way ANCOVAS were used to analyze the data gathered in the post-test and delayed test.

The following chapters analyze and discuss the data.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

The purpose of the present research was to test the effectiveness of a marriage enrichment program and to investigate the importance of location as a factor in the effectiveness of marriage enrichment weekends. In addition, the responses of men and women were compared to observe any significant differences which might occur. Demographic variables were also examined. All subjects were drawn from a church population.

#### Treatment Group

There were two content treatment groups in the study. The first experimental group met for weekend retreats; the second experimental group met for weekend workshops. The groups met from Friday night until Sunday noon and were given the same marriage enrichment program.

#### Retreats

Three separate weekend retreats made up the retreat group. Two of the retreat groups met in a mountain setting in a home specifically designed for marriage enrichment retreats. The third group met in a motel on the outskirts of a large city. Twenty-eight subjects made up the retreat group.

#### Workshops

Three separate weekend workshops comprised the workshop

group. Two were held in church buildings in an urban setting, the third in a large home near an urban church. A total of 34 subjects made up this experimental condition.

#### Control Group

Two subgroups, no-treatment and placebo, made up the control conditions. Twenty-four control subjects took the testing instrument at the same time intervals as the experimental subjects.

#### Instrumentation

As a measure of marital satisfaction, the Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory was administered as a pretest immediately prior to the retreat/workshop, as a posttest immediately following the weekend program and as a delayed test four weeks following the retreats and workshops. In addition to a Total score, the RI yields four subscale scores: (1) Regard, (2) Empathy, (3) Congruence, and (4) Unconditionality. In this chapter, an analysis of variance of all five scores are reported for pretest, posttest, and delayed test in the two experimental and the control conditions. Gains scores from pretest to posttest and from pretest to delayed test are analyzed.

#### Pretest Findings

The pretest was given to determine relative equivalency of groups. It also served as a baseline measure of marital satisfaction. Each of the participants in retreats and

workshops was given the RI upon arrival at the marriage enrichment event. These were filled out prior to any involvement in the program. Control subjects also filled out a RI on a Friday evening.

Although random assignment to groups was not practical for this study, caution was taken to control for systematic differences which might exist between groups. These cautions were (1) drawing the samples from within one church denomination, (2) drawing the samples from within one region of that denomination, (3) using congregations located only in middle class, urban areas, (4) controlling for race as a variable by not using interracial congregations in the sample, (5) controlling for subject choice of retreat or workshop by offering only one or the other to any given congregation, (6) reducing the cost discrepancy between retreats and workshops by encouraging "retreat" congregations to subsidize the retreat or to offer couple scholarships.

#### Retreat, Workshop and Control Group Findings

Contrary to expectation, significant differences between retreat, workshop and control groups were shown on the analysis of variance of pretest scores. A multiple comparisons procedure by Fisher's Modified LSD showed retreat group means significantly lower than the control groups on RI Total scores and on all subscales except RI Empathy. The retreat group means were also significantly

lower than workshop means on RI Total, RI Congruence and RI Unconditionality. No significant differences were found between the workshop group and the control groups. The summary of this analysis of variance of pretest scores is found in Table 2. A Matrix of Multiple Comparisons on retreat, workshop and control group pretest scores by Fisher's Modified LSD procedure is presented in Table 3.

To investigate for possible differences within the content treatment group, an analysis (ANOVA) was made of the means of the three separate sites which made up the retreat group and the three separate sites which made up the workshop group. No significant differences were found between the three sites which comprised the retreat group. The ANOVA summary for these data appears in Table 4.

Significant differences were found, however, by analysis of variance between the three workshop sites. These differences are shown on Table 5 (ANOVA Summary Table) and on Table 6, which displays the matrix of between workshop-site differences at pretest. The matrix shows that the workshops held in LaVerne and Fresno had higher mean scores than did the workshop held in Pasadena on the RI Total. LaVerne participants scored higher than those of the Pasadena workshop on RI Regard.

The means of the two control groups were also examined. No significant differences were found between groups in analyzing the pretest scores of the no treatment and placebo conditions.

Table 2

Analysis of Variance of Pretest Scores  
Between Retreat, Workshop and Control Treatment Groups

Dependent Variable	<u>df</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u> <sup>a</sup>
<u>Regard</u>				
Between	2	539.65	269.82	8.07*
Within	83	2772.99	33.41	
<u>Empathy</u>				
Between	2	422.85	211.42	2.81
Within	83	6231.13	75.07	
<u>Congruence</u>				
Between	2	759.09	379.54	4.96*
Within	83	6350.59	76.51	
<u>Unconditionality</u>				
Between	2	579.98	289.99	4.16*
Within	83	5777.92	69.61	
<u>Total</u>				
Between	2	535.48	267.74	6.08*
Within	83	3650.21	43.97	

<sup>a</sup>.95F<sub>(2,83)</sub> = 3.12

\* p < .05



Table 3

~~Matrix and Means: Multiple Comparisons of Treatment Groups~~  
on Pretest Scores by Fisher's Modified LSD Procedure

	<u>Workshop</u>	<u>Control</u>
<u>Retreat</u>	Regard Empathy Congruence* Unconditionality* Total*	Regard* Empathy Congruence* Unconditionality* Total*
<u>Workshop</u>	_____	Regard Empathy Congruence Unconditionality Total

Mean Scores on Dependent Variable (Pretest)

<u>Treatment Group</u>	<u>Reg</u>	<u>Emp</u>	<u>Con</u>	<u>Unc</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Retreat</u>	16.48	6.16	8.40	0.85	7.97
<u>Workshop</u>	22.36	10.69	15.11	5.21	13.34
<u>Control</u>	20.39	11.14	14.08	7.32	13.23

\*  $p < .05$

Table 4

ANOVA SUMMARY TABLE  
 Analysis of Variance of Pretest Scores  
 Between Retreat Sites

(Phoenix, Modesto I, Modesto II)

Dependent Variable	<u>df</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u> <sup>a</sup>
<u>Regard</u>				
Between	2	98.34	49.17	0.738
Within	25	1664.62	66.58	
<u>Empathy</u>				
Between	2	34.64	17.32	0.182
Within	25	2375.74	95.03	
<u>Congruence</u>				
Between	2	208.26	104.13	0.922
Within	25	2822.40	112.90	
<u>Unconditionality</u>				
Between	2	5.82	2.91	0.036
Within	25	1993.71	79.75	
<u>Total</u>				
Between	2	42.64	21.32	0.341
Within	25	1562.61	62.50	

<sup>a</sup>.95F(2,25) = 3.38

\* p < .05

Table 5

ANOVA SUMMARY TABLE  
 Analysis of Variance of Pretest Scores  
 Between Workshop Sites  
 (Pasadena, Fresno, LaVerne)

Dependent Variable	<u>df</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F<sup>a</sup></u>
<u>Regard</u>				
Between	2	81.03	40.52	3.386*
Within	31	370.98	11.97	
<u>Empathy</u>				
Between	2	301.19	150.60	2.908
Within	31	1605.48	51.79	
<u>Congruence</u>				
Between	2	50.71	25.35	0.632
Within	31	1243.82	40.12	
<u>Unconditionality</u>				
Between	2	342.38	171.19	3.048
Within	31	1741.33	56.17	
<u>Total</u>				
Between	2	158.74	79.37	3.804*
Within	31	646.75	20.86	

<sup>a</sup>.95F(2,31) = 3.31

\* p < .05

Table 6

Matrix and Means: Between Site Differences for Workshop  
Condition at Pretest

	<u>Fresno</u>	<u>LaVerne</u>
<u>Pasadena</u>	Regard Empathy Congruence Unconditionality Total*	Regard* Empathy Congruence Unconditionality Total*
<u>Fresno</u>	_____	_____

Mean Scores on Dependent Variable (Pretest)					
<u>Treatment Group</u>	<u>Reg</u>	<u>Emp</u>	<u>Con</u>	<u>Unc</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Pasadena</u>	20.03	6.43	13.21	0.32	10.00
<u>Fresno</u>	22.85	14.08	16.00	6.77	14.92
<u>LaVerne</u>	23.67	11.30	15.81	7.58	14.59

\*  $p < .05$

The statistical analyses which were anticipated were those of analyses of covariance. However, because the analysis of covariance procedure cannot adequately compensate for what appears to be substantial non-equivalency of groups at the beginning of this study, analysis of variance of gains scores was also performed to provide a dual statistical treatment. Wherever the ANOVAS and ANCOVAS were not in agreement, the ANOVA findings were given precedence as being most appropriate, given the non-comparable treatment groups.

#### Male/Female Pretest Responses and Demographic Variables

An analysis of variance of male and female responses on pretest scores revealed no significant differences between men and women in their self-report of marital satisfaction. Four other demographic variables produced no significant differences on pretest scores. These were number of marriages, level of education, level of employment and income range.

However, on age and number of years married a pretest difference between groups was shown on one subscale, RI Regard. According to this finding, persons in this study who are under 38 years of age report self-perception of higher regard in their marriages than do persons over 38 years of age, and persons married 14 years or less also show higher levels of regard than do those married 15 years or more.

