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A Model for Training Church Family Life Directors in Hispanic Congregations in the Michigan Conference

Jorge Raul Mayer
Andrews University
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ABSTRACT

A MODEL FOR TRAINING CHURCH FAMILY LIFE DIRECTORS IN HISPANIC CONGREGATIONS IN THE MICHIGAN CONFERENCE

by

Jorge Raúl Mayer

Adviser: Nancy Jean Vyhmeister
ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: A MODEL FOR TRAINING CHURCH FAMILY LIFE DIRECTORS IN HISPANIC CONGREGATIONS IN THE MICHIGAN CONFERENCE

Name of researcher: Jorge Raúl Mayer
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Problem

The complexity of today’s life—with divorce, parenting inadequacy, juvenile delinquency, one-parent households, financial pressures, and the sexual revolution—creates significant distress to the families. Within the general population of the United States, Hispanics find additional stressors in acculturation and machismo. The families in Hispanic congregations of the Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists did not have a meaningful ministry to assist them in coping with these challenges.

Method

This project examined the biblical principles on the origin, composition, and
mission of the family, the socio-theoretical approaches to understand the family as an
institution, and the Hispanic family in the United States.

A selection process for the nomination of Church Family Life Directors
(CFLDs) among the Hispanic churches in the Michigan Conference was developed.
Two training-session weekends were designed to teach CFLDs concepts and skills that
are related to the family in general, and more specifically to the Hispanic family, and
congruent with biblical principles and the most appropriate theory about the family.

Results

The Family Life Department was organized in all seven Hispanic churches of
the Michigan Conference. CFLDs equipped themselves for the new task by attending
the training sessions and participating in the organization of specials events that gave
visibility to the department.

Conclusions

The Family Life Department can effectively serve today’s families, not only
within the church but outside of it. The appropriate selection and training of CFLDs is a
practical and effective avenue to minister to the needs of marriages and families.
Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

A MODEL FOR TRAINING CHURCH FAMILY LIFE DIRECTORS IN HISPANIC CONGREGATIONS IN THE MICHIGAN CONFERENCE

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

by

Jorge Raúl Mayer

October 1998
A MODEL FOR TRAINING CHURCH FAMILY LIFE DIRECTORS IN HISPANIC CONGREGATIONS IN THE MICHIGAN CONFERENCE

A dissertation presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Ministry

by

Jorge Raúl Mayer
To my lovely wife, Nibia, who for over twenty years has been of exceptional support to my ministry and for her patience and support during my doctoral program;

To my children, Ronald, Lissie, and Kevin, my best teachers, from whom I continue to learn how to be a family-oriented person;

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Task of This Project

The purpose of this project was to create a model for the selection and training of leaders for the Family Life Department. This model was applied to the Hispanic Churches of the Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (SDA).

Justification for the Project

Families, especially in North America, are in distress. The complexity of a changing society presents new and different stresses. There are industrial, technological, and political stressors. Beyond these, other factors affecting the family are faulty attitudes toward marriage, role conflicts, financial pressures, the sexual revolution, parenting inadequacy, juvenile delinquency, and family violence. In the 1990s families face escalating divorce rates, an increase in one-parent households, and reproduction.}

remarriage and blended families, and family dysfunction.¹

Hispanic families living in the United States not only confront the difficulties of the typical American society, but an additional issue: acculturation. This involves the clash between their own and the American culture and the personal and family transformations that occur as they attempt to become part of the mainstream culture.²

Thus, they are even more at risk than their American counterparts.

Increasingly, churches have attempted to respond to the needs of families in crisis through different educational programs. The SDA Church supports a Family Life Department (FLD) in its General Conference, as well as at the conference level and in the local church. The purpose of the FLD is to nurture and instruct the family unit in the biblical principles of marriage, parenting, and family life. In addition, this department helps families apply the biblical concepts to their everyday life in order to prevent trouble and increase family satisfaction.³


³Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Church Ministries Department, Caring for Today's Families: Planbook: A Guide to Planning Family Ministries in the Local Church (Westlake Village, CA: Church Ministries Department, 1989), 5-14; Karen Flowers, Ron Flowers, Willie Oliver, and Larry Yeagley, Family Seasons (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference Family Life Department, 1995), 82.
In 1995, when this project was carried out, there were seven Hispanic SDA churches in the Michigan Conference. Of these, only one had a functional FLD; two churches had attempted to establish one; the other four had never tried. This situation called for the training of church members in the Spanish churches and the establishment of FLDs in each congregation.

**Definition of Terms**

**Family Life Department (FLD).** A department of the SDA Church. FLD promotes the strengthening of families as discipling centers through educational programs and referral services.\(^1\)

**Church Family Life Director (CFLD).** A person who leads the Family Life Department in a local church. In this project, couples were asked to work together as *Family Life Co-directors.*

**Church Family Life Council.** The group that assists the *Family Life Director* (or *Co-directors*) to carry out a ministry to families in a local church. This group should include persons in the different stages of the family life cycle.

**Description of the Project**

Because an adequate response to the needs of Christian families demanded a Christian basis, the first aspect of the study was biblical and theological. Special attention was given to the origin, composition, and mission of the family. The

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\(^1\)General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1995), 114-115.
information garnered is reported in chapter 2.

A second step was to review Christian literature produced mainly in the last ten years on marriage and family relationships from social science perspective. Because family clinicians and sociologists consider that the family-system and family-development approaches are the best approaches to study the family, this special aspect was pursued with greater interest than others. A synthesis of what was learned appears in chapter 3.

The third step was to consider the special needs of the Hispanic family in the United States. General information on the more than 20 million Hispanics, as well as specific data on the Hispanic family, was gathered from diverse sources. The information obtained is disclosed in chapter 4.

On the basis of the data gathered, together with reflection on it, a series of events was designed to prepare future CFLDs for Spanish-speaking churches in Michigan. A manual, with versions for participants and instructor, was compiled for use in two weekend training sessions. These weekends and other special events were carried out over the course of several months in 1995. The implementation of the program is narrated in chapter 5. The manual, in its two versions, together with the overhead transparency masters used, appears in Appendixes A-C.
CHAPTER II

A BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

The purpose of this chapter is to gain insight into the dynamics of the family unit. Specifically the origin, the composition, and the mission of the family as seen in the Old and New Testaments and the writings of Ellen G. White will be considered.

Origin of the Family

Although the Scriptures do not provide a systematic discussion of the family, as Thomas Maston and William Tillman state, they do "contain some important insights and even some rather specific teachings regarding the family." The Bible tells us about the family throughout: each Testament begins and ends with a family portrait. The Old Testament (OT) opens with a wedding in the garden (Gen 2:24-26) and concludes with a restorative message for families (Mal 4:5, 6). The New Testament (NT) begins with Jesus' family genealogy (Matt 1) and closes with the marriage of the Lamb and the invitation of the Spirit and the bride (Rev 19:7-9; 22:17).

Because all human groups practice some form of family life, one must accept that the family lies at the heart of the creative purpose of God. As Sue Walrond-Skinner

\[1\]Thomas Bufford Maston and William M. Tillman, Jr., The Bible and Family Relations (Nashville: Broadman, 1983), 35.

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states, "Families have existed in some form or other within all cultures and in all periods of history, from the earliest societies known to human beings."\(^1\) George Homans, anthropology professor at Harvard University, adds: "It may be that men have lived in families as long as men have been men."\(^2\) The origin of marriage is recorded in Gen 1: "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female he created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it'" (Gen 1:27, 28).\(^3\) The second chapter enlarges thus: "And the LORD God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him'" (Gen 2:18).

Against the sevenfold refrain, "and God saw it was good," in chap. 1, the divine observation that something was not right with man's situation is startling. Despite God's identification of man's need, there was a delay in His provision in contrast to the instantaneous fulfillment of the divine word in chap. 1. Man's mate did not originate simultaneously with him as apparently did the females of all other species.\(^4\) Gordon Wenham remarks, "This hold-up creates suspense and allows one to feel man's

---


\(^3\)Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from New King James Version (NKJV).

loneliness."1 Roberto Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown observe: "In the midst of the abundance and delights, man was conscious of feelings which he could not satisfy."2 The animals were brought before Adam, but none made a suitable companion for him.

As the story continues, God put Adam into a deep sleep to create "a suitable companion" (2:18, Today's English Version) for him. Following Eve's creation, God Himself brought her to the man and solemnized the first marriage.3

According to Solomon, marriage was instituted by God and appropriately called "the covenant of . . . God" (Prov 2:17), "a title which implies His authorship of that sacred institution."4 In the NT, Jesus made reference to "this passage to prove that marriage is a divine institution (Matt 19:4, 5)."5

Later references of the OT indicate that the family was also instituted by God. It is seen in His commandment to honor one's parents (Exod 20:12), in His prohibition of adultery (Exod 20:14), in His command for parents to teach their children (Deut 6:4-7).


4Ibid., 1:227.

5Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, 22.
The origin of both nuclear and extended families is found in Genesis. Adam calls Eve "bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh." Walter Wegner says that this expression is also "used idiomatically to express family and blood relationships." For example, Laban calls Jacob "my bone and my flesh" (Gen 29:14).

Not all scholars agree that the opening chapters of Genesis narrate the creation of the family. However, the majority of Christian writers affirm that the family is a necessary component of creation. For example, Herbert Anderson states that "despite wide diversity of forms and functions throughout human history, the family has fulfilled God's intent to provide a context for creation and care in order to ensure the continuity of the human species." William Blum remarks that the OT creation shows "the form of marriage willed by God from the beginning, and that it is not simply a cultural

1A nuclear family consists of father, mother, and children, or at least two of these: an extended family includes others related by blood or adoption, such as aunts and uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews, and grandparents.


3"The institution of the family is not a result of a creative command." Helmut Begemann, Strukturwandel der Familie (Hamburg: Furche, 1960), 102. "The truth of the matter is we do not know with even a modest degree of certitude how the family got started." Bernard I. Murstein, Love, Sex, and Marriage Through the Ages (New York: Springer, 1974), 14. Another proponent of such a view states: "It is not known when the family originated, although it was probably between two million and a hundred thousand years ago. It is not known whether some kind of embryonic family came before, with, or after the origin of the language. . . . The chances are that language and the family developed together over a long period, but the evidence is sketchy." Kathleen Gough, "The Origin of the Family," Journal of Marriage and the Family 31 (November 1971): 760.

composition of the family

If God created the family, it must have form or structure. An analysis of different words in the Hebrew and Greek languages that are often understood as relating to family provides a starting point. A study of the components of the family, both at creation and after the fall, follows. Then the patterns for the family in the biblical times are examined. And finally the relationship that God intended between husband and wife


and between the parents and children will be explored.

Old Testament Words about the Family

In the OT, the two most common Hebrew words often understood as relating to family are *mishpachah* and *bayith*.