Persons with one or no children have significantly higher means on all five measures of marital satisfaction than do persons with two or more children (four children was the highest number reported for any couple). The finding was the same for number of children in the home. Therefore, ANOVA of gains is considered as the most appropriate statistical procedure. The analysis of variance for these pretest means is shown on Table 7.

#### Control Group Findings

The original design of this study called for one control group which was to receive no treatment. An additional control group was added to the design which met many of the conditions of the placebo control group. This group attended a district church conference for the same amount of time as couples who attended marriage enrichment weekends and participated in a program of discussions, business, and inspirational meetings. The placebo group was added to answer the following questions: (1) Do couples find their relationship enhanced as a result of being away from home together for a weekend? (2) Do couples report greater satisfaction in their marriages as a result of any church-related program in which they participate together? (3) Do couples experience their marriages to be enriched as a result of being in a group with other persons of their same church affiliation?

An analysis of the means for both no treatment and

Table 7

Differences in Marital Satisfaction According to Demographic Variables  
F Ratios for Pretest, Posttest and Delayed Test

Demographic Independent Variable	df between groups	Reg	Emp	Con	Unc	Total
<u>Sex</u>						
Pretest	1	0.366	0.106	0.771	1.074	0.074
Posttest	1	0.531	0.729	0.785	0.785	0.892
Delayed Test	1	0.037	0.016	0.105	1.057	0.042
<u>Age</u>						
Pretest	1	4.501*	0.994	1.102	0.113	1.029
Posttest	1	1.254	1.280	2.629	0.883	2.576
Delayed Test	1	0.680	0.494	0.851	2.380	2.059
<u>Years Married</u>						
Pretest	1	7.449*	0.461	1.479	0.168	1.857
Posttest	1	0.004	2.654	2.280	0.108	1.398
Delayed Test	1	0.090	3.036	1.655	2.336	3.611
<u>Number of Marriages</u>						
Pretest	1	0.316	0.043	0.005	0.274	0.108
Posttest	1	0.005	0.026	0.008	3.367	0.644
Delayed Test	1	0.318	0.014	2.747	1.220	1.456

(continued on next page)

Table 7 (continued)

Demographic Independent Variable	df between groups	Reg	Emp	Con	Unc	Total
<u>Number of Children</u>						
Pretest	1	5.395*	6.884*	9.214*	6.160*	9.833*
Posttest	1	0.004	0.006	0.004	1.460	0.279
Delayed Test	1	0.030	0.370	0.675	0.001	0.010
<u>Number of Children in the Home</u>						
Pretest	1	7.153*	6.911*	15.602*	5.122*	11.882*
Posttest	1	0.286	0.033	0.759	0.179	0.279
Delayed Test	1	0.000	2.196	0.513	1.393	0.668
<u>Level of Education</u>						
Pretest	1	1.271	0.145	0.090	0.774	0.546
Posttest	1	2.983	0.000	0.025	0.925	0.847
Delayed Test	1	0.214	0.804	0.483	0.003	0.173
<u>Level of Employment</u>						
Pretest	1	0.558	1.070	2.689	0.024	1.146
Posttest	1	0.113	0.122	1.582	0.767	0.038
Delayed Test	1	0.006	0.477	0.612	0.714	0.019
<u>Income Range</u>						
Pretest	1	1.082	1.062	0.863	0.238	1.020
Posttest	1	0.016	0.299	1.820	0.057	0.296
Delayed Test	1	0.000	0.437	0.030	0.178	0.000

<sup>a</sup>.95F<sub>(1,84)</sub> = 4.00

\* p < .05



placebo control groups shows no significant gains from pretest to posttest, nor from pretest to delayed test. Based on these findings, there is no support for the suggestion that couples may experience increased satisfaction in their marriages simply by a weekend away from home together, by participation in a church related conference, nor by group interaction among church friends and acquaintances.

As a result of finding no significant differences between the two control conditions, the data for all control subjects have been combined into one control group for the reporting relative to the major hypotheses of this study.

#### Problem 1

The first issue examined related to the effectiveness of the program which was designed for the use of marriage enrichment in the Church of the Brethren. All marriage enrichment programs have not been found to be equally effective. Would couples participating in this program experience it as effective? Would they report higher levels of marital satisfaction at the conclusion of the weekend? The independent variable was the program, the dependent variable was marital satisfaction measured in five ways: (1) Regard, (2) Empathy, (3) Congruence, (4) Unconditionality, and (5) Total.

#### Null Hypothesis 1 (Ho<sub>1</sub>)

After adjustments based on pretest data, there is no

significant difference between retreat, workshop and control group mean gains on immediate posttest measures of marital satisfaction.

Ho<sub>1.1</sub> Regard. Analysis of covariance shows no significant differences between groups on the posttest measure of RI Regard. The analysis of variance gains scores do show a significantly higher mean score for the retreat group when compared to controls. Because the means scores differed markedly on pretest RI Regard, ANOVA of gains scores is a more appropriate statistical treatment and takes precedence. In view of these differences between retreat and control groups, null hypothesis 1.1 is rejected. The ANOVA and ANCOVA summaries are found on Table 8.

Ho<sub>1.2</sub> Empathy. Both ANCOVA and ANOVA of gains scores show significant differences between means of groups on the measure of RI Empathy. Multiple comparison statistics using Fisher's Modified LSD procedure show both retreats and workshops made significant gains over pretest while the control group did not. Ho<sub>1.2</sub> is found to be untenable. These findings are displayed on Tables 8 and 9.

Ho<sub>1.3</sub> Congruence. Both the retreat group and the workshop group made significant gains on posttest RI Congruence scores. The control group did not make significant gains. The null hypothesis of no gain is therefore rejected. See Tables 8 and 9.

Ho<sub>1.4</sub> Unconditionality. Neither workshops nor retreats

Table 8

Comparison of Retreat, Workshop and Control Treatment  
Groups on Posttest Measure of Marital Satisfaction

Dependent Variable	ANCOVA of Adjusted Posttest Means			ANOVA of Post-test Gains Score	
	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F<sup>a</sup></u>
<u>Regard</u>					
Between	2	35.57	2.30	67.48	3.66*
Within	83	15.40		18.42	
<u>Empathy</u>					
Between	2	143.96	5.17*	151.89	5.34*
Within	83	27.80		28.42	
<u>Congruence</u>					
Between	2	149.24	7.21*	156.94	7.38*
Within	83	20.68		21.24	
<u>Unconditionality</u>					
Between	2	145.07	3.67*	112.96	2.61
Within	83	39.44		43.15	
<u>Total</u>					
Between	2	83.33	5.86*	86.22	5.99*
Within	83	14.21		14.38	

<sup>a</sup>.95F<sub>(2,83)</sub> = 3.12

\* p < .05

Table 9

Matrix and Means: Multiple Comparisons of Treatment Groups  
(Posttest Gains) by Fisher's Modified LSD Procedure

	<u>Workshop</u>	<u>Control</u>
<u>Retreat</u>	Regard Empathy Congruence Unconditionality* Total	Regard* Empathy* Congruence* Unconditionality Total*
<u>Workshop</u>	_____	Regard Empathy* Congruence* Unconditionality Total*

Mean Scores on Dependent Variable (Posttest Gains)

<u>Treatment Group</u>	<u>Reg</u>	<u>Emp</u>	<u>Con</u>	<u>Unc</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Retreat</u>	3.459	3.287	4.004	1.640	3.098
<u>Workshop</u>	1.696	4.564	4.380	4.998	3.909
<u>Control</u>	0.247	-0.026	0.033	1.734	0.480

\*  $p < .05$

show significant gains on mean scores for RI Unconditionality. The null hypothesis is tenable for this measure of marital satisfaction. Table 8 shows the F ratios for RI Unconditionality.

Ho<sub>1.5</sub>Total. The RI Total scores show significantly higher means in self reports of marital satisfaction in retreat and workshop conditions at the end of the weekend program. The control group does not show a gain in mean scores. These findings resulted from both the ANCOVA of mean scores and the ANOVA of gains scores as seen on Table 8.

Summary of Ho<sub>1</sub>. The F ratios for ANCOVA of means and ANOVA of gains scores on all five measurements of the dependent variable listed above are found on Table 8. A matrix of posttest gains scores displays the results of the multiple comparison of these groups on all five measures of the dependent variable and is found on Table 9.

The rejection of null hypotheses 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, and 1.5 suggests that this marriage enrichment program was effective in improving participants' sense of marital satisfaction from the beginning of the weekend on Friday night to the end of the weekend on Sunday noon. Control subjects show no improvement during the same period of time. Although pretest means indicated initial differences between groups making the ANCOVA a less defensible treatment of the data, the ANOVA of gains scores generally supports the ANCOVA findings.

### Problem 2

The second issue examined also related to the effectiveness of the marriage enrichment program. Would gains on an immediate posttest marital satisfaction endure over a four-week period of time? The RI measured the dependent variable in five ways: (1) Regard, (2) Empathy, (3) Congruence, (4) Unconditionality, and (5) Total.

#### Null Hypothesis 2 (Ho<sub>2</sub>)

After adjustments based on pretest data, there is no significant difference between retreat, workshop and control group means on a delayed posttest of marital satisfaction.

Ho<sub>2.1</sub> Regard. Differences in RI Regard which were apparent at the conclusion of the retreat did not endure over the four-week period. No significant differences in groups were found on the delayed test RI Regard scale. The null hypothesis of no differences is, therefore, found to be tenable. See Table 10 for F ratios.

Ho<sub>2.2</sub> Empathy. Significant differences between groups were found on the delayed test for RI Empathy. The differences show similarity to the immediate posttest, with both experimental groups showing more gains in empathy than the control group. The gains having endured, the null hypothesis is rejected. These findings are displayed in Tables 10 and 11.

Ho<sub>2.3</sub> Congruence. Gains for RI Congruence endured over four weeks time. Mean scores were significantly greater in

Table 10

Comparison of Retreat, Workshop and Control Treatment  
Groups on Delayed Measure of Marital Satisfaction

Dependent Variable	ANCOVA of Adjusted Delayed Test Means			ANOVA of Delayed Test Gains Scores	
	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F<sup>a</sup></u>
<u>Regard</u>					
Between	2	17.48	1.58	32.60	2.59
Within	83	11.06		12.58	
<u>Empathy</u>					
Between	2	127.51	4.31*	136.58	4.41*
Within	83	29.58		30.99	
<u>Congruence</u>					
Between	2	81.30	3.50*	107.18	4.02*
Within	83	23.25		26.64	
<u>Unconditionality</u>					
Between	2	316.54	6.88*	245.14	4.98*
Within	83	45.97		49.28	
<u>Total</u>					
Between	2	66.84	4.25*	65.11	4.22*
Within	83	15.72		15.41	

<sup>a</sup>.95F<sub>(2,83)</sub> = 3.12

\* p < .05

Table 11

Matrix and Means: Multiple Comparisons of Treatment Groups  
(Delayed Test Gains) by Fisher's Modified LSD Procedure

	<u>Workshop</u>	<u>Control</u>
<u>Retreat</u>	Regard Empathy Congruence Unconditionality* Total	Regard Empathy* Congruence* Unconditionality Total
<u>Workshop</u>	_____	Regard Empathy* Congruence* Unconditionality Total*

Mean Scores on Dependent Variable (Delayed Test Gains)

<u>Treatment Group</u>	<u>Reg</u>	<u>Emp</u>	<u>Con</u>	<u>Unc</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Retreat</u>	2.448	3.450	4.053	0.582	2.633
<u>Workshop</u>	1.239	4.538	3.277	6.080	3.784
<u>Control</u>	0.213	0.208	0.184	2.369	0.744

\* p < .05



both experimental groups than in the control group. In view of these findings, the null hypothesis is untenable.

Table 10 and Table 11 show these results.

Ho<sub>2.4</sub> Unconditionality. Although gain scores for the workshop group were significantly different when compared to the scores of the retreat group, neither experimental group made significant gains when compared to the control subjects on the scale of RI Unconditionality. The null hypothesis, therefore, is retained. See Tables 10 and 11.

Ho<sub>2.5</sub> Total. Total score gains endured for the workshop group on the delayed test measure. The enduring gains made by the workshop group at the .05 level make that component of the null hypothesis untenable. For the retreat group, gains endured at the .10 level of significance, but not at the .05 level of significance set for this study. There were no gains for controls.

The ANCOVA of means and ANOVA of gains scores for the above mentioned data is found on Table 10. Table 11 displays the matrix of delayed test gain scores with significant differences indicated.

Summary of Ho<sub>2</sub>. Three of the five scales which measure marital satisfaction endured from posttest measurement to delayed test measurement four weeks later. The measures that endured were RI Empathy, RI Congruence and RI Total. RI Regard and RI Unconditionality did not show significance. Although null hypothesis 2 can be rejected on the basis of

these findings, it should be noted that some gains which were apparent at posttest had begun to fade by the end of four weeks.

### Problem 3

Many enthusiasts for marriage enrichment programs assume the importance of a weekend retreat during which participants are isolated from the demands of daily life. Is the retreat location related to gains in marital satisfaction that can be measured immediately following a program? Could similar results be achieved in a weekend workshop where participants eat and sleep at home and continue with daily routines during breaks in the program? The independent variable in this problem was location, the dependent variable marital satisfaction as measured on the RI.

#### Null Hypothesis 3 ( $H_{03}$ )

After adjustments based on pretest scores, there is no significant difference between retreat groups and workshop groups on an immediate posttest of marital satisfaction.

$H_{03.1}$  Regard. No significant differences were found between retreats and workshops. Tables 8 and 9 display these findings.

$H_{03.2}$  Empathy. On neither RI Regard nor RI Empathy were any significant differences observed on the posttest between the retreat group and the workshop group. This is consistent with the findings in the pretest where workshop

and retreat means were not found to be significantly different on these two subscales. This makes the posttest ANCOVA more defensible. The ANOVA of gains also supports no difference between these two experimental groups on the posttest. The null hypothesis 3.1 and 3.2 were found to be tenable. See Table 8.

Ho<sub>3.3</sub>Congruence. RI Congruence scores between retreats and workshops were not significantly different at the time of the posttest. However, RI Congruence scores were significantly different on the pretest, with retreat participants reporting less marital satisfaction. This suggests that retreat subjects made substantial gains as compared to workshop participants, but not sufficient gains to be significantly different from the workshop gains. The null hypothesis for Ho<sub>3.3</sub> was retained. See Table 8.

Ho<sub>3.4</sub>Unconditionality. Unconditionality is the only RI scale which shows a significant difference between retreat and workshop groups at the posttest. Contrary to expectation, the workshop group scored higher than the retreat group. The null hypothesis was rejected. It should be noted, however, that the significant difference by which the rejection of the null was made is in the opposite direction of the research hypothesis statement prior to the study. Tables 8 and 9 display these findings.

Ho<sub>3.5</sub>Total. Total RI scores show no significant differences between the means of retreat and workshop

groups. Accordingly, the null was retained. Refer to Table 8.

Summary of Ho<sub>3</sub>. This null hypothesis was rejected solely on the one scale, RI Unconditionality, the means for which went in the opposite direction of the research hypothesis. These data do not generally support the claim that retreat locations enhance the effectiveness of this marital enrichment program beyond that for local workshop settings. Analyses of covariance and analyses of variance of gains scores are shown in Table 8. Table 9 follows and is a matrix of a multiple comparison of groups which displays the findings for Hypothesis 3.

#### Problem 4

If retreat locations are shown to provide better effectiveness for marriage enrichment programs, will these gains endure over time? Four weeks following the retreats and workshops, the RI measured the dependent variable again. Tables 10 and 11 show these results.

#### Null Hypothesis #4 (Ho<sub>4</sub>)

After adjustments made on pretest data, there is no significant difference between retreat groups and workshop groups on a delayed test of marital satisfaction.

Although all subtest and total scores were statistically analyzed, only one significant difference was obtained, the subscale of RI Unconditionality. Contrary to the expectation stated in the prior research hypothesis,

the workshop group scored higher than the retreat group. These results do not justify the rejection of null Hypothesis #4 and do not lend support to the view that retreat settings are superior to local settings with regard to the effectiveness of the marriage enrichment program.

Findings related to Hypothesis #4 are found in Tables 10 and 11.

#### Problem 5

Findings of previous research are contradictory regarding differential responses of men and women to marriage enrichment programs. Does one profit more than the other during these weekend retreats and workshops? Do persons respond differently depending on other personal characteristics? Sex and eight other demographic characteristics were independent variables in this study.

#### Null Hypothesis #5 ( $H_{05}$ )

There is no significant difference between men and women in gains in marital satisfaction in any of the three conditions.

Analysis of covariance of means and analysis of variance of gains scores in all three conditions show no measurable differences in the responses of men and women on the testing instrument. F ratios for sex from the two way ANCOVA are shown with the demographic variables in Table 7. The null hypothesis is retained.

### Demographic Variables

Two-way analyses of covariance were computed for eight demographic variables which were recorded for each of the 86 subjects in this study. In addition to sex of subject, data were collected relative to each subject's (1) age, (2) years married, (3) number of marriages, (4) number of children, (5) number of children living in the home, (6) level of education, (7) level of employment, and (8) income range. Of these eight variables there was no main effect on two-way analyses of variance of either the posttest or the delayed test scores. There were, however, three significant two-way interactions, a treatment by level of education interaction on the immediate posttest RI Total score, RI Regard, and RI Unconditionality. This finding suggests that persons in this study with less formal education (high school or one year of college) are more satisfied with their spouses after attending a retreat than are persons who have two or more years of college. Those with more formal education show slightly higher means in the workshop condition over those with less education. Control subjects with more formal education also had higher means. No interactions were present on the delayed posttest. The group mean scores and the three two-factor interactions resulting on the posttest are illustrated in Figures 1-3.