Uses of *Mishpachah*

The word often translated into English as "family" is *mishpachah,* which, as William Seek states, "refers more to a patriarchal clan than to a nuclear family unit."¹ *Mishpachah* first appears in the Genesis account of the generations of the sons of Noah. Gen 10:5 reads: "From these the coast land peoples of the Gentiles were separated into their lands, everyone according to his own language, according to their families [*lemishpachoth*], into their nations." Kenneth Grayston defines the word as follows:

> These groupings are not limited by external rules but are composed of those who are flesh and therefore of the same fundamental character. They extend as far as this unity is felt, i.e., they are homogeneous communities each with its own characteristics. The nucleus and center of life is the father's house; first the man as founder, then the wife who helps him maintain the house, and then the children, i.e., all who call on the man as father. The family is all who claim kin with him. A family once founded lives and grows as long as there are any descendants, and it stretches back into the past to include all who have contributed to the strength of the family.²


Irvin Chetty adds:

The same term is used almost continuously in the census listings in the book of Numbers where both identity and quantity of persons are explained by the genealogical roots of their respective ancestry. Therefore a listing is made by family grouping.1

Uses of Bayith

Bayith most often indicates a place of residence. It is the word most commonly translated into English as "house" or "household." However, its multiple meanings include a place (Prov 8:2), those who belong to the same household (Gen 7:1), a clan of descendants (Gen 18:19), or property and persons of a particular place of residence on which and on whom one depends (Job 8:15). This word also appears early in Genesis. God says to Noah: "Come into the ark, you and all your household [bayith], because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation. . . . So Noah, with his sons, his wife, and his son's wives, went into the ark because of the waters of the flood" (Gen 7:1, 7).

It is clear from this passage, as well as others where it is used in the OT, that bayith as "household" does not imply the possessions or the physical living quarters. It has to do with the personal element, that is, the actual people who reside within the sphere of the leader of the specific group. Bayith here means those who were born in his sphere of authoritative influence, not his "tents." Chetty states that "the scope of this

Hebrew word for 'house' seems to imply something as small as the contemporary understanding of a nuclear family, that is, those immediate relatives, up to perhaps three generations living in a central, focused area.¹

A secondary meaning of bayith suggests a large number of people. The term "house of Israel" includes all who trace their ancestry back to Jacob. It could also include any sojourners or servants living among the Israelites (see, for example, 1 Sam 7:2).

Raphael Patai offers a summary that concurs with the conclusion drawn from the biblical data:

Biblical and Middle Eastern outlook finds no difficulty whatsoever in applying the same terms to a nuclear family of three to an extended family of thirty, to a wandering unit of three hundred, and even to a huge tribe of three or thirty thousand. Meticulous research could probable detect some differences in preferential usage of these terms, but by and large the same names, such as bayith (literally, house), mishpachah (family) in Hebrew; or bavt (tent), ahl (family) in Arabic, are used indiscriminately when referring to both very small and very large units.²

Other Words

Two other groups of words are used in the Hebrew language to indicate family ties. The first includes shebet and matteh, translated "branch," "rod," or "tribe."

William Wilson states that the expression is metaphorical and is "probably deduced from a rod being the symbol of a tribe" (Num 17:2, 3), which is sometimes used in a

¹Ibid., 66. Ruth 4:1 is an example of the second application of bayith.

"narrower sense for the families of a tribe (e.g., of Benjamin, Judg 20:12), or the whole people of Israel called the possession of Jehovah, his own peculiar people (Jer 10:16)."  

The second group of words includes goi and ām which means "nation." They are general words spoken of nations universally (Neh 5:8), and also of the Israelites as a nation separated from other nations (Deut 26:18,19). "It implies nations according to their locality (1 Chr 16:20); or, as under a form of government their own" (Gen 10:5).

On the use of these words William A. L. Elmslie comments:

The Hebrews employed the words People and Nation in reference to the large communities that shape history. But when we consider their use of those words, one fact of immense importance stands out, namely, the instinct and passion with which they held on to the root-conception that whenever any group of men—from the smallest to the largest numerically—lives and worship together, it is essentially a family; wherefore all its members, from the greatest to the least, must stand to one another in the intense social obligations proper to a family.  

The terms nation, tribe, house, and family display an overlapping usage in the OT. This suggests that the components of the family included more than the nuclear family. Family, to the OT mentality, was a term which had a broader meaning than it does today.


2Ibid., 285.

New Testament Words about the Family

On the use of the NT words, Chetty states that "there are similarities between the Old Testament and the New Testament in their conception of the family." The three Greek words that could be understood as relating to family are patria, oikos, and oikia. Seek adds that, "as in the Hebrew of the Old Testament, none of these meant family exclusively as mother, father, and children."

Uses of Patria

Patria (used in Acts 2:29; 7:8. 9; and Heb 7:4) has more to do with clan, lineage, and descendants from the same father or ancestral patriarch than with what might be understood in contemporary society as a "nuclear family."

Uses of Oikos

Oikos, which often meant "house" as a building, could also have meant "family" in the broad sense of lineage or clan (Matt 7:24). Sometimes it was used to identify members of a specific household (1 Cor 1:16). On a few occasions it was used to refer to property and possessions connected with a house (Acts 7:10).

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1Chetty, 73.

2Seek, 37.

Uses of *Oikia*

*Oikia*, as did *oikos*, most often meant "house" as a building (Matt 7:24), but it also could mean "household" (Matt 13:57), which included husband, wife, children, and other persons living in the house as well.¹

There is no Greek word which in and of itself clearly identifies "family" in the way it is used by most scholars today—mother, father, children, grandparents, and so on.

As Seek puts it:

And while a Christian household in the early church had a specific nucleus of one husband and one wife, and often children, it probably also included slaves, servants, and others who were attached for habitation or work. That broad understanding of family is evidenced in the New Testament passages which proposed duties for members of households, including slaves, masters, husbands, wives, and children (Eph 5:21-6:4; Col 3:18-4:1).²

Thus a family in the biblical sense may indeed be a nuclear family, a small group of people related by blood, marriage, or adoption. But family may also refer to a house, tribe, or nation, the larger identity with one's people and nation.³ Ian Shaw states that "there is no biblical word for nuclear family, although the fifth commandment shows that it was recognized as a central part of the household."⁴ Christ Himself exhorted His

¹Seek, 37, 38.
²Ibid., 38.
³For examples of family as a larger group than the nuclear or extended family used by Ellen G. White, see Messages to Young People (Nashville: Southern, 1930), 224; idem, The Southern Work (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1966), 26; idem, Testimonies for the Church (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 1:258.
hearers five times to honor their father and mother (Matt 15:4-6; 19:19; Mark 7:10; 10:19; Luke 18:20).

Components of the Family

In Gen 1 and 2 the basic elements that constitute the family are set forth: husband and wife. Adam and Eve come to be a married couple as a result of Adam's love and admiration for Eve, Eve's love and respect for Adam, and God's blessing. Ronald du Preez states, "From Gen 2:21-24 it becomes clear that this marriage took place between one man and one woman." The repeated use of singular nouns and pronouns in the passage is significant: God decided to make "a helper" for "the man" (2:18); He selected "one" rib from the man, and fashioned it into "a woman" whom He then took to "the man" (2:22). "The man" said that "she shall be called woman" (2:23); thus, "a man" leaves his parents and is joined to "his wife" (2:24). John Calvin notes: "But though here no mention is made of two, yet there is no ambiguity in the sense; for Moses had not said that God has assigned many wives, but only one to one man." 

Even though not much is said about the marital status of those involved in the narrative of the flood, the few facts that are mentioned confirm that the new beginning followed a monogamous marriage as it was at creation. The record simply states that 


when the ark and all the necessary preparations had been made. Noah, "a just man, perfect in his generations" (6:9), and "Noah's sons. Shem. Ham and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them. entered the ark" (7:13). Tryggve Kronholm notes, "Noah himself as well as his three sons are described in an unambiguous way as monogamous."¹ And White affirms: "Noah had but one wife, and their united family discipline was blessed of God."²

In the Garden or at the beginning of human history there were no single-parent families, blended families, instances of communal living, homosexual unions, or even temporary conjugal relationships. Instead there was a spiritual-physical bond between one man and one woman who fruitfully, freely, and faithfully fulfilled the command of God. The traditional biblical family was totally unlike any modern alternative family such as a homosexual or cohabitational family.

It has been said that because there were no others to interfere in the relationship, it was not possible to have infidelity or any "alternate" forms of marriage. The line of this argument merely adds support to the traditional family model in the sense that it was the only form God created. It was the form God intended to be. White, speaking about how adultery was early introduced, says: "The Lord gave Adam one wife,


showing His order in that respect."

The fall made a frightening environment of what once was a paradise; the ideal family began to bicker and blame. Suddenly Adam and Eve no longer felt comfortable being naked together.

And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the Garden. Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him. "Where are you?" So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hide myself." (Gen 3:8-10)

Adam's response reflects not only a change in his relationship with God, but also a change in his relationship with Eve. Doubtless, one of the greatest losses experienced by the first couple was the loss of their pure relationship, full of innocence, trust, respect, and unconditional love for one another. The family unit, as well as the human being, though good, pleasing, and flawless at creation, became fallen. The form of the family, as God had created it, became subject to attack and to change. It was not above or immune to sin any more than the environment of Paradise. Polygamy and concubinage became family forms through which God worked, although he did not create or accept them.

Later, apparently after the fall--but not because of it--the basic structure of society was completed when children were brought into existence, constituting the nuclear family (Gen 4:1, 2). Such a family--with married parents and children--is the biblical family. To these are added other relatives, as is seen in the genealogical tables

1White, Patriarchs and Prophets, 91.
of Gen 5, which show the secondary structure of society: the extended family.

Ray Anderson and Dennis Guernsey state that "form" has more than one meaning in the biblical account:

What must be made clear here is the biblical distinction between "form" in the sense of a rigid or non-changing structure, and "form" as a dynamic and intrinsically structured reality and order, which entails what we called "formation." The human family is thus a formation of God's purpose with its intrinsic structure of relationships, which we could call "rules" or "laws" of relationships.¹

If Anderson and Guernsey are correct, although the form of the family is important to God, since He gave it, once the ideal (the traditional biblical family) falls, the family unit could still survive by a rearranged or altered structure, as happened within the boundaries of God's instructions.²

Patterns of the Family

Both the OT and NT speak about the sanctity of the home. God intended that permanent, monogamous companions should fulfill each other and rear and teach their children the same family motif. Although this pattern was assumed by the prophets,³ it did not always work out in the history of fallen human beings. White indicates, in the context of a description of God's monogamous relationship plan for humankind, that


²Harold N. West, Jr., "Families and Church Growth" (D.Min. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1987), 10, 11.

³Maston and Tillman, 47.
"after the Fall, men chose to follow their own sinful desires"¹ and did not respect the marriage bond.

In Hebrew history alternate family styles emerged, but were not sanctioned by the Creator.² As the forms of family life found in the Bible, especially in the OT, are sketched, it is to be kept in mind that Scripture frequently records things it does not approve. Furthermore, Michael Lawler states, "the Biblical teaching on marriage should be seen in the context of the Near Eastern cultures with which the people of the Bible had intimate links."³

Polygamy

Polygamy, which represents a "dramatic departure from God's original plan for marriage,"⁴ was first practiced by Lamech (Gen 4:19).⁵ It was also practiced by heroes of faith such as Abraham, Jacob, David, and Solomon. Although it was a common

¹White, Patriarchs and Prophets, 91.