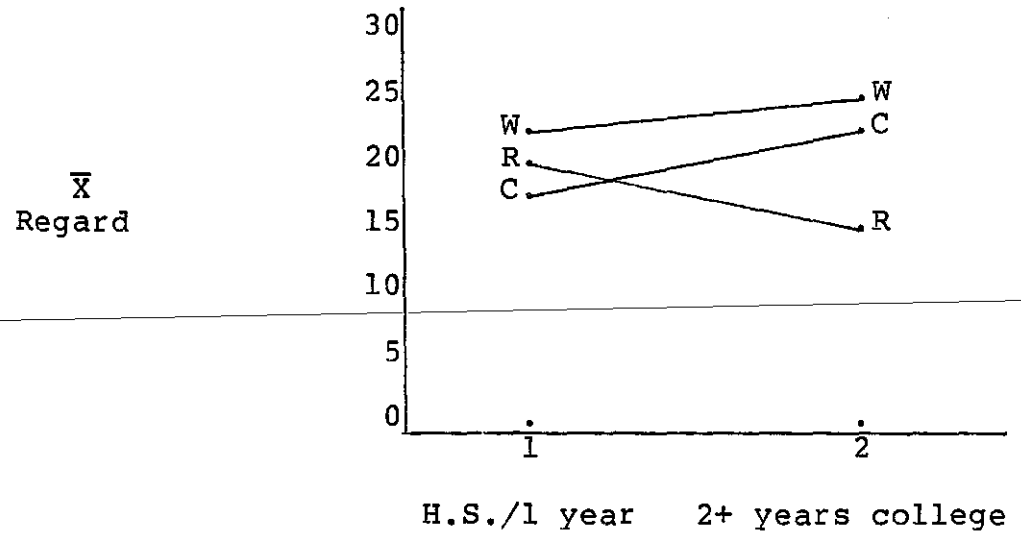


Figure 1. A graph depicting the interaction of treatment and educational level on RI Regard.

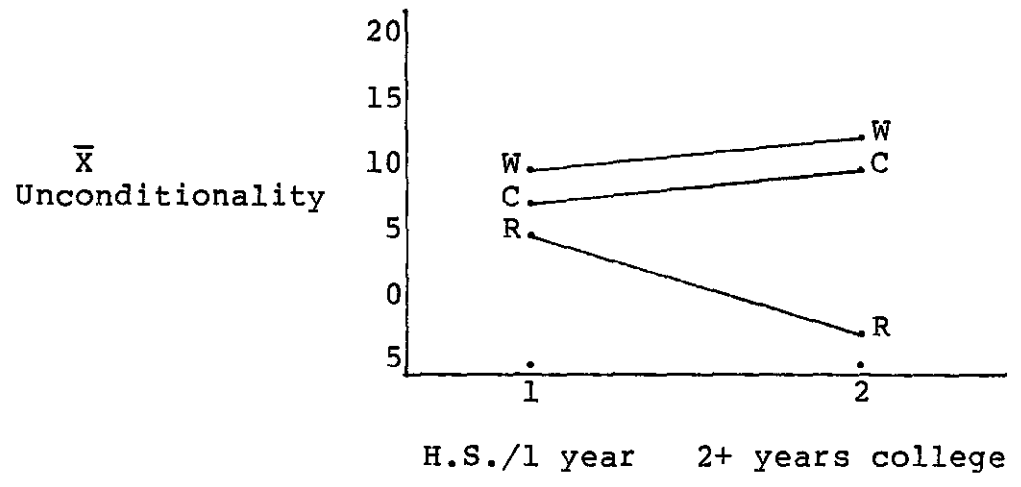


Figure 2. A graph depicting the interaction of treatment and educational level on RI Unconditionality.

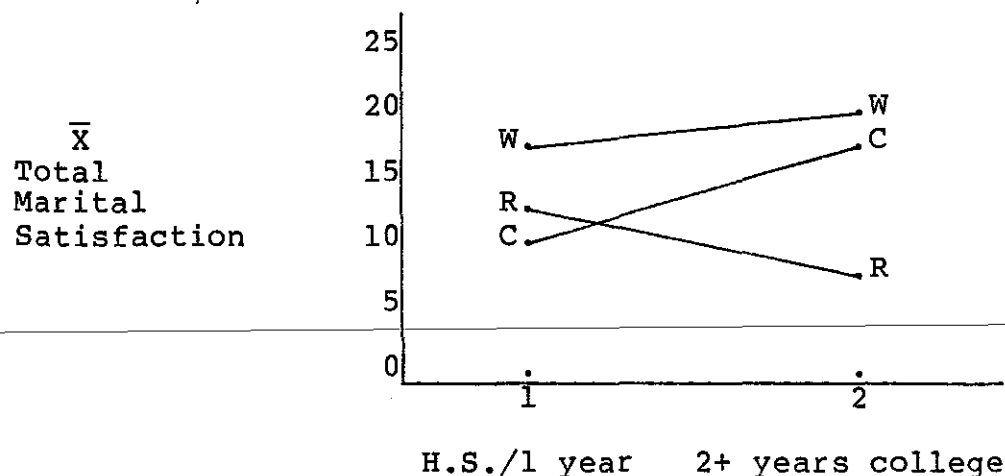


Figure 3. A graph depicting the interaction of treatment and educational level on RI Total.

#### Summary

Chapter 4 presented the statistical analyses of the data to test the five research hypotheses. The statistical procedures used for the analyses included one-way analysis of variance of pretest scores, two-way analyses of covariance of posttest and delayed scores and analysis of variance of gains scores for posttest and delayed test. Fisher's modified LSD procedure of multiple comparison of groups was also used. Demographic variables were examined by analyses of variance of means gain scores.

The first null hypothesis tested was that there is no difference between the experimental groups and the control groups on immediate posttest scores. This hypothesis was rejected. The findings show significantly greater gains in experimental groups than in the control groups.



The second null hypothesis of no difference between experimental groups and the control groups on delayed test scores was also rejected. Significant gains were shown in the experimental groups as compared to the control group on an analysis of variance and Fisher's multiple comparison procedures.

The third null hypothesis that there is no difference between retreat and workshop locations in the gains made by subjects on immediate posttest was retained. On four of the five scales no significant differences were found. On the one scale reflecting statistical significance, findings were in the opposite direction of the prior research hypothesis, favoring the workshop location (subscale of RI Unconditionality).

The fourth null hypothesis was that there is no difference between retreat and workshop conditions on delayed test. The null was retained with findings similar to the findings for Hypothesis #3.

The fifth null hypothesis of no difference between sexes in all testing conditions was retained. Eight demographic variables showed no significant differences and no interactions with the exception of a treatment by level of education interaction on the immediate posttest on total score and two subscales, RI Regard and RI Unconditionality.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to measure the effectiveness of a specific marriage enrichment program, the importance of location as a variable in retreat/workshop outcome, and differences in the responses of men and women to a weekend marriage enrichment program. Relevant literature was reviewed with attention given to six theoretical bases which form the foundations of marriage enrichment and provide the rationale for its varied programs. Research on marriage enrichment was also reviewed with a summary of findings presented and the need for additional research cited. This chapter presents a summary of method and findings, a discussion of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

#### Summary of Methods

Eighty-six subjects made up the sample for this study. They were drawn from a Protestant church population in California and Arizona (Church of the Brethren). As a part of regular church programming, half the congregations contacted were asked to hold a marriage enrichment retreat at a secluded location removed from their communities, and half were asked to hold workshops in their churches or a nearby home. The two experimental conditions were comprised of three workshops and three retreats held during a nine

month period. Three trained leader couples each led one workshop and one retreat.

Each weekend marriage enrichment program was of equivalent length and had five to seven participant couples (with the exception of one retreat where numbers fell to three couples because of unforeseen circumstances on the day it began). The same fourteen hour program was presented on all six weekends beginning on Friday evening and ending Sunday noon.

The testing instrument was the Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory and was administered immediately prior to the weekend, immediately following the weekend program and four weeks following the weekend. Two control groups, no-treatment and placebo, were given the Barrett-Lennard RI at the same intervals as the experimental groups.

#### Summary of Results

A one-way analysis of variance showed significant differences between groups on the pretest with retreat group mean scores lower on all RI scales. The means of the workshop and control groups were roughly comparable.

Research hypotheses which predicted the experimental conditions on posttest and delayed test to produce significant gains over the control conditions were substantiated by the data. The data did not meet the expectation of the hypotheses predicting significantly greater gains in the retreat locations than in the workshop

locations. The null hypothesis of no significant differences between men's and women's responses was retained. Eight demographic variables, examined by analyses of variance of gains scores produced no significant findings at posttest or delayed test with the exception of one treatment by level of education interaction.

### Discussion

A discussion of the findings of this study includes attention to the pretest results, the effectiveness of the treatment, the importance of retreat/workshop location, and the effect of demographic variables. The researcher's speculations about the findings are included.

#### Pretest Results and Speculations

Contrary to expectations, subjects in the retreat condition produced lower mean scores on pretest than did workshop and control subjects. Further analysis within the three separate retreats which made up that experimental group produced no significant variance between pretest means. Subjects at the three separate workshop sites did vary somewhat on pretest means when examined by one-way ANOVAS and multiple comparisons of groups.

The composition of groups was examined for any apparent or systematic group differences which would illuminate the above findings. None were found. Leader couples' written reports of each weekend and informal questioning of leader couples about pretest group differences revealed no

awareness of obvious differences between groups.

One could speculate that the factors of greater costs of attending a retreat, or the difficulties of finding child care for a weekend away, may influence subjects' perceptions and metaperceptions on the RI in the secluded retreat setting. One could, further, wonder if the more intensive nature of the retreat, where spouses are together all weekend without interruption, may provide a greater perceived challenge to the distance-regulation function of the marriage relationship which Kantor and Lehr (1975) have observed in the marital subsystem of families. Or perhaps comfortable levels of self-disclosure between spouses (Jourard, 1964) are perceived as being threatened by the anticipation and experience of the secluded retreat.

No effort was made to control for subjects' acquaintance with other members of their weekend group. It is possible some couples were better acquainted within their group than was true in other groups and that these group dynamics in some way influenced the subjects' self-reported marital satisfaction. Hof and Miller (1982) emphasize that participants in marriage enrichment programs are a heterogeneous group of people. Since randomized assignment to groups was not practical with this population, sampling error in such a heterogeneous population was likely.

#### Program (Treatment) Results

As hypothesized, both experimental groups showed

significant gains from pretest to posttest mean scores and from pretest to delayed test mean scores. This gain was not observed in the control groups. The results would suggest the effectiveness of this specific marriage enrichment program in either condition tested, at any of the six experimental sites. Assuming a heterogeneous population and still demonstrating significant gains across all experimental groups, the generalizability of this program as facilitating marital growth and satisfaction is enhanced. Further, program effectiveness is supported by the endurance of gains as found on the delayed test four weeks following the marriage enrichment weekends. Significant gains for subjects regardless of leadership couple and possible leader effects add support for the claim of program effectiveness.

RI Scales Relative to Program Components. Marriage enrichment programs are based on the premise that human relationships have a great many untapped strengths and resources which can be developed. There is the assumption that people can learn how to choose and change behaviors and attitudes which will improve their intimate relationships and allow them to experience increased marital satisfaction. The program tested in this study was designed to create a climate to affirm self and other regard, empathic understanding, behaviors congruent with thoughts and feelings, and unconditional love between married partners. Participants in the program were given the opportunity

through leader modeling, structured exercises and behavioral rehearsal to change behaviors and attitudes which they perceived would increase their marital satisfaction. Although specific components of the program were not measured, the results of this study suggest that an affirming climate was achieved, and that leader modeling and structured exercises which focused on the goals of the program contributed to couples making changes which increased their marital satisfaction.

Specific program components may be more related to the dimensions of marital satisfaction on the RI than are other components. For example, Friday evening's activities, as they promote self and other esteem, may influence responses on the RI Regard scale more than other parts of the weekend. This scale taps perceptions relating to feeling appreciated, approved of, being respected, valued and cared about. Retreat results at posttest showed significant gains in means scores on the measurement of Regard, suggesting the retreat groups were effective in building a climate for self and other esteem.

The increase in empathic understanding may be related to the module on Saturday morning. The exercises in this component focus on the communication of feelings. RI Empathy measures perceptions relative to the extent that partners feel their experiences and meanings are affectively understood. That RI Empathy showed significantly higher

means in both experimental conditions immediately following the weekend as well as four weeks later, suggests that participants in these retreats and workshops made important and enduring changes in their understandings of each other's emotional life. These changes may result from new learnings around communication of feelings.

RI Congruence may respond to the Saturday afternoon focus on conflict management. Concerns of honesty and openness around both positive and negative expressions in a relationship, the effort to match behavior and feelings without denial or deception are measured on this subscale. Learning skills for conflict management may increase relationship skills that would be reflected on RI Congruence. This scale, also, showed significant and enduring gains, suggesting a readiness on the part of marriage enrichment participants to learn more effective ways of expressing differences within intimate relationships.

The RI Unconditionality scale measures an attitude of consistency and unchanging love which allows for ups and downs in a relationship. It could be thought of as somewhat related to the Sunday morning component on commitment. The findings for this subscale are puzzling. Workshop groups showed considerably increased means on RI Unconditionality while retreat groups showed very little increase. Workshop groups showed an increase from posttest to delayed test.



These increases with workshop subjects were not statistically significant because control subjects also showed an increase on RI Unconditionality. This finding may raise doubt about the reliability of the RI Unconditionality subscale and suggests a need for further research on this part of the instrument.

The RI Total measure of marital satisfaction is a combination of subscale scores. The total experience of a marriage enrichment weekend was perceived as increasing marital satisfaction for participants when tested immediately following the retreat. Workshop participants indicated four weeks later that they still had more satisfying relationships than they had before they went to the weekend event. Retreat participants' response on RI Total did not endure for the four-week period at a significant level, although means declined only slightly. The total retreat/workshop experience suggests that this program has merits as a method of education and growth for married couples. It enhances their sense of marital satisfaction in several relationship dimensions that theorists believe to be important. That this increased marital satisfaction may contribute to the stability and longevity of marriage relationships would commend this model as a program of prevention of marriage breakdown.

Importance of Delayed Test Results. It is generally accepted among marriage enrichment enthusiasts that one

weekend event is not usually sufficient to create lasting changes in marriage relationships. At best, these events provide motivation for change and beginnings in the direction of change. Research suggests that the positive feelings generated at a weekend enrichment experience should be followed soon by multi-week communication training and/or marital support groups. How soon these sessions must follow was one of the questions this study sought to answer.

An examination of delayed test means shows gains in RI Empathy and RI Congruence sustaining well at four weeks for both retreat and workshop participants. RI Total sustained well for the workshop condition over a four-week period and means for RI Unconditionality actually increased. Retreat group participants did not maintain their gains on RI Regard and RI Total at the end of the four weeks. Although their decline was not great, they lost statistical significance at the .05 level. This suggests that four weeks is a reasonable time lapse from the marriage enrichment weekend to the beginning of multi-week sessions, but the delay should probably not extend much beyond four weeks to take advantage of the heightened motivations for change generated by the retreats and workshops.

#### Importance of Location

One cannot say, as a result of the findings of this study, that location is a significant variable in the effectiveness of marriage enrichment programs. The

hypothesis that it is important to retreat to a site removed from daily demands and routines of participant couples for the purpose of enriching marital growth is not supported by the data of this study. Contrary to expectation, the workshop group scored significantly higher than the retreat group on the RI Unconditionality subscale at both posttest and delayed test. In light of these findings, agencies and churches who sponsor marriage enrichment weekends may want to provide near-home alternatives for couples who want to attend a marriage enrichment event but feel they cannot afford the cost of a retreat setting, transportation expenses, or, perhaps, cannot arrange overnight child care.

#### Demographic Variables

By the data gathered for this study, the null hypothesis was supported in showing no significant differences between male and female responses on the RI at either posttest or delayed test. No apparent program modifications are dictated by these findings.

Eight other demographic variables were analyzed: (1) age, (2) years married, (3) number of marriages, (4) number of children, (5) number of children in the home, (6) level of education, (7) level of employment, and (8) income range. Although pretest differences occurred for age, years married, number of children and number of children in the home, none of the demographic variables produced significant main effects for gains made on the

posttest or delayed test. This suggests a greater generalizability for the program than if there had been main effects.

One interaction, location by level of education, produced statistical significance. The interaction suggests that persons with two or more years of college respond less well to retreat locations than do those with less education, and the better educated respond slightly better in workshop settings than do those with less education. The practical significance of that finding is not great in church populations since these programs are usually open to all married couples within a congregation. There may be occasions, however, when a congregation may be advised to sponsor a workshop rather than a retreat if the average level of education in the congregation is two or more years of college.

#### Summary

The effectiveness of this marriage enrichment program was given credibility in that gains in marital satisfaction were made in both experimental conditions regardless of pretest differences. Further, the program appeared to be effective across all demographic variables assessed. Location of retreats/workshops did not appear to be an important variable.

#### Limitations

In order to make proper evaluation of the findings, it

is important to keep the limitations of this study in view. Four major limitations are discussed.

First, the measuring instrument used in this study was a self-report measure. Although it has undergone numerous and rigorous analyses for validity and reliability, self-report measures are criticized as being subject to responses of social desirability. Socially desirable responses were, hopefully, diminished by the stringent efforts made to assure participants of the confidentiality of responses they provided. While it is assumed that each person is the best judge of his or her own subjective sense of marital satisfaction, the self-report nature of the testing instrument constitutes a major limitation of this research.

Second, subjects volunteering to participate in marriage enrichment retreats/workshops under church sponsorship constituted the sample for this study. Accordingly, the generalization of results is limited to a similar population. The church population is Protestant, primarily Caucasian, middle class and resides in California and Arizona.

Third, attrition in one cell of the design lowered sample numbers below that desired for that segment. A one-way analysis of variance between groups shows no statistically significant difference between that group and other groups in that experimental condition. The low number in one retreat, however, does provide a limitation.

Fourth, an assumption was made that the leader couples for these retreats/workshops were representative of the population of marriage enrichment leaders. An attempt to control for leader effects was an important element of the design. This assumption is the fourth major limitation of this study.

### Conclusions

The results of the present study appear to warrant the following conclusions:

(1) The weekend marriage enrichment program used in this study is effective in enhancing marital satisfaction in either retreat or workshop settings.

(2) Retreat locations are not superior to workshops in local churches as a factor in the effectiveness of the weekend marriage enrichment program used in this study.

(3) Men and women respond equally well to the weekend marriage enrichment program under study.

(4) Age, number of children, number of children in the home, years married, level of income, number of marriages, and level of employment are not important factors in the effectiveness of the marriage enrichment program studied.