²Hinkle and Cook, 31.


⁴Maston and Tillman, 47.

⁵"To the crime of murder, in which Cain had led the way, Lamech, the fifth in descent, added polygamy." White, Patriarchs and Prophets, 81. See also Ephraim Neufeld, Ancient Hebrew Marriage Laws (New York: Longman, Green and Cook, 1944), 143.
practice among other nations. as White pointed out, it appears to have been less common in Israel, especially restricted, as Pierre Grelot indicates, to kings and the well-to-do. Although polygamy was regulated by the Torah Deut 21:15), there is no biblical approval of the practice. White affirms: "God has not sanctioned polygamy in a single instance. It was contrary to his will." During the OT period the most common pattern of marriage was monogamy. Based on the biblical data it is not possible to support William Kearns's statement that "in the Old Testament, the form of marriage shows a cultural progression from polygamy to monogamy." It is historically correct to see the practice of polygamy from the patriarchal period to the United Kingdom as a deterioration of God's ideal (Gen 16: 3; Judg 8: 30; 1 Kgs 11: 3). God's creation of

1"Polygamy had become so widespread that it had ceased to be regarded as a sin." White, Patriarchs and Prophets, 45.

2"One false step leads to another. Solomon's alliance with heathen nations was followed by evils which led the children of Israel to violate the law of God. . . . Polygamy was introduced into Palestine." Ellen G. White, "A Lesson from Israel's Wisest King," Signs of the Times, November 26, 1896, 1.


4Ellen G. White, The Spirit of Prophecy (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1945), 1:94. See also from the same author, "Marriages, Wise and Unwise," The Youth's Instructor, August 10, 1899, 1, where she says, "Wherever polygamy is practiced, it is against our Heavenly Father's wise arrangement."

5William Patrick Kearns, "The Development of a Marriage Enrichment Program on Conflict Management for Recently Married Couples" (D.Min. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1980), 53.

6Although the rabbinical literature provides for the possibility of polygamy, it was certainly something exceptional, even among the moneyed classes. "The Tannait
marriage and family did not include polygamy as an alternative family lifestyle. In NT times, monogamy had become a fairly standard practice.¹

Concubinage

Along with polygamy arose concubinage, first mentioned in Gen 22:24. The practice seems to have been restricted to relatively few leaders.² A concubine was not a mistress, rather she was a secondary wife, whose children did not have all the rights of a first wife (Gen 21:9-14). Oscar Feuch says that polygamy, concubinage, and other alternative forms of family life "are expressions of man in his fallen state, or they are intrusions from other cultures."³

Extended Family

Frequently the family in the OT was an extended family. This extended family literature and the gospels' presuppose a society that was practically monogamous, [for] the great mass of the population were to all intents and purposes monogamous." Grelot, 49.


²The Scripture records that David had at least ten concubines (2 Sam 15:16; 20:3), that Solomon had three hundred concubines in addition to seven hundred wives (1 Kgs 11:3), and Rehoboam had eighteen wives, sixty concubines (2 Chr 11:21). These kings violated a plain statement in Deuteronomy: "Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away" (Deut 17:17).

was not restricted to the three-generation family that was more or less prevalent in our culture two or three generations ago. The extended family in the OT included not only the nuclear family and their relatives associated by blood or adoption, but the servants and their families, as well as strangers who accepted the patriarchal authority of the family. The extended family on occasions was referred to as the household (Gen 18:19; 47:12). This pattern of family life developed, to some degree, out of nomadic life in which people needed one another for protection and companionship.

**Levirate Marriage**

Another family life pattern in the OT was the levirate marriage. The law of the levirate required that if a husband died without a son, his brother was to take the widow as his wife (Deut 25:5-10). Explaining the purpose of such a law, Maston and Tillman write: "This law . . . seemed to have stemmed primarily from a desire to protect the inheritance,"\(^1\) which was achieved by the birth of a son. Du Preez confirms that "the purpose of the levirate was not to ensure the care of widows. The biblical record indicates that this law's only stated purpose was to raise up offspring for the deceased."\(^2\) Only two examples occur in the OT, "both of them difficult to interpret and only superficially corresponding to the law in Deuteronomy: the stories of Tamar and Ruth."\(^3\)

\(^1\)Maston and Tillman, 48.

\(^2\)du Preez, 108.

Mate Selection and the First Year of Marriage

The selection of a wife is revealed in the OT as a major responsibility of the man's parents\(^1\) or at least arranged with their consent,\(^2\) particularly of the father, although he could ask someone to make the arrangements for him (see Gen 24:3-8; 28:8,9; Judg 14:1-3). It was an affair for the families involved rather than for the individuals: the proposal of marriage was usually presented to the family rather than to the girl or young woman.\(^3\)

The state of marriage was so respected that honeymooners were given special privileges. "When a man has taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war or be charged with any business; he shall be free at home one year, and bring happiness to his wife whom he has taken" (Deut 24:5).

Marriage Restrictions

Two restrictions for marriage must be noted. Biblical law did not permit marriage within close degrees of consanguineous relationship. For example, a man

\(^1\)"Anciently, children were not permitted to marry without the consent of their parents. Parents chose for their children. It was considered a crime for children to contract marriage upon their own responsibility. The matter was first laid before the parents, and they were to consider whether the person to be brought into a close relationship to them was worthy, and whether their parties could provide for a family." White, *Testimonies*, 1:218.

\(^2\)Schiffman and Achtemeier, 608.

\(^3\)See Maston and Tillman, 64-68; and Murstein, *Love, Sex and Marriage*, 37, 38, for a detailed explanation of the wife's selection.
might not marry his father's sister ( Lev 18:12 ). The second restriction prohibited marriage of the children of Israel with those of other groups. Moses listed six ( Exod 23:23-33 ) or seven ( Deut 7:1-8 ) nations to whom God's people were not to give their sons or daughters in marriage. Ezra later extended the list to include other nations ( Ezra 9:1 ). The reasons for the restrictions on marriage to persons of other nations were religious, as is stated in Deut 7:3-4: "Nor shall you make marriages with them . . . For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods." White, commenting on the danger of entering into a marriage covenant with unbelievers writes: "They are serving two masters, between whom there can be no concord. . . . It was this that opened the flood-gates of sin to the antediluvians. Such a connection with the world is a direct departure from God's express requirements." In the NT restrictions on the spouse selection continue ( 2 Cor 6:14-18 ) based on the same religious concern. Exogamy is not mentioned, but the principle was not derogated at the cross since it was given to protect the genetic well-being of future generations.

**Divorce**

Although divorce was practiced within Israel ( Deut 24:1-4 ), God never

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1Ellen G. White, "Israel Depart from God," *Signs of the Times*, December 30, 1880, 2. Additional references of the same author are found in *Fundamentals of Christian Education* (Nashville: Southern, 1923), 500; *Testimonies*, 4:504; and *Sons and Daughters of God* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1955), 165.

2The reasons justifying divorce in this legislation are left vague since it is concerned with the prohibition against taking back a repudiated wife who has remarried. "The ultimate effect of this legislation is to regulate customs that were common throughout the ancient East." Grelot, 42.
approved it. Yahweh says that He hates divorce (Mal 2:16). Jesus' teachings show that divorce was possible only in case of infidelity (Matt 19:7-9).

The pattern of the family in the Scriptures, especially in the OT, is summarized by Feutch:

The forms of marriage and the patterns of family structure and authority in various Old Testament eras varied with changing times and circumstances, revealing not only the cultural influences of other Near Eastern nations with whom Israel came into contact but also the impact of social and economic factors in Israel's own internal development.¹

He observes, however, that "the fact that a certain marriage or family pattern appears at a given point in Israel's history . . . does not elevate that pattern to the status of a divine ordinance expressive of God's will for humanity in all times and places."²

Relationships in the Family

The form of a family is important, but God's plan is even more specific than that. There is need to indicate how the different parts that constitute the family should relate to each other. Of all the relationships that exist in a family unit (husband-wife, parent-child, sibling-sibling, family-God, family-society, and family-church), two are basic: the one between husband and wife and the one between parent and child.

The Relationship of Husband and Wife

The couple in the OT was patriarchal. Usually the oldest male member of the

¹Wegner, 50.
²Ibid.
family was considered the head of the home, which in some cases was large enough to be a clan. "Women were things rather than persons and had few rights," although some of them exercised considerable influence. The Decalogue lists a wife among a man's possessions along with his servants and animals (Exod 20:17). When Lot is visited by two angels, the wicked men of Sodom cry out for Lot to send the two men for some homosexual sport. Lot pleads with the mob and, instead, ungallantly offers his two virgin daughters (Gen 19:1-8). A similar situation occurs in Gibeah (Judg 19). A woman passes from the dominion of her father to that of her husband to whom he gives her in marriage (Gen 29; 1 Sam 18:17, 19, 27). The husband is called "master" (ba'al) of his wife in the Hebrew text (Gen 18:12). A husband could nullify a wife's vows (Num 30:10-14). To the Corinthians Paul stated that "the head of a woman is her husband" (1 Cor 11:3) and a similar viewpoint is repeated in several other epistles as well (Eph 5:22; Col 3:18; 1 Pet 3:1, 2). "Subordination thus appears to be the traditional position of a wife in the Bible."

Yet several biblical references support a more mutual and equal relationship. In

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1Hinkle and Cook, 31.

2Maston and Tillman, 47. William Seek stated: "Females in the strongly patriarchal, though matrilineal Hebrew family were not passive and inactive, or solely housewives. . . . The stories of Naomi (Ruth 1-4), Hannah (1 Samuel 1), and Esther (Esther 1-10) affirm women for their initiative. A passage in Proverbs praises a good wife for her industry, economic decisions, and achievements (Prov 31:10-31). Mothers . . . are referred to as wise teachers (Prov 6:20)." Seek, 35.

3Kearns, 54.


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the account of creation, both male and female are created in the image of God (Gen 1:27) and are to exercise equal lordship over the natural world (Gen 1:28). Marriage is described as a covenant relationship between two partners (Prov 2:17; Mal 2:14). Jesus recognized that a wife, as well as a husband, could dissolve a marriage (Mark 10:11, 12). Paul taught that a wife has rule over her husband's body and vice versa (1 Cor 7:4). Both spouses are to submit themselves to one another in fear of God (Eph 5:21). The basic statement on equality is that "there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28).

Marriage before the fall

The primary biblical references to marriage relationships are found in Gen 1 and 2. Other passages, such as Mal 2:10, 15 and Matt 19:4, 8 refer to, presuppose, or embroider upon the creation reference. The Genesis account speaks of God's original intention prior to the fall. It is safe to assume that the time Adam and Eve spent together in the garden before the fall was characterized by a beautiful threefold relationship as the first couple shared their love with each other and with the Creator.1

Gen 1. According to Claus Westermann, the primary theological focus on Gen 1:1-2:4 is on God as Creator, while a secondary emphasis is placed on the seven-day

sequence and the Sabbath rest at the conclusion of God's creative acts.¹ There is no

dominant doctrine of man at this point. The focus is to praise God as Creator and
worship Him on the Sabbath day. The key is in vs. 27. As one commentary puts it.