(5) Persons with two or more years of college tend to respond more positively to this program if offered in a workshop than if offered in a retreat location.

(6) Follow-up marriage enrichment programs should commence within 4 weeks of a marriage enrichment event or

shortly thereafter.

(7) Cautious generalizations of these findings may be made to similar populations.

### Recommendations

~~The following recommendations are made for the replication of this study:~~

(1) The location should be studied as a variable with other populations, other programs and other leader couples.

(2) Random assignment to groups should become a practical reality for future investigation.

(3) Another follow-up test should be given four months following the weekend retreat/workshop.

(4) A study should be made of the three-stage model of marriage enrichment as proposed by Hof (1981), extending attendance at a weekend event by adding multi-week skills training and a support group.

(5) Behavioral assessments should be made of spouses' interactions by a trained observer.

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APPENDIX A  
Church of the Brethren  
Marriage Enrichment Program

MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT RETREAT  
PROGRAM\*  
Church of the Brethren

FRIDAY EVENING

I. Creating a Warm Atmosphere

A. Questionnaire

B. Name Tags

1. Pick out three pictures which tells something about you, without talking about your choices to others. (A hobby, occupation, a life priority, etc.)
2. Paste these pictures on paper provided. (If you have a particular thing in mind and can't find it fairly quickly, you might want to draw it.)
3. Gather in a circle without sharing your name tag.
4. Proceed around the circle sharing by couples. One spouse offering an interpretation of the other spouse's nametag. The wearer may then confirm or explain further their name tag. The other spouse does the same.
5. Leader couple will begin by modeling the process.

C. Mutual Hug

Partners give each other a hug; hold on a moment.

D. Discussion of expectations

A time for questions on principles and procedures, which have been mailed ahead of time and sharing of expectations.

E. Assumptions

Marriage Enrichment Principles

Good marriages take time.

Communication is the key.

Self-esteem is an important foundation.

All marriages have a potential for growth.

It is important to celebrate good marriages.

Christian faith nurtures marriage relationships.

\*Program designed by leader couples, Mary and Bob Baucher and Nancy and Tom Deal. Program written by Dr. Tom Deal, Pastor, Modesto Church of the Brethren, Modesto, California.

Workshop Procedures

Share only what feels comfortable; group activities are voluntary.

Confidentiality.

Attendance is extremely important for all sessions.

Group sharing builds group support, but the main emphasis is on the couple's relationship.

Deal with the here and now.

Focus is on relationships, rather than techniques, but couples learn additional communication skills.

Leaders are teachers, not doctors — participants are students, not patients.

Leaders will participate in the activities.

Leaders will not ask other couples to do something that they themselves won't do.

F. Individual Hugs

Take turns giving hug; mate does not hug back — just experience being hugged. Then reverse.

G. Statement of Marriage:

(Using clay, markers, other media) portray the character or course of your marriage via a symbol or drawing.

(BREAK)

H. Candlelight Fantasy

1. Have each couple light candles and cuddle up to each other.

a. We would like you to go back to the time of your first meeting. What were your first impressions...What did you notice about the other person...What happened that sticks in your mind?...Move on to the time of your first date. How are you feeling as the time of the date is approaching?...How are you feeling?...Take time to relive that experience...What do you think you will remember from your experience?

b. As you are celebrating your first anniversary, what have you enjoyed most about being married?...Is marriage what you thought it would be?... What do you notice about the appearance of your mate that you did not notice when you first met?...

2. Come back from the fantasy trip, take a few moments to share with your mate what you experienced.

3. "Where You Love" by David Augsburger

4. Closing Prayer Circle/Group hug.

## SATURDAY MORNING

## II. Communication

## A. Back to back (non-verbal)

Sit down - close eyes.

1. Say hello, using only back.
2. How do you feel about spouse?
3. Lock arms, stand-up, say good-bye using back only.

B. Modeling Self-Responsible Statements - Expressing and listening for feelings.

## C. Explain self-responsible statements - contrast with under and over responsible statements. (On blackboard). Again, focusing on feelings.

## D. Group work on rewording statements (self-responsible) - listening for feelings. Feelings may not be directly stated. For example, the statement might be, "That was a terrible party!" the feeling might be, "I felt excluded."

Hand out paper, rewording statements, into feeling, self-responsible statements.

1. "You're not listening to me."
2. "You're laughing at me."
3. "We have good times together."
4. "You shouldn't work late so often."
5. "Some people sure think they're hot stuff."
6. "We women seem to get stuck with more than our share of the housework."
7. "Life's a bowl of cherries."
8. "Oh Honey, you shouldn't have gone to all that trouble for my birthday!"
9. "You have been the best chairperson that that church committee has ever had."
10. "Everything is going to be alright."

## E. Shared Meaning (Reaching an understanding)

1. I feel...(have already done)
2. Tell me about it...
3. Tell more about it...
4. Feed back (I hear you saying...)
5. Confirm or correct.

(Not trying to reach agreement on the idea being presented, only trying to be clear on what is being said.)

6. **EXERCISE:** select 3 pictures each from magazines - don't take a lot of time. Look at the picture and tell of your feelings about it or an imaginary story it makes you think of or experience out of your past that it reminds you of. With your spouse take turns with your pictures. If you don't get finished that's o.k.; if you get finished too soon, respond to your mate's pictures - always using "I feel." 20 minutes)

**BREAK** (10 minutes)

**F. Vulnerability Exercise (Non-verbal)**

1. Blindfold spouse
2. Have spouse get in "vulnerable" position, lay on back, legs, arms, hands open; be helpless, do not respond to your mate - only receive.
3. To other spouse - do not do anything until you have directions.  
Direction: Give something to your helpless spouse.  
Reverse roles.
4. Debriefing.

**G. TEN Minute Talk**

Each talk for 10 minutes. The other is to listen for feelings. After each has talked for 10 minutes, the first listener is to respond to feelings, give feedback. Then the second listener will respond for five minutes. There can be clarification, but no debate. Is the message I got accurate? If not, the speaker can give clarification.

**SUBJECTS:** dreams, family fun, pets, favorite relatives, friends, vacations, health. For now stay off emotional or tense subjects. Go have fun with each other.

Come back at \_\_\_\_\_. Get feedback.

Suggestion: 5 10 minute talks this next week. At least 1 per week after that.

**LUNCH**

**III. Conflict and Affection**

**A. Ranking**

1. Hold hands; face each other. As criterion are called out, each spouse moves in the direction of person they feel best fit. Do not let go of hands.

**WHO:**

- a. gets out of bed easiest in the morning?
- b. spends money more easily?
- c. takes longest time to get ready to go out?
- d. drives most carefully?
- e. wears loudest clothes?
- f. has easiest time talking in front of group?
- g. is most daring?

B. Checker Game (40 minutes) Introduction - explain game

Conflict and affection are usually seen as opposites, but they are really partners. Love has two sides if it's going to be a fulfilling or complete relationship. One is the concern for your own needs; the other is concern for your partner's needs. Conflict is caring about yourself enough to confront your partner with your own needs. Affection is caring about your partner enough to meet his/her needs. It is only when both partners' needs are met that we have true harmony.

Checker Game - Resolving Differences (for couple, need checker game.)

Purpose (not to be stated before the game is played, but afterward)

To enable couples to become more aware of their method of decision-making.

Each couple has their own game of checkers. The object of the game is to gain as many kings as possible as a couple. The game will be played according to the regular rules of checkers, including forced jumps, with the following exceptions:

1. Make your intended move known to your partner.
2. A move must be agreed upon in order to be made.
3. If you do not have enough coins to crown all kings, turn coins over in order to identify them.

A handout will be given to be filled out by each person. After the questions are answered, the couples will share their reactions.

Come back to total group for debriefing (possibly divide into 2 groups)

Ask for reactions and comments.

Did the way you addressed your partner change during the course of the game?

C. Co-operative Balance (non-verbal)

D. Belt-Line Exercise

Introduction

1. Each of us has tender areas in our life that we do not wish to discuss or be teased about. These may be irresponsible actions in our past, a family trait, a habit of which we are not proud, or a health problem. In order for spouses to settle their differences smoothly they must agree to stick to the issues and not "hit below the belt," by touching a sore point. Hitting below the belt is a distraction and causes a person to think about their hurt rather than the issue.
2. This exercise is designed to determine where your belt-line is, and to share this with your mate for feedback.
3. Each spouse will receive a lined sheet of paper bearing a symbol of their sexual identity.
4. Fold the sheet in half lengthways.
5. Beginning with the bottom line on one-half of the sheet, list anything concerning yourself which you consider out-of-bounds in settling differences with your spouse.

6. List only one item per line.
7. When both of you are finished turn your paper over and exchange sheets.
8. Without looking at what your mate has written, begin at the bottom line and list what you believe your husband/wife's tender areas are.
9. When you are both finished, open the paper and compare lists.
10. Discuss any differences.
11. Do you feel that your mate's "belt-line" is too high (too many areas out-of-bounds) or too low (perhaps not realistic)?
12. Is there anyway that your belt-lines can be lowered in order to make you stronger when conflict arises?

E. Asking For Affection

1. Take a moment to think of an expression of affection you would like from your partner. It should be something which he/she could do for you some time during your afternoon free time.
2. Be clear in your mind why this particular expression would be important to you.
3. Take turns sharing your requests with each other. Partners respond as you will.
4. Reassemble as large group for debriefing:  
Debriefing questions:
  - a. Could you anticipate your partner's request?
  - b. How did you feel about asking for affection?

F. Love Letters

1. Give each person a sheet of paper.
2. After receiving instructions, women go to another room, men remain, spreading out.
3. Write a love letter to your partner.
  - a. Take some time before you begin writing, to think of some things you want to say.
  - b. Focus on expressing your feelings and thoughts on your relationship at present.
  - c. Share the letters sometime this afternoon. Exchange the letters so that each partner can read the letter first, before you do any verbal sharing.

BREAK or DINNER - depending on the group's decision



## EVENING

## IV. Sexuality

- A. Introduction - "Song of Songs"
- B. Film: "Sexuality & Communication"
- C. Half sheet on film - (Group sharing)
- D. Break, snack, get candles
- E. "A Look at Sexuality" - sheet (couple)
  - 1. Each person fills out and then shares 3 areas mutually agreed on in couples - might want to share in areas where there are major differences in response.
- F. Compliment Exercise/Candlelight
  - 1. Give your mate three compliments involving your sexual relationship. Write out: "I like the way you..."
  - 2. When finished writing, light votive candle from a large candle, each couple may sit in an area somewhat removed from group.
  - 3. All candles are lit and lights are out, take turns sharing compliments. No feedback except "thank you" until both are finished.
  - 4. Share briefly with each other how each felt when giving and receiving compliments. If a comment is not understood, can ask for further clarification.

## PRAYER

## SUNDAY MORNING

## V. Celebration

- A. Warm-up/Songs (see if anyone wants to take this responsibility)
- B. Affirmation Posters  
(Need: Newsprint, paper, markers, pencils) Time: 35 minutes
  - 1. Divide men and women into two groups.
  - 2. Each person write on a small piece of paper four or five positive characteristics - or what you like about your spouse.
  - 3. Have someone else in the group print those characteristics on a sheet of newsprint, using no names on the paper.
  - 4. Bring the total group together. Women will hang up the sheets describing the husbands.

5. Husbands select one sheet they think their mate wrote, without disclosing this to the group; check out the choice quietly with your wife. If correct, husband will remain with spouse. If not correct, repeat the process until he makes the correct choice.
6. Repeat the process with wives guessing their sheets.
7. Identify posters in group: Share what led you to choose the poster, or posters, you did.

#### C. Spiritual Resources

##### 1. Peak Resources

###### a. Fantasy Experience

Get comfortable - imagine an experience you have sometimes in which you feel fully alive, something you do which makes you very happy to be alive, something which totally turns you on.

Allow yourself to be in that experience. Notice where you are - what do you see, hear, smell, taste?

Allow yourself to feel the sensations of your body.

What other feelings are you having?

Is anyone with you?

Enjoy yourself

Now come back and share together as a couple

###### b. Debriefing (as a group)

Where were you?

What were you doing?

Were you alone or with others?

How often do you do this?

What effects does it have?

##### 2. Sustaining Resources (share in group)

a. What are the occasions when you as individuals and as a couple feel closest to God?

b. What helps you in times of crises?

#### D. Renewing Our Love

1. Song - "God Who Touches Earth With Beauty"
2. Review Statement
3. Exchange Vows (couples)

4. Prayer of Blessing for a Marriage

5. Communion (as a group)

6. Circle of Thanks

7. "Blest Be the Tie That Binds"

E. Evaluation/Questionnaire

F. Dinner

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APPENDIX B  
Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory  
with Instructions to Couples,  
Subscales and Scoring

Please do not write your name on this form. Your answers will be anonymous. Do write your Social Security number:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Below are listed a variety of ways that one person may feel or behave in relation to another person. Please consider each statement with reference to your present relationship with your spouse. Mark each statement in the left margin, according to how strongly you feel that it is true, or not true, in this relationship. Please mark every one. Write in +3, +2, +1, or -1, -2, -3, to stand for the following answers: L2

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| +3: Yes, I strongly feel that it is true.                           | -1: No, I feel that it is probably untrue, or more untrue than true. |
| +2: Yes, I feel it is true.   | -2: No, I feel it is not true.                                       |
| +1: Yes, I feel that it is probably true, or more true than untrue. | -3: No, I strongly feel that it is not true.                         |

- 
- \_\_\_ 1. He respects me as a person.
  - \_\_\_ 2. He wants to understand how I see things.
  - \_\_\_ 3. His interest in me depends on the things I say or do.
  - \_\_\_ 4. He is comfortable and at ease in our relationship.
  - \_\_\_ 5. He feels a true liking for me.
  - \_\_\_ 6. He may understand my words but he does not see the way I feel.
  - \_\_\_ 7. Whether I am feeling happy or unhappy with myself makes no real difference to the way he feels about me.
  - \_\_\_ 8. I feel that he puts on a role or front with me.
  - \_\_\_ 9. He is impatient with me.
  - \_\_\_ 10. He nearly always knows exactly what I mean.
  - \_\_\_ 11. Depending on my behaviour, he has a better opinion of me sometimes than he has at other times.
  - \_\_\_ 12. I feel that he is real and genuine with me.
  - \_\_\_ 13. I feel appreciated by him.
  - \_\_\_ 14. He looks at what I do from his own point of view.
  - \_\_\_ 15. His feeling toward me doesn't depend on how I feel toward him.
  - \_\_\_ 16. It makes him uneasy when I ask or talk about certain things.
  - \_\_\_ 17. He is indifferent to me.

Page 2

- 
- \_\_\_ 18. He usually senses or realizes what I am feeling.
- \_\_\_ 19. He wants me to be a particular kind of person.
- \_\_\_ 20. I nearly always feel that what he says expresses exactly what he is feeling and thinking as he says it.
- 
- \_\_\_ 21. He finds me rather dull and uninteresting.
- \_\_\_ 22. His own attitudes toward some of the things I do or say prevent him from understanding me.
- \_\_\_ 23. I can (or could) be openly critical or appreciative of him without really making him feel any differently about me.
- \_\_\_ 24. He wants me to think that he likes me or understands me more than he really does.
- \_\_\_ 25. He cares for me.
- \_\_\_ 26. Sometimes he thinks that I feel a certain way, because that's the way he feels.
- \_\_\_ 27. He likes certain things about me, and there are other things he does not like.
- \_\_\_ 28. He does not avoid anything that is important for our relationship.
- \_\_\_ 29. I feel that he disapproves of me.
- \_\_\_ 30. He realizes what I mean even when I have difficulty in saying it.
- \_\_\_ 31. His attitude toward me stays the same; he is not pleased with me sometimes and critical or disappointed at other times.
- \_\_\_ 32. Sometimes he is not at all comfortable but we go on, outwardly ignoring it.
- \_\_\_ 33. He just tolerates me.
- \_\_\_ 34. He usually understands the whole of what I mean.
- \_\_\_ 35. If I show that I am angry with him he becomes hurt or angry with me, too.
- \_\_\_ 36. He expresses his true impressions and feelings with me.
- \_\_\_ 37. He is friendly and warm with me.
- \_\_\_ 38. He just takes no notice of some things that I think or feel.
- \_\_\_ 39. How much he likes or dislikes me is not altered by anything that I tell him about myself.
- \_\_\_ 40. At times I sense that he is not aware of what he is really feeling with me.
- \_\_\_ 41. I feel that he really values me.

Page 3

- \_\_\_ 42. He appreciates exactly how the things I experience feel to me.
- \_\_\_ 43. He approves of some things I do, and plainly disapproves of others.
- \_\_\_ 44. He is willing to express whatever is actually in his mind with me, including any feelings about himself or about me.
- \_\_\_ 45. He doesn't like me for myself.
- \_\_\_ 46. At times he thinks that I feel a lot more strongly about a particular thing than I really do.
- \_\_\_ 47. Whether I am in good spirits or feeling upset does not make him feel any more or less appreciative of me.
- \_\_\_ 48. He is openly himself in our relationship.
- \_\_\_ 49. I seem to irritate and bother him.
- \_\_\_ 50. He does not realize how sensitive I am about some of the things we discuss.
- \_\_\_ 51. Whether the ideas and feelings I express are "good" or "bad" seems to make no difference to his feeling toward me.
- \_\_\_ 52. There are times when I feel that his outward response to me is quite different from the way he feels underneath.
- \_\_\_ 53. At times he feels contempt for me.
- \_\_\_ 54. He understands me.
- \_\_\_ 55. Sometimes I am more worthwhile in his eyes than I am at other times.
- \_\_\_ 56. I have not felt he tries to hide anything from himself that he feels with me.
- \_\_\_ 57. He is truly interested in me.
- \_\_\_ 58. His response to me is usually so fixed and automatic that I don't really get through to him.
- \_\_\_ 59. I don't think that anything I say or do really changes the way he feels toward me.
- \_\_\_ 60. What he says to me often gives a wrong impression of his whole thought or feeling at the time.
- \_\_\_ 61. He feels deep affection for me.
- \_\_\_ 62. When I am hurt or upset he can recognize my feelings exactly, without becoming upset himself.
- \_\_\_ 63. What other people think of me does (or would, if he knew) affect the way he feels toward me.
- \_\_\_ 64. I believe that he has feelings he does not tell me about that are causing difficulty in our relationship.