"The account of the accomplishment of the divine purpose is expressed in a form of

Hebrew poetry, common in all poetic books of the Hebrew Bible."² The text is set in a
metrical form of three lines, each consisting of four stresses and each containing the
verb "create." The first line describes the creation of humankind in general terms: the
second indicates that humankind was created in God's image; and the third notes the
creation of the two sexes.³ The three metrical lines are:

So God created man in His own image;
In the image of God He created him;
Male and female He created them. (Gen 1:27)

The generic Hebrew word *adam* means "human" or "humankind." Unlike the
record of the creation of other creatures, of whom it is said, "And God said, Let . . . and
it was so" (Gen 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24), the creation of man is introduced by the
plurality of Godhead who said: "Let Us make man (humankind) in Our image" (Gen
1:26). God existing in community as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit created man in His
image as a pair of human beings. They were created to be in relationship. The human


²"Genesis," *SDABC*, 1:216.

being in a dual unity is male and female. God created a twofold humanity: male and female, open to each other as equal partners. The principle involved is one of equality. Applied to the context of marriage, according to Elizabeth Achtemeier, "it depicts full personhood for both husband and wife as well as equality in relationship."¹

The use of "image" and "likeness" has been understood in different ways by various theologians. For example, Dietrich Bonhoeffer understands "image" as personal rationality or freedom.² Carl Keil and Franz Delitzch suggest that the image is the spiritual personality of man, a creaturely copy of the holiness and blessedness of the divine.³ John Youngberg and Millie Youngberg question whether God's image is only an external or outward appearance by saying: "If that is the case, there is little we can do to improve His image. The unity of God is in the unity of male and female together."⁴ White says, "Man was to bear God's image, both in outward resemblance and in character. Christ alone is 'the express image' (Heb 1:3) of the Father; but man was formed in the likeness of God."⁵ In the following paragraph she states, "Man was not


²Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Creation and Fall (London: SCM, 1959), 35.


⁵White, Patriarchs and Prophets, 45.
made to dwell in solitude; he was to be a social being." Karl Barth suggests that the image of God in man is his "being-in-relation," man's relation to God and fellow man. The God who exists in community commanded that the human being be created in His image. This creation represents a basic need for persons to be in relationship with each other.

Whether or not the *imago Dei* is relational because of the essence of God in man or the consequence of creation could be discussed, but such discussions are beyond the scope of this paper. The plurality of God can be understood in the human desire to show and to experience God in relationship, a relationship that postulates intimacy without fusion and differentiation without separation. As Walrond-Skinner expresses it: "The plural noun 'Adam' is used to describe human beings, and it is as a male-female representation of co-humanity that God's image is to be reflected."

From Gen 2:1-4a it is seen that sexual differentiation was presented as a creation by God and not part of the divine order. This emphasis forms a subtle but strong

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1Ibid., 46.


3John Murray also views man's nature as being-in-relation when he notes that "the initial relationship of the mother to the infant is the impulse to communicate," and that "personal existence is not just the individual, but two persons in personal relationship." John Murray, *Persons in Relation* (London: Faber and Faber, 1961), 60-61.

4Walrond-Skinner, 159.
polemic against, as Gerhard von Rad calls, the "'divinisation' of sex."¹ so common in the
thought of Israel's neighbors.² Second, it may be noted that God created the bipolarity
of humankind from the beginning.³ A third insight into the theology of male and
female creation stems from the equal pairing of both sexes. There is no hint of
ontological or functional superiority or inferiority between male and female. Helmut
Thielicke states that both are "equally immediate to the Creator and His act."⁴ And a
fourth theological insight that bridges the discussion of the \textit{imago Dei} in humankind is
that the generic term \textit{ha'adam} includes both male and female. The man and the woman
together make humanity;⁵ the holistic picture of humankind is only complete when both
male and female are viewed together.⁶

²Raymond Collins, "The Bible and Sexuality," \textit{Biblical Theology Bulletin} 7 (Spring 1977): 149-151, summarizes the major aspects of sexuality in the ancient Near Eastern myths, which are fertility, love-passion, destructive capacity, and sacred marriage.
Gen 2. The other creation passage to be considered is one which gives a more detailed explanation of the origin of the man and the woman (Gen 2:4b-25). While the precise manner in which God created in Gen 1 is not stated, Gen 2 removes any possible lingering thoughts that it occurred by divine procreation. Creation was God's personal labor of love, forming man out of dust of the ground, and "building"1 woman from one of the man's ribs.

Through the centuries scholars have debated the relative status of the sexes. Many have affirmed a divinely ordained hierarchical interpretation that affirms the superiority of man over the woman.2 But as Phyllis Trible points out, none of the arguments used to sustain the hierarchical view of the sexes "is altogether accurate and most of them are simply not present in the story itself."3 The sequence of Gen 2 is not from superior to inferior, but from incompleteness to completeness. The Hebrew word "helper" (ezer), unlike the English term, does not denote an inferior relation but one that is at least


equal.1 God "provided 'an help meet for him'--a helper corresponding to him.--one who was fitted to be his companion and who could be one with him in love and sympathy. . . . She was his second self, showing the close union and the affectionate attachment that should exist in this relation."2 Since he was asleep, man had in the creation of woman no active part that might allow him to claim to be her superior. Eve was formed from Adam's rib to stand by his side as an equal. "Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal."3 And man's naming of woman does not buttress the hierarchical view of sexes, but rather underscores man's joyous recognition of his second self.4

The two creation accounts are complementary.5 In Gen 1:27 man and woman stand beside each other as equals. In Gen 2:18-24 the essential character of their relationship is described as a mutual one. There is no superior or inferior rank. Husband and wife correspond to each other in nature as well as in name, and their union


4Trible, 100.

5Recent studies point to the conclusion that the first two chapters of Genesis do not represent separate and disparate sources, but a unified dual perspective on Creation. See especially Doukhan, 18-25.
is the most intimate of all experiences.

Walter Trobisch indicates that Gen 2:24 contains the three elements necessary for a biblical marriage: "there must be a 'leaving,' a 'cleaving,' and a fusion into 'one-flesh.'"¹ The "leaving" has to do with breaking the parental ties to mother and father. It does not mean abandoning them, but cutting the physical and emotional dependence set up in the childhood environment. In doing so the new marriage is able to establish new surroundings where husband and wife can develop and cultivate structure for their unit. The "cleaving" has to do with the individuals’ relationship with one another. In the Hebrew language "to cleave" means "to cling to," or "to hold fast to,"² which can be achieved only by unconditional love. The "one-flesh" in the husband-wife relationship has to do with being drawn closer and closer together in interests, priorities, and activities, so that a new identity can be established out of two separate entities. To become one flesh is not an instant fact, but a process.

When sin entered, what had been equality and harmony between Adam and Eve required a new but inevitable relationship in order for the pair to survive and be satisfied. The beautiful threefold relationship was destroyed and the first negative words spoken regarding the husband and wife relationship come from the lips of Adam in Gen 3:12: "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I


The primary OT reference regarding the husband-wife relationship after the fall is found in Gen 3:16. When God came to the Garden after Adam and Eve sinned, he initiated an encounter that constituted a "trial and punishment by God." Following the interrogation, God pronounced the sentence in the form of curses (on the serpent and the ground, vss. 14, 17) and judgments (for the man and the woman, vss. 16-19). Of special concern is the judgment pronounced upon the woman in vs. 16: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow [distress, trouble] in your conception; in pain [distress, trouble] you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

Pertaining to the first two lines of poetic parallelism, Richard Davidson states that the emphasis should be "upon the hard work and not the pain." For the last two lines of the divine sentence upon the woman's desire for, or subordination to the husband there are, according to Davidson, five major views.

The first and perhaps the most common position states that the subordination of woman is a creation ordinance, God's ideal from the beginning, corrupted by sin, and which must be restored by the Gospel. The second

1Westermann, The Genesis Accounts of Creation, 96.


3Ibid., 124-126.

4See for example, Calvin, 1:172; Hurley, 218-219; and Bacchiocchi, 79-84.
interpretation also views subordination as a creation ordinance, but not as a distortion but as a blessing and a comfort in the difficult task of motherhood.¹ The third major view agrees with the second that woman's submission is a blessing, not a curse, but denies that it is a creation order. Proponents of this interpretation, such as John Otwell, suggest that the word for "rule" should be translated "to be like," emphasizing the equality of husband and wife.² The fourth view contends that woman's subordination to man did not exist before the fall, and its mention in this verse is only a description of the evil consequences of sin rather than a permanent prescription of God's will.³ The fifth and preferred position concurs with the submission of the wife to her husband as part of the evil consequences of the fall of the fourth view, but understands that the divine sentence is prescriptive, that is, it represents God's normative pattern for the couples' relationship after the fall.⁴ "It seems clear that according to Gen 3:16 a change is instituted in the relationship between the sexes after the Fall, a change which involves

¹See Clark, 35.


³Proponents of this interpretation underscore the culturally conditioned nature of the passage. See for example, Thielicke, 8; Patricia Gundry, Woman Be Free! (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), 60-63; Collins, "The Bible and Sexuality,"149; and Paul King Jewett, Man as Male and Female: A Study of Sexual Relationships from a Theological Point of View (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 114.

the subjection/submission of the wife to the husband." The word "rule" (mashal) employed in vs. 16 is not the same word that describes humankind's rulership over the animals. Although the verb consistently indicates submission, subjection, or dominion in Scripture, "the idea of tyrannous exercise of power does not lie in the verb." There are several passages where mashal is used in the sense of comfort, protect, care for, love (2 Sam 23:3; Prov 17:2; Isa 40:10; 63:19; Zech 6:13).

God pronounces that even though the woman would have difficult "labor" in childbirth—an ordeal that would seem naturally to discourage her from continuing to have relations with her husband—God assures her, "your desire shall be for your husband" (Gen 3:16). That desire, yearning, may serve to sustain the union that has been threatened in the ruptured relationship resulting from sin.

Marriage in the New Testament

The primary biblical NT reference to the relationship between spouses is presented by Paul in Eph 5:21-33. Theologically, the main theme of the epistle is ultimate unity in Christ and the role of the church in attaining that unity. The church represents the primary stage in gathering a divided humanity into one body (Eph 1:10, 12).

1Davidson, "Genesis 3," 127.
Mutual subordination. The idea of mutual subordination or respect in vs. 21 is the theme of all other relationships presented in the passage. For husbands and wives, the abiding rule is that of mutual respect and love for one another because of Christ. White, after quoting this passage, adds: "If the husband and wife would only continue to cultivate these attentions which nourish love, they would be happy in each other's society and would have a sanctifying influence upon their families."\(^1\) "Neither husband nor wife is to make a plea for rulership."\(^2\) Marriage is a reciprocal relationship, honoring the individual freedom and equality of the spouses. The attitude is one of self-sacrifice, not self-assertion.