*next page please*

### Instructions

We are always interested in improving our presentation of marriage enrichment retreats and workshops. LaVon Rupel (PSWC) is studying the retreat/workshop process with this in mind and would like you to fill out this questionnaire.

Please complete the attached questionnaire upon arrival Friday afternoon and give it to your leader couple. You will be asked to fill out a questionnaire again on Sunday afternoon and one more questionnaire about 4 weeks from now.

Your responses will be anonymous. Please:

- 1) Do not put your name on any form. Do put your Social Security number on the upper right hand corner. Do indicate the date.
- 2) Complete the forms independently of each other. Do not confer with your spouse.
- 3) Answer each question for yourself in light of how you feel at the moment you are answering it.

Thank you!



	VARIABLE LIST	ID, R1 TO R64 *
		(identification, variable # for each question)
(regard)	COMPUTE	$\text{REG} = (\text{R1} + \text{R5} + \text{R13} + \text{R25} + \text{R37} + \text{R41} + \text{R57} + \text{R61}) - (\text{R9} + \text{R17} + \text{R21} + \text{R29} + \text{R33} + \text{R45} + \text{R49} + \text{R53})/16$
(empathy)	COMPUTE	$\text{EMP} = (\text{R2} + \text{R10} + \text{R18} + \text{R30} + \text{R34} + \text{R42} + \text{R54} + \text{R62}) - (\text{R6} + \text{R14} + \text{R22} + \text{R26} + \text{R38} + \text{R46} + \text{R50} + \text{R58})/16$
(congruence)	COMPUTE	$\text{CON} = (\text{R4} + \text{R12} + \text{R20} + \text{R28} + \text{R36} + \text{R44} + \text{R48} + \text{R56}) - (\text{R8} + \text{R16} + \text{R24} + \text{R32} + \text{R40} + \text{R52} + \text{R60} + \text{R64})/16$
(unconditionality)	COMPUTE	$\text{UNC} = (\text{R7} + \text{R15} + \text{R23} + \text{R31} + \text{R39} + \text{R47} + \text{R51} + \text{R59}) - (\text{R3} + \text{R11} + \text{R19} + \text{R27} + \text{R35} + \text{R43} + \text{R55} + \text{R63})/16$
(total)	COMPUTE	$\text{TOTAL} = (\text{REG} + \text{EMP} + \text{UNC} + \text{CON})/4$
	WRITE CASES	(4F1.0, 64F2.0, 5F4.0) ID
		TO TOTAL

\*Subscale scoring for SPSS courtesy of Karen Wampler  
College of Home Economics  
University of Georgia  
Athens, GA 30603

APPENDIX C

Examples of Letters to Congregations

2024 Cedar Way  
Stockton, CA 95207  
November 10, 1981

Robert Earhart  
Pasadena Church of the Brethren  
1041 N. Altadena  
Pasadena, CA 91107

Dear Bob:

I am writing to inquire if the Pasadena Church would consider sponsoring a marriage enrichment workshop sometime in the next few months. Pacific Southwest Conference, out of its continuing interest in family life education is encouraging the churches of the conference to do this.

Some of us feel a sense of urgency in stabilizing healthy marriages as we become increasingly aware of the many stresses on families today. Many denominations are finding that the marriage enrichment weekend is one way of doing this. I have taken on the responsibility for promoting marriage enrichment in PSWC churches at the same time that I collect some information on marriage enrichment retreats for my doctoral dissertation.

The marriage enrichment weekend consists of activities intended to help couples learn more about their marriages and improve their communication. It suggests specific ways to make life together more full of joy and meaning and to affirm the marriage commitment in light of New Testament understandings. Individuals and couples are encouraged to look for their strengths and to build on them.

The weekend usually begins on Friday evening and runs through Sunday noon. It includes both structured and unstructured couple time and some group activities. No one is "put on the spot" or asked to share things they don't feel free to share. McFarland, Modesto, San Diego and other PSWC churches have held marriage enrichment weekends. They report unanimously that couples have found them both enjoyable and helpful and they plan to schedule additional retreats.

PSWC is prepared to offer a leader couple specially trained for leadership in marriage enrichment weekends. We recommend a minimum of five couples, a maximum of eight couples (in addition to the leader couple). Because retreat facilities are both hard to locate and to schedule and their costs make it difficult for some couples to participate, PSWC is suggesting the marriage enrichment workshop be held in your church and couples can then stay in their own homes. The leader couples volunteer their time, so the leaders' transportation and a few miscellaneous supplies are the only costs.

When promoting a marriage enrichment event, in addition to general publicity, it is usually a good idea for one person (or couple) to personally contact couples to invite them and answer their questions (additional information about marriage enrichment can be supplied for this purpose if you wish). The contact person would also arrange the date for the workshop and serve as a contact with the PSWC leader couple.

I will phone you in a few days to see if it is likely that the Pasadena Church is open to planning a marriage enrichment workshop and if so, who your contact person or couple will be.

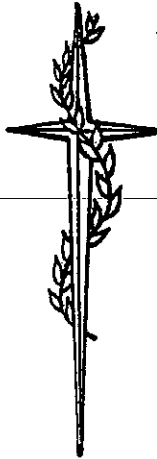
Sincerely,



LaVon Rupel

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APPENDIX D  
Example of Letters to Couples



# Church of the Brethren

918 Sierra Drive

Modesto, California 95351

Phone 523-1438

Ministers and Staff: Tom Deal, Glenn Harmon, John Hunter, Martha Webber, Romy Mueller

February 5, 1982

1334 Houser Lane  
Modesto, Ca 95351

Dear

We invite you to join us for an exciting Marriage Enrichment weekend. This is the fourth year that the Modesto Congregation has offered marriage enrichment events, and those who have participated say they have found it helpful, supportive, fun and growthful.

Our marriage enrichment weekend will follow a workshop format. We will begin with fun activities as a group to help us know each other a little better. Later, some suggestions for couple activities — entirely voluntary — will focus on ways to talk together, work together and play together that can add more joy to the marriage relationship. No one will be asked to change, but to affirm what is unique and good in their own relationship and to look at ways to accentuate the positive. We will look at a film together and discuss it with our spouses. We will share with other couples some relaxed free time and some avenues of spiritual growth.

Most persons, when they come home from a marriage enrichment retreat, say they feel a sense of renewal both as individuals and as a couple.

The cost of a marriage enrichment retreat is for room and meals only. Leadership time is donated. The retreat will be held in a lovely new mountain log home near Twain Harte, April 2, 3, 4 (Friday evening through Sunday noon). The cost is \$60 per couple. Plan to eat Friday evening before you arrive at the retreat location.

It is important that you let us know by March 19 if you plan to attend. The facility we are planning to use can only accomodate six couples plus the leader couple.

The details of preparation for the retreat, schedule, and materials needed will be sent to you as soon as we know who is going to be a part of the retreat.

Sincerely,

Tom and Nancy Deal  
TD:rm



"I have given you an example"  
John 13:15

APPENDIX E  
Demographic Form

PLEASE FILL OUT THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ONE TIME ONLY:

1. Age \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Sex: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_
3. Number of years married \_\_\_\_\_
4. Number of children \_\_\_\_\_; number of children still at home \_\_\_\_\_
5. First marriage \_\_\_\_\_ Second marriage \_\_\_\_\_
6. Number of years of school completed: High School \_\_\_\_\_  
College \_\_\_\_\_ Graduate \_\_\_\_\_
7. Employment: Full time \_\_\_\_\_ Part time \_\_\_\_\_ Not employed \_\_\_\_\_
8. Annual Income Range for Family: Under \$15,000 \_\_\_\_\_  
\$15,000 - \$25,000 \_\_\_\_\_  
\$25,000 - \$35,000 \_\_\_\_\_  
\$35,000 - over \_\_\_\_\_
9. Social Security # \_\_\_\_\_

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APPENDIX F  
Instructions to Leader Couples



## MEMORANDUM

May 5, 1982

Enclosed are questionnaires for the retreat at Pasadena on May 14-16. The questionnaires are identical except for the personal pronoun and are therefore separated "for women" and "for men."

The first packet contains 2 extras in order that the two of you may familiarize yourself with it by checking your own responses prior to administering it to the retreat participants.

Because an instruction sheet accompanies the forms on the first administration, no explanation should be necessary other than: "We would like you to fill out this questionnaire while we're waiting for others to arrive (or preparing to begin). [When you have completed it, please return it to the designated envelope] and we will give you directions for the first activity."

Perhaps one of you can be in charge of passing out and collecting the questionnaire while the other gives directions for the beginning activity.

At the conclusion of the retreat, pass out the second administration of forms along with and as a part of your written evaluations. Again, they should be returned to the appropriate envelope.

I will be glad to reimburse you for the postage in returning the forms to me following the retreat. If you have further questions, do not hesitate to call me collect at (209) 951-3632.

Thanks a million for all your help and cooperation.

Have fun!

LVR

LVR:gt