Wife's subordination. Eph 5:22-24 specifies the wife's response to mutual subordination or respect.

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

The submission enjoined upon the wife is of the kind that can be given only between equals, not a servile obedience, but a voluntary submission. Every community needs, for purposes of organization and existence, to have a leader. As Nichols states, "the

\(^1\)Ellen G. White, This Day with God (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1979), 335.

\(^2\)White, Testimonies, 7:47.
principle of wives' submission to their husbands is permanent, but its specific application may vary from age to age according to custom and social consciousness.\(^1\) Throughout the ages husbands have taken this inspired pronouncement to control their wives. White counters: "but it was not the design of God that the husband should have control, as head of the house, when he himself does not submit to Christ."\(^2\)

**Husband's headship.** The headship of the husband is gained by his dedication and willingness to serve the family unit (Eph 5:23), and by his ability and responsibility to care for his wife in the same way that Christ cares for the church. Paul compares the husband's headship to Jesus' relation to the church and declares that his leadership is gained by unconditional love to his spouse (Eph 5:25, 27, 33). It is not a matter of status or superiority; being the "protector, house-band."\(^3\) and sustainer of his wife and the family needs makes him the leader. If the husband shows headship as expressed here, there will be no question of inferiority or superiority.\(^4\) According to White this has not been always the case:

When husbands require the complete subjection of their wives, declaring that women have no voice or will in the family, but must render entire submission, they place their wives in a position contrary to the Scripture. . . . This interpretation is

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\(^1\)"Ephesians," SDABC, 6:1036.

\(^2\)White, The Adventist Home, 117.

\(^3\)Ellen G. White, Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1956), 64.

\(^4\)Ibid.
made simply that they may exercise arbitrary rule, which is not their prerogative.¹

But when husbands fulfill their headship as their Lord said, "they will use their authority with the same tenderness as Christ uses toward the church."²

_Husband's unconditional love._ Eph 5:25-29 spells out the husband’s response as follows:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies: he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.

As the church's subjection to Christ is the model of the wife's relations to her husband, so the husband should take Christ's love for His church as the model for his own attitude toward his wife. Loving a wife as Christ loves the church makes a partnership out of what otherwise would be a dictatorial marriage.

To summarize, although the equality of the sexes is maintained, as Paul states in Gal 3:28, different roles are given to husband and wife. Thus harmony may be maintained in their relationship (1 Pet 3:1-7).

¹White, _The Adventist Home_, 116.

The Relationship between Parent and Child

Basic to a biblical understanding of the parent-child relationship is the stewardship premise that the children belong to God who gives them and takes them away (Gen 22:2, 8, 9) and are gifts from the Lord (Ps 127:3-5). Parents are to instruct children in religion and morals (Deut 4:9; 6:7; Prov 1:8) and to discipline them (Prov 23:13). In formal and informal settings parents are to nurture their children so that they may grow spiritually, mentally, socially, and physically. Religion and education were closely intertwined in the Hebrew home (Deut 6:4-10, 20-25; Josh 4:19-24). In addition to schooling the children in the deeds of God, fathers acted as priests in the home (Job 1:5). In the book of Genesis they are shown erecting altars and offering sacrifices (Gen 22:6), while at the time of the Exodus the Passover feast was instituted as a family rite (Exod 12:21).

Paul’s understanding was that parents were not to provoke their children to anger (Eph 6:4). They were not to take advantage of their position of authority. Rather they were to bring their children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.\(^1\) Parental authority must not be exercised mechanically, negatively, inconsistently, or to

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\(^1\)See White, Testimonies, 2:701.


\(^3\)M. Barth translates the command in Eph 6:4 thus: "Bring them up in the way the Lord disciplines and corrects." Markus Barth, Ephesians, The Anchor Bible, vol. 34-B (New York: Doubleday, 1964), 714.

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force children into a mold.¹

The fifth commandment summarizes the Scripture's teaching on the relationship of children to parents: "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you" (Exod 20:12). In other places the meaning of this command is spelled out: Children are not to strike (Exod 21:15) or curse parents (Exod 21:17; Lev 20:9; Deut 27:16), and are to submit to and obey them (Deut 21:18-21).

Children can be a glorious blessing in the godly home, as David points out: "That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as pillars, sculptured in palace style" (Ps 144:12). They should also listen to parents to gain wisdom (Prov 1:4, 8; 6:20-29). Kenneth Gangel indicates that "God is greatly concerned about the behavior of children in the home."²

Jesus condemned His contemporaries for violating the fifth commandment (John 2:9-13). His attitude toward His family was also instructive. When, at the age of twelve, His parents took Him to the temple in Jerusalem, although He wanted to stay behind and be about His Father's business, He returned submissively to Nazareth (Luke 2:51). At a later age, tension arose between Him and His family due to

¹Meyer, 20. The word translated "bring up" in Eph 6: 4 is the same word used in chap. 5 vs. 29 of the way the husband is to nourish and provide for his wife. As he loves and provides for his wife, so they are to love and provide for their children. See "Ephesians," SDABC, 6:1037.

misunderstanding (John 2:1-11; Mark 3:33-35; John 7:1-9), but Jesus did not neglect His mother, brothers, and sisters. His attitude toward them was such that at least two of His brothers (James and Jude) became His followers.\(^1\) At the cross, in the midst of His agony, He commended His mother to the care of the disciple whom He loved (John 19:26, 27).

Paul's discussion in Eph 6:1-3 about the relationship of children to parents encourages them to be obedient to their parents because it is the will of the Lord. Even when children are old, "there is no period in life when children are excused from honoring their parents."\(^2\) In ancient times, even after children were married they were "under the most solemn obligation to their parents. Their judgment was not then considered sufficient without the counsel of the parents, and they were required to respect and obey their wishes unless these should conflict with the requirements of God."\(^3\) Even mature children should respect their parents as God's commandment indicates (Mark 7:10-12). When children had unbelieving parents, they were "not excused for disobedience because of their parents' unsanctified ways."\(^4\) The only time they might break the paternal rule was when "to obey their parents . . . would mean

\(^{1}\)Meyer, 23.

\(^{2}\)White, Testimonies, 2:80.

\(^{3}\)Ibid., 1:218.

\(^{4}\)Ellen G. White, "Obligation of Children to Parents," Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, November 15, 1892, 2.
disobedience to Him."¹

In conclusion, while parents are responsible for the nurture of their children in love, children are responsible to honor their parents, obeying them in youth, and honoring and caring for them when they grow to maturity.

**Purpose of Marriage and the Family**

In this section the purpose of the family is explored. Since God created the family, He must have a purpose in mind. The family is the place where five basic functions occur.

**The Place to Propagate the Human Race**

The first, although not necessarily the most important, purpose for the family stated in the Bible is the propagation of the race. The command, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen 1:28), came after creation, indicating that procreation is more a secondary purpose of marriage than its primary one.² Husbands and wives can be "God's deputy creators."³

According to White, God had two main purposes for human procreation. The first was for families to reproduce themselves:


³Maston and Tillman, 39.
The Garden of Eden was a representation of what God desired the whole earth to become, and it was His purpose that, as the human family increase in numbers, they should establish other homes and schools like the one He had given. Thus in course of time the whole earth might be occupied with homes and schools where the words and works of God should be studied, and where the students should thus be fitted more and more fully to reflect, throughout endless ages, the light of the knowledge of His glory.¹

The second purpose for human procreation was to re-populate heaven. "It was God's purpose to re-populate heaven with the human family if they would show themselves obedient to His every word."²

In the Pentateuch, and particularly in the book of Genesis, "God is in complete control of fertility."³ Consider the following axioms which emerge from the text: God gives children when and as He chooses (Gen 18:9-15); God gives children in answer to prayer (Gen 25:21-23); God gives children as compensation (Gen 29:31-34); and God gives children to take away reproach (Gen 30:22, 23). Therefore parents are to consider themselves as stewards of children who belong ultimately to God (Exod 22:29; 34:19).

Several passages note the negative side of procreation (among them Ps 58:8; Eccl 6:3; Isa 22:3; Jer 20:14, 15), but they are insignificant compared to those that show the positive plan of God. Two passages which are considered "classics among poetical texts" are Pss 127 and 128: "Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of


the womb is His reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of
one's youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them" (Ps 127:3-5). The
imagery from the first reference seems to be that parents who have large families of
sons can rejoice in the blessing of God because the sons are like arrows which will
enable the father to protect the home and challenge his enemies. Ps 128 pictures the
wife as a fruitful vine and the children as tender shoots of the olive tree, a place of
prosperity and contentment in the God-blessed family: "Your wife shall be like a fruitful
vine in the very heart of your house, your children like olive plants all around your
table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD" (Ps 128:3, 4).

The emphasis on large families in these portions of the Scripture is balanced by
the responsibility of family support and control which forms a general thrust of NT
teaching and culminates in the strong words of Paul to Timothy: "If anyone does not
provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith
and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Tim 5:8, NIV).

The NT does not identify the absence of children as a punishment or a curse
from God, as was believed with much consistency by the Jews. Zechariah and
Elizabeth "were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and
ordinances of the Lord blameless. But they had no child" (Luke 1:6, 7). Elizabeth's
barrenness was obviously not a punishment for sin or a demonstration of God's disfavor.
It was simply not the will of the Lord for them to have children until their advanced
As White states, "If you have no children of your own, it may be that the Lord has a wise purpose in withholding from you this blessing."2

The Bible has no magic numbers to determine the ideal size of a family, and the principle derived from these observations is that "it is generally God's plan for couples to have children but the particular choice of number and time is a matter of Spirit control and a sensitivity to the will of God."3

A Place to Belong

Another purpose for marriage and the family is the provision of a place of understanding, love, belonging, and companionship. Emil Brunner describes this essential task of the family as "the actual fact of community."4 Curtis Miller says, "The family is a place of belonging. It is a place where the structure of commitment can be realized."5

Family members can find fulfillment of their deepest hungers and needs as creatures of God in the intimate relations in the home. In reference to the Sabbath,


White says that God "preserves for the family opportunity for communion with Him with nature, and with one another." \(^1\) This purpose of the home is implied in Gen 2:18, which simply states, "It is not good that man should be alone." The same might well be said for the woman.

The relational mission of the family is particularly emphasized in the NT. Jesus and Paul did not refer specifically to Gen 1:27 or 28. They did, however, cite Gen 2:24 on several occasions (Matt 19:5; Mark 10:7; 1 Cor 6:16; Eph 5:31).

The unconditional love expressed at home is seen in passages like Ps 103:13: "As a father pities his children, So the LORD pities those who fear Him." An "amazing display of love" \(^2\) is recounted in Jesus' parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-24).

Love between spouses is found in the book of Hosea (Hos 3:2,3). In both instances the expressions of love include mercy, acceptance, and forgiveness.

The Legitimate Place for the Expression of Sex

A third purpose of marriage is to serve as a place for the legitimate expression of sexual urges. In Scripture sexual expressions were present before the fall and as a result of God's wedding of Adam and Eve. Jay Adams says that marriage "is the proper framework for the expression of it [sex]." \(^3\) Sex is not unholy in itself, but only when

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used outside marriage (Exod 20:14; 1 Cor 6: 9. 10. 16-19; Rom 1:26, 27; Rev 22:15).

Paul, in 1 Cor 7, says that neither partner has the right over his or her own body (1 Cor 7:14). In this same chapter, the apostle had a specific word to the unmarried or the widow (1 Cor 7:8, 9). The aim of his counsel was not to spell out the purpose of marriage, but to encourage his readers to maintain their sexual purity until marriage vows were pronounced.

A Place to Transmit a Religious Heritage

The fourth purpose of marriage and the family is to transmit a religious heritage to the next generation. Abraham and Job are examples of those who taught their families to worship God (Heb 11:17; Job 1:5). Deuteronomy is dedicated primarily to this mission. Moses and the children of Israel had seen God's greatness: the plagues, the open road through the Red Sea, the voice of God from Mount Sinai. About forty years had passed, and with the exception of two, all were of a new generation which did not witness those acts. As Moses' last will and testament, he gathered the children of Israel and told them about God's supernatural acts. Israel treasured Deut 6, especially vss 4-9. They called it "Shema," which means "to hear." It was the first portion of Scripture that a Jewish child would commit to memory.\footnote{Betty Holbrook, Karen Flowers, and Ron Flowers, eds., Families at Worship (Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Home and Family Service, 1985), 85.} White states that parents should study the instruction of the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy. "If the counsels of the Word of God..."
are faithfully followed, the saving grace of Christ will be brought to our youth."

In this book God not only instructed parents about their role as teachers, but about the methodology to be used. Parents might transmit a religious heritage to the next generation by modeling (Deut 6:4) what they wanted to see in their children.

Another vehicle to transmit the religious heritage to children was teaching God's marvelous acts for His people to the children (Deut 6:7). The responsibility of teaching was not in strange hands, but in those of the parents. Teaching was to be given both formally and casually, and in a repetitive manner. Parents were responsible for instructing children in the "present truth and the fulfillment of the prophecy," in the "knowledge of Christ and his love," in knowing "how to live in order to please God." in conforming themselves "to the laws of health." in yielding

1Ellen G. White, "Parents as Character Builders," Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, October 5, 1911, 2.

2"This was one of the special duties of every parent--one that was not delegated to another. In the place of stranger lips the loving hearts of the father and mother were to give instruction to their children." White, Patriarchs and Prophets, 592.


5White, Testimonies, 1:398.

6White, Child Guidance, 134.

and respecting their authority regarding "the humble round of everyday duties as the course marked out for them by the Lord." in regard to God's chosen methods of discipline and the conditions of success in the Christian life. and in "the important principle that purity of life and sincerity of purpose will best qualify them to act their part in the world." The sources of such instruction are "both from the inspired word and from the book of nature."

A third way of transmitting a religious heritage, also in Deuteronomy, is through discipline (Deut 8:5; 11:2). The way parents discipline will lead children to God; this should be the same way that God disciplined parents. Parents should teach their children through celebration (Deut 12:18), since God wants us to celebrate the blessings He has given us. The last great agent to transmit to the Jewish children the Israelite heritage in the book of Deuteronomy was "choice-making" (Deut 6:20). Although children are by the parents' side when small, and perhaps obey them out of obligation, the day will come when they will "flap their wings and fly away." Then their obedience will not be a matter of obligation but of choice. Therefore parents are encouraged to use time to answer their children's questions while at home, in order that knowing what was

1White, Spiritual Gifts, 2:112.


3White, Testimonies, 5:42.


God's purpose for Israel, they will choose to follow Him. White adds to this thought by saying:

Parents should so instruct their children that they may become children of God. Godly parents, who instruct their children by precept and example in the ways of righteousness, will generally see their children following in their footsteps. The example of God-fearing parents will be imitated by their children, and their children's children will imitate the right example their parents have set before them; and thus the influence is seen from generation to generation.  

A Place to Advance God's Kingdom

The fifth purpose of marriage and the family is the promotion of the kingdom of God. Although this purpose may not be specifically stated in the Scriptures, it is implied. There is a sense in the Bible that the home is not an end within itself, but a means to a broader and more important end in the promotion of God's instructions.

Thomas Maston states this mission in the following words:

If the . . . husband and wife will let this conception of the home grip their lives, it will tend to purify and glorify every relation within the home and will deepen and make more meaningful every natural purpose of the home. It will give an added quality to every phase of their lives together. They will recognize themselves as co-laborers with God in his work in the world.  

Jesus said that "he who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Matt 10:37), because in order to fulfill the broader task the home might suffer some divisions. Even in Jesus' own life a time came when he had to break with His

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family in response to the Father's call (Matt 12:46-50). The Master's disciples also had to leave not only their places of business but their families (Luke 18:28; Matt 4:20, 22; 9:9). The maximum fulfillment for husbands and wives, parents and children, comes as a by-product of giving the kingdom of God first place in their life and home (Luke 18:29, 30).

White indicates that to advance God's kingdom the home should display concern for commendable Christian values: "Their own hearts must first be imbued with the Spirit of God, and their labors should commence at home; their families should have the benefit of their influence. . . . Then the circle should widen."¹ But to foster the advancement of the great commission (Matt 28:19, 20), members of Christian families should unite to share the good news of salvation to those in close contact. "The work of Christian . . . parents, should begin with their own children. Present to the church and to the world a well-disciplined family, and you present one of the strongest arguments in favor of Christianity."² White herself brought into her home children to care for, thus turning her home into a center for service.³

In summary, the mission of the family is to be the center for responsible

1White, Spirit of Prophecy, 1:240.


3"Although called to travel often, and having much writing to do, I have taken children of three and five years of age, and have cared for them, educated them, and trained them for responsible positions. I have taken into my home from time to time boys from ten to sixteen years of age, giving them motherly care and a training for service." White, Welfare Ministry, 321.
parenthood, a place for belonging, the site for the transmission of values, and the post from where the unreached can be reached.¹

Summary

This brief survey of biblical data regarding the family yields the following conclusions. First, the origin of marriage and family is found in the heart of the creative purpose of God.

Second, the word "family" means those who accept the leadership of the head of a household. When family came from the Creator there was no other style of living than the traditional family.

Third, throughout fallen human history new alternate family styles have emerged, but were not sanctioned by God. Inspired writers frequently recorded what is not approved. Family in the Hebrew nation suffered from polygamy, concubinage, and adultery. Through the prophets' teachings, and especially through Christ and Paul, the original intention of marriage and family are more clearly seen.

Fourth, the family is a relational unit. Spouses and children were created in God's image to be in intimate community as the Godhead is. Man and woman were equals, but because of sin, in order to keep the balance between equals, God assigned roles to each. Children are a gift from the Lord; therefore, parents should be stewards

¹"There are souls to save. Come near to them by personal effort. Open your doors to young men who are exposed to temptation. Evil invites them on every hand. Seek to interest them. If they are full of faults, seek to correct those errors. Bring them to your firesides; invite them to your family altar." Ellen G. White, "An Address to the Workers," Second Advent and Sabbath Herald, November 10, 1885, 1.
responsible for the nurture of their children.

Finally, the family has a five-part mission. Family is the place to propagate the human race. The OT data emphasize the large nuclear family. The Savior was promised to Israel and every family wanted to be His ancestor. NT writers indicated that the size of the family should be determined by the ability to provide for them. The absence of children is not a punishment from God, but they are His gifts, and parents, His stewards. Family is a place of belonging and companionship. God created man and woman to be in communion with each other. Love should be expressed with mercy, acceptance, and forgiveness. Family is also the place to express the sexual urge. Within the boundaries of marriage God intended human beings to enjoy what He bestowed at creation. Family is the place to communicate the religious heritage to children by molding and teaching. And finally, the family is the center that promotes God's kingdom by leading Christian families to open their homes to others, and to approach others with God's message.
CHAPTER III

FAMILY THEORY

In this chapter, selected aspects of family theory are considered. In the first section, chosen conceptual family frameworks\(^1\) are briefly noted. Next, family system theory is reviewed. The family development framework is also taken into consideration. Finally, on the basis of the family theory studied, a Christian perspective of the family life cycle is developed.

Selected Conceptual Family Frameworks

Two assumptions are present in the mind of the writer. First, being part of a family may reduce objectivity. "Our emotions are aroused quickly by the behavior of families, and we are likely to feel that family patterns other than our own are queer or improper."\(^2\) Emotional involvement and reliance on individual experience often convince people that the findings of family sociology must be "obvious," since they deal with what is already known. Many popular beliefs about how family works are correct, but one cannot simply assume their correctness. To understand family behavior, a self-

\(^1\)The words, "framework," "frame of reference," "theory," and "approach," are used as synonyms.

conscious method which combines theory with facts should be used. Theories without facts are blind speculation; facts without theory are random and often insignificant observations.

Second: God has two books, the Bible and the book of nature (science). Rightly understood, nature reflects its Creator and is in agreement with its Author.\(^1\) Sociology has arrived at many valuable insights on marriage and the family. Its findings, however, should be interpreted according to the philosophical limitations of the premises upon which they are based.\(^2\) The Christian recognizes that God's word is truth, and since it does not contradict itself, if the "teaching of so-called science contradicts the truth of God's revelation, [it] is mere human guesswork."\(^3\) The study of the following family frameworks does not analyze them from a Christian viewpoint, but merely enlists their axioms.

Sociologists have diverse opinions about the approaches to the family. This diversity is, as Michael Gordon stated, "both a strength and a weakness of family sociology. It is a strength because it reveals the field's vitality; it is a weakness because it reveals how far we have to go in developing anything resembling solid theory."\(^4\)

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\(^1\)"Truth, whether in nature or in revelation, is harmonious with itself in all its manifestations." White, Testimonies, 8:258.

\(^2\)Pragmatism, existentialism, evolutionism, behaviorism, humanism, materialism, and the New Age teachings build on the premise that human knowledge is the only reliable resource of truth.

\(^3\)Ibid., 8:325.

The institutional framework was one of the earliest approaches employed in the study of the family. It originated with eighteenth-century anthropologists and was later adopted by sociologists who identified with organicism or evolutionism. Family analysis was primarily seen as evolutionary; in it changes were observed over time. The family was viewed in a broad institutional and historical perspective as linearly progressing toward a more perfect form. Later, the value conception of change as progress was generally abandoned since the family does not necessarily improve with physical changes nor is there a linear regularity of change in the family.

Michael Gordon, an institutionalist, regarded the main purpose of this approach as a way to see how an appreciation of long-term change in family-related phenomena enables one to better understand current family manifestations. His motto was that the present may be understood only if there is knowledge of the past.

For the institutionalists, the focus of analysis is an institution rather than an individual, a group, a social system, or a culture. The most basic of these organized systems is the institution of the family, which is not only altered over time, but also


2Gordon does not call himself an institutionalist, but the focus of his analysis of the family falls in what Koenig and Bayer call an institutionalistic framework. Koenig and Bayer, 78-96.

3Gordon, 14.
varies from one society or subculture to another. This variation results in a number of different family types. The family is an instrument of social control, with its functions primarily centered around reproduction and the socialization of offspring.¹

Glen Elder, Jr., a recent exponent of this approach, argued that the study of the historical time dimension is important because individuals and families are embedded in the social context of a particular era.² Thus, people married during a certain period, such as the Depression or the Vietnam War, can be referred to as belonging to a Depression family cohort or as a Vietnam family cohort.³ Through cohort studies, institutionalists compare the life course of individuals and families with those of other groups born at other times.

The Interactional Framework

The formal initiation of the interactional framework’s application to family sociology is credited to Ernest Burgess. This occurred in 1926 when Burgess referred to the family as a unity of interacting personalities.⁴

This approach is interested in the personal relationships between husband and


³See the results in Glen Elder, Jr., Children of the Great Depression (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975).

wife, and parents and children. Within the family each member occupies a position, or positions, to which a number of roles are assigned, such as the "good provider," the "responsible older sister." and so forth. The primary focus of the framework has not been on external or environmental factors as such, but on the interaction of family members in constant flux. This formulation allows researchers to ask what proportion of married wives are dissatisfied with their marriage, which social class has most prevalent marital dissatisfaction, how individuals play familiar roles, how they think and feel about what they or other members of the family do, and other similar questions. The peculiarity of the interactionalist approach consists in the fact that human beings interpret or define others' actions instead of merely reacting to them. The means used to interpret each other's reactions is communication by the use of symbols.

The interactionalist goal is to catch or freeze the process of interpretation through which family members view the role of the members whose behavior is under study. From this standpoint, the family is the framework inside of which social action takes place, and is not the determinant of that action. As Hill and Hansen stated, the family is viewed as a "unity of interacting persons." The researcher focuses upon naturalistic observations, interviews, or questionnaires as techniques rather than upon experimentation under artificially controlled settings.

An identifiable value of the interactionalist frame of reference is the view that

marital happiness has to be achieved and nurtured, even above marital stability. This framework has a great effect upon teaching, counseling, and casework since it considers topics such as dating, mate selection, marriage adjustment, parent-child relationships, family communication, decision-making, problem-solving, and personality formation. Since this approach is able to focus successfully on the family as a small group, it is not surprising that the research projects stemming from this approach, as well as the different functional practices, are extensive.

The Situational Framework

Like the interactional framework, the situational approach was developed to analyze the actual behavior of families. It differs, however, in that it tries to deal with all of the social facts that bear on an individual's actions at a given time. The situationists study situations inductively, without any reference to the way in which organisms react to them. Bossard and Boll, major exponents of the situational approach, developed the notion that individual families develop cultures, which

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2According to Arnold Rose half of all sociologists were nurtured from this framework. See Arnold M. Rose, Human Behavior and Social Processes: An Interactional Approach (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962), 381-666. Jay D. Schvaneveldt goes one step further: "Within the family field at least three-fourths of the researchers have employed this approach at some point." Jay D. Schvaneveldt, "The Interactional Framework in the Study of the Family," in The Family: Its Structure and Interaction, 114-115.
influence and guide the individual acts of family members. Thomas and Thomas have noted: "We regard this approach as the only one capable of giving a rational basis for the control of behavior which may be a substitute for the common sense, perceptual, ordering-and-forbidding type of control." 

The situational approach to the study of the family is an observational, descriptive effort to record some part of the endless variety of family situations. Since these situations are constantly changing and being modified, the situationalist delimits the situation with regard to time, place, and constituent elements. This approach requires immense amounts of time and effort to collect enough data to predict behavior. Even so, the collected material does not lend itself readily to the statistical approach.

The Choice/Exchange Framework

The Choice/Exchange approach argues that human relationships can be best understood by examining the exchanges that occur between family members--what they give, receive, and take from each other. As Georg Simmel said, this framework "underscores the importance of rewards and costs within family interactions."

Humans avoid costly behavior and seek rewarding statuses, relationships,

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interactions, and feeling states to maximize their profits. The individual, group, family, or organization will choose the best outcome, based on their perception of rewards and costs. Thus, if a marital relationship works it is because it produces profit. In spite of their powerlessness, as John and Millie Youngberg state, sociologists say that parents fulfill their duty to children because society demands it, because it costs less than a child care center, and because of the psychological rewards parents receive.

The reward/exchange theory assumes that an individual will change his or her relationships if better alternatives are offered. The central focus of this framework is on receiving. Receiving what one feels is deserved produces satisfaction; receiving less creates anger; and receiving more leads to guilt. Principles have no value except as they are meaningful to society as a medium of exchange. For example, it is possible to view divorce as resulting from an imbalance of costs and rewards.

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2Youngberg and Youngberg, Syllabus, 21.

Family System Theory

A family system has been defined as "a cluster of highly interrelated parts [family], each responding to the others, the entire set somehow maintaining itself as a distinguishable whole in spite of incessant internal change." Kantor and Lehr define it as "a set of different things or parts that . . . are directly or indirectly related to one or more of the other parts of the [family] in a reasonably stable way during any particular period of time."

Basic Concepts Relevant to the Family

Four basic concepts of the General System Theory are relevant to family. These are the concept of wholeness or non-summativity, the concept of feedback, the concept

1Also known as Structure-Function Framework, General System Theory, System Theory, or Ecological Framework.


System theory focuses less on the content of the data and more on the process, on the interconnectedness of the data and what governs it. It is based on the premise that no component part is understood independently, rather it is understood best as it relates to other component parts around it. See Fred Kasischke, "A Plan for Development of a Family Ministry Program for the Southeastern California Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists" (D.Min. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1988), 35, 36.


of differentiation of self and the concept of boundary.

**Wholeness and Non-summativity**

Fritjof Capra defines the concept of wholeness or non-summativity with the following words: "The nature of the whole is always different from the mere sum of its parts." Because this is so, it is impossible to understand the family simply by understanding its individual members.

Since the whole is more than the sum of its parts, the therapist will not approach the family by conducting individual interviews, but by family group meetings.

**Feedback**

The second useful concept to the study of the family is feedback. Within each system there are always two forces—the pull towards maintaining stability (morphostasis) and the pull towards change (morphogenesis). There is a constant tension between these two tendencies which is held in balance by a regulator and governed by a process known as feedback, which may be either positive or negative.

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2"Morphostasis refer to reciprocal process ... [and] emphasizes the organism's tendency toward homeostasis, that is a dynamic 'steady state' in which organisms seek to maintain equilibrium within given parameters, and dynamic stability." Cameron Lee, "The Social and Psychological Dynamics of the Minister's Family: An Ecological Model for Research" (D.Min. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1986), 14, 16.

3Morphogenesis "emphasizes the organism's adaptive capacity for change and evolutionary growth." Ibid., 16.

4Feedback is "a process by which a system informs its component parts how to relate to one another and to external environment in order to facilitate the correct or
According to Walrond-Skinner, feedback "is the means whereby new information from the environment is introduced into a system, leading either to change and variation (positive feedback) or to stability and homeostasis (negative feedback)."¹

There are four major levels of feedback operating within each system: simple feedback, cybernetic control, morphogenesis, and reorientation.² Simple feedback is identical to the cause-effect model from the mechanistic approach of social behavior. Simple feedback is frequently used by family members as a stimulus for change. It is a simple exchange between the system and the environment.

Cybernetic control is the action the system takes to maintain its rules or status quo.³ Families have rules or norms which define expected behavior for each family member. Each of these rules has a tolerance limit beyond which one cannot go without damaging the family as a system.

Morphogenesis feedback is the system’s capacity to generate or create new ways of responding to a situation. New responses are created whenever tested methods no longer work, or the system is facing a situation for the first time. The tendency in most families is to respond in old, familiar ways to new situations, but it is likely that those

¹Walrond-Skinner, 30.


old ways will be inadequate.¹

The fourth and highest level of feedback is reorientation. Reorientation is the capacity of the system to change its entire goal. Different from morphogenesis where new ways of responding were generated, reorientation sees that the goals of the family system are changed. As Balswick and Balswick stated, "reorientation is prescribed when a family's existing patterns of behavior prove to be totally unworkable."²

**Differentiation of Self**

The third concept that further defines a social system and is useful in the study of the family is the idea of differentiation of self. This concept involves a person's ability to distinguish himself from the family system. It is the ability of a member of the system to define his or her goals independent of the pressures within the system, and to assume maximum responsibility for one's own destiny and emotional well-being.³ As Murray Bowen, originator of the self-differentiation theory, stated.

> Self-differentiation is the degree to which a person has a 'solid self' or solidly held principles by which he lives his life. This is in contrast to a 'pseudoself' made up of inconsistent life principles that can be corrupted by coercion for the gain of the moment. The 'differentiation of self' is roughly equivalent to the concept of emotional maturity.⁴


²Balswick and Balswick, 40.

³Ibid., 41.

"Self-differentiation is different from individuality because it does not just say, 'I', but says, 'I' and remains connected."¹ For a family member to differentiate is to define his or her own life's goals and values apart from surrounding togetherness pressures.

Bowen's scale of differentiation ranged from 0 to 100, with 0 representing the lowest possible differentiation. He affirmed that "a person living in the lower half of the scale lives in a feeling-controlled world which makes it difficult to distinguish feeling from fact. and major life decisions are based on what 'feels' right."² Individuals at the 50-75 range have increasingly defined convictions and opinions on essential issues, but are still sensitive to opinions of those about them. Very few people move above the 60 mark, while a very high-level person manages up to 75.³

Boundary

Boundary is the fourth system concept that is useful in the study of the family. The boundary of a particular system is "that which conceptually or physically distinguishes it from other systems."⁴ To understand any system one must begin by identifying the boundary around that system.⁵ Once a boundary has been established,

¹Miller, 36.
²Bowen, Family Therapy, 474.
³Ibid., 474.
⁴Lee, 14.
⁵For example, in Western societies the boundary of the family system is drawn around a husband and wife and their children. In many other societies the boundary also includes relatives beyond the nuclear unit, because the extended family is part of the basic system.
objects within the system are identified as units of the system or subsystems.\textsuperscript{1} Anything which is within the boundary is considered part of the system, and anything which falls outside of the boundary is identified as part of the environment. Input includes any message or stimulus which enters the system from the environment, while output includes any message or response from the system to the environment. Boundaries around a system can be relatively open or closed. In an open-family system, boundaries are permeable allowing for significant input from and output to the environment. In a closed-family system, boundaries serve as barriers which limit such interaction.\textsuperscript{2}

In a family including both parents and children, the system becomes more complicated, since each member occupies a given position in the system and is assigned a role to play within it. In the parent-children system there are at least two subsystems: the parental composed of the mother and father, and the sibling composed of the children (or in the case of only one child, the child subsystem). In most systems, rules and hierarchy exist between the subsystems.

Urie Bronfenbrenner examined the family as part of the ecological environment, that is, as part of the larger social institution network. According to this theory, there are four levels of system analysis: microsystem,\textsuperscript{3} mesosystem,\textsuperscript{4} exosystem,\textsuperscript{5} and

\textsuperscript{1}According to Lee, "a subsystem is a system within a system which exhibits its own dynamics." Lee, 13.

\textsuperscript{2}Balswick and Balswick, 36.

\textsuperscript{3}Microsystem "is a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a giving setting with particular physical and material characteristics." Urie Bronfenbrenner, The Ecology of Human Development:
The arrangement of these structures is such that one is nested within the next. Microsystem includes the family relationships with its subsystems. It consists of persons with whom there is regular face-to-face interaction in a meaningful experience. Mesosystem includes those settings in which a person participates, such as the workplace, the school environment, the church milieu, and the neighborhood. The exosystem consists of social settings that affect the individual in an indirect way, such as the nation's economy. And the macrosystem is a social setting that includes a community's ideology and its organization of social institutions, such as the American culture or the country's capitalistic ideology.2

Principles Applicable to Family Life Ministry

The implications of the church's ministry to families lie in the necessity to address the dimension of relationship. In the church's families an individual will learn


4Mesosystem "comprises the interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates (such as, for a child, the relations among home, school, and neighborhood peer group; for an adult, among family, work, and social life)." Ibid., 25.

5An exosystem "refers to one or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events occur that effect, or are affected by, what happens in the setting containing the developing person." Ibid.

1Macrosystem "refers to consistencies, in the form and content of lower-order systems (micro-, meso-, and exo-) that exist, or could exist, at the level of the subculture or the culture as a whole, along with any belief systems or ideology underlying such consistencies." Ibid., 26.

2Ibid., 16-42.
or fail to learn how to get along with others, and how to communicate effectively.

There are four principles of the family-system approach which are relevant to the family of families, the church family: (1) what system is and its implications from Scripture, (2) the system's rules, (3) the energy shift from the system, and (4) the complexity of the system.

**System Parts**

According to Dennis Guernsey's definition of a system, each system has three parts. Guernsey explains that "the parts are in relationship with one another; the whole is greater than the sum of the parts; and, the whole is able to continue and change in response to itself and to its environment."  

One scriptural example of a system is the inspired description of marriage.

"Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh" (Gen 2:24). Marriage is more than a man plus a woman. Marriage is like a third person that is created between them, the "one flesh" which is greater than either one of them. In the NT, Paul, in his description of the church, draws attention to

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1"A system is anything that constitutes a cluster of highly interrelated parts, each responding to the other while at the same time somehow maintaining itself as a whole even when there is incessant internal change." Dennis B. Guernsey, *A New Design for Family Ministry* (Elgin, IL: David C. Cook, 1982), 67.

2Ibid.

3As biologist Sir Arthur Eddington said: "We often think that when we have completed our study of 'one' we know all about 'two' because 'two' is the product of 'one and two.' We forget that we have to make a study of 'and.'" Arthur S. Eddington, *The Nature of the Physical World* (New York: Macmillan, 1946), 83.
the whole as well as the parts in 1 Cor 12:

For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ (vs. 12). For in fact the body is not one member but many (vs. 14). But now indeed there are many members, yet one body (vs. 20). And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it (vs. 26).

The purpose of Paul's use of the metaphor is to bring attention to the fact that the whole is of greater importance than any one part and to show the dependency each part of the body has on the other parts.

System Rules

Systems theory affirms that systems operate according to rules. Certainly families do also. Sometimes those rules are explicit and recognized by the members of the system and sometimes they are implicit. However, there are always rules. The task in understanding a system is not to gather data about the properties of the members of the systems but to gather data about how the members interrelate with one another.\(^1\)

Energy Shift in the System

Another principle says that "as any system becomes more complex the kind of energy needed to run the system shifts from activity to information."\(^2\) According to the system theory, in order to be effective, a system must have the ability to process two kinds of information. First, the system must be able to gather and process information

\(^1\) Guernsey, 68.

\(^2\) Ibid., 70.
as to whether it is doing a good job and can stay the same. That kind of information is called negative feedback. Second, the system must be able to gather and process data as to when it is time to change. This kind of feedback is called positive.\textsuperscript{1} Both kinds of feedback are necessary. Their significance in terms of a church’s family ministry lies in the family’s need to be able to know when, why, and how to change.

**Complexity of the System**

Finally, a system becomes more complex when new members enter into the system. The family is a developing system which needs to be open to the arrival of new members and their later departure. It must be able to tolerate and be responsive to the changing needs of its individual members. At the same time, it must maintain a stability which is capable of providing a firm foundation for them.\textsuperscript{2} This is not an easy task, especially with the demands that are made on the family system in our modern urban society. A multitude of extrafamilial systems (the work place, the educational system, church groups, various clubs and organizations, and the business world) are all competing for the time and devotion of family members. Only strong families will be able to survive the intrusiveness of modern society.

\textsuperscript{1}Negative feedback means you do not have to change what you are doing because you are doing well. Positive feedback means that the system must adapt in order to survive. See Guernsey, 71.

\textsuperscript{2}Balswick and Balswick, 49.
Qualities of a Strong Family

According to Balswick and Balswick, the four main characteristics of a strong or healthy family from the system perspective are: cohesion, adaptability, communication, and role structure. These are noted in Table 1.

TABLE 1

CHARACTERISTICS OF STRONG AND WEAK FAMILIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strong Families</th>
<th>Weak Families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cohesion</td>
<td>Individuation</td>
<td>Enmeshment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mutuality</td>
<td>Disengagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability</td>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Rigidity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stability</td>
<td>Chaos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Clear perception</td>
<td>Unclear perception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clear communication</td>
<td>Unclear communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Structure</td>
<td>Agreement on roles</td>
<td>Conflict over roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clear generational boundaries</td>
<td>Diffuse boundaries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Cohesion

According to Balswick and Balswick, cohesion means "the degree of closeness or oneness which exists in a family." Olson, Sprenkle, and Russell have defined it as the "emotional bonding members have with one another and the degree of individual

\[1\text{Ibid.}\]
autonomy a person experiences in the family system."¹ While in strong families each member possesses a healthy degree of separateness from the others (individuation), each feels close ties to other family members (mutuality).

When family members are too cohesive, they are described as enmeshed. An enmeshed family system lacks a sense of separate identity or individuality, each being overly dependent upon the family for identity. "Personal boundaries have become intertwined with each other."² The opposite extreme is a very low level of cohesion, which can be described as disengagement. Here the life of each member rarely touches the other in a meaningful way. The three levels of cohesion are seen in figure 1.

The amount of cohesion required to produce strong families will vary from family to family in the same or different culture, and from one life stage to another. The strong family at all stages and cultures will have closeness, loyalty, and interconnectedness.³


²Miller, 31.

³Balswick and Balswick, 45.
Figure 1. Disengagement, differentiation, and enmeshment. From Jack O. Balswick and Judith K. Balswick, *The Family: A Christian Perspective on the Contemporary Home* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 46.
Adaptability

Adaptability is another criterion for identifying strong families. Adaptability has been defined as "the ability of a family system to change its power structure, role relationships, and rules in response to situational and developmental stress." In strong families there is a sense of orderliness which involves both flexibility and structure. Weaker families can manifest high levels of adaptability which lack the needed structure and predictability. They may also show a low degree of adaptability, which makes them rigid. For example, a chaotic family may set no time for dinner, and family members eat at their convenience. The rigid family sets dinner at 6 p.m. sharp. In the stable and flexible family, dinner is scheduled for a certain time but can be changed as needed and agreed upon by the family as a whole.2

Olson, Sprenkle, and Russell have, combining the characteristics of cohesion and adaptability, created what they called the "circumplex model" as shown in figure 2.3

1 Olson, Sprenkle, and Russell, 12.
2 Balswick and Balswick, 47.
3 Olson, Sprenkle, and Russell, 17.
Figure 2. Circumplex model of marital and family system. From David Olson, Douglas Sprenkle, and Candyce Russell, "Circumplex Model of Marital and Family System: Cohesion and Adaptability Dimensions, Family Types and Clinical Applications," *Family Process* 18 (January 1979): 17.

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The four family types at the center of the figure are orderly differentiated families. The corners of the chart represent four types of dysfunctional families. The chaotic enmeshed family is extremely high in both cohesion and adaptability; the rigid enmeshed family is high in cohesion and low in adaptability; the rigid disengaged family is low in cohesion and high in adaptability. It is important to note that a variety of family styles are functional and healthy. It is the families at the extremes which have problems.

Communication

Because communication contributes so much to building strong families, no other subject is more prominent in self-help books than family communication.

The dynamics of good communication boil down to clarity of perception and clarity of expression. Clarity of perception pertains to the receiver of communication. It involves good listening skills, the ability to pick up on the nonverbal communication elements (voice intonation and body language) of the sender, and willingness to ask for clarification when needed. Strong families take an interest in improving the clarity of perception while showing empathic skills.

Clarity of expression, the more obvious dimension of communication, pertains to the sender. In strong families, members are able to communicate feelings, opinions, wishes, and desires in a forthright manner.

Weak families are characterized by unclear perception and unclear expression. There is lack of interest to better understand how communication works and how to
better use it, as well as a great amount of deceptive game-playing.¹

Role Structure

Each family member plays a role in the family system. A strong family agrees on roles and sets clear generational boundaries.

Strong families are characterized by agreement on respective roles, while, in this area, weak families experience conflicts which lead to contention. For example, husband and wife may both want to work outside the home and have the other spouse be responsible for the housekeeping and child care. In a strong family the couple will come to an agreement on the roles each will fulfill, while in a weaker family individuals will fight over who will do what and why without much success.

Strong families have clear boundaries around the parental subsystem as well as in the sibling subsystem. When parents are away for the evening, the oldest child may be put in charge. When parents return, the child of a weak family will continue to take the parenting role with his siblings, while in a strong family the parental role will be relinquished by the sibling. Healthy or strong families will have clear yet permeable generational boundaries. This means that family members have the freedom to occasionally take on different roles. For example, parents of a strong family can become childish at times, while children may sometimes act as nurturers to their parents.²

¹Balswick and Balswick, 47.

²To a great extent, these last two sections follow Balswick and Balswick, 47-50.
Family Development Framework

Human beings have "always been aware of the sequential stages of life from birth to death." However, family research has not always taken these stages into consideration. Bobbie Bundick stated:

The developmental approach to families was originally developed in preparation for the First National Conference on Family Life in Washington, D.C. in 1948. Since that time much research has gone into this approach, to the point that it is popular among family life professionals.

Although family process is by no means linear, it exists in the linear dimension of time. As Ruth Cavan stated, "the pattern of family life is not a series of disjointed segments. . . . Family life flows on . . . [as] a long river of experience that begin at birth, already loaded with heredity from the past, that flows on until the end of life."

Family Life Cycle Definition

The stages into which life is divided are somewhat flexible. In fact, they have varied over the centuries, with adolescence appearing in the nineteenth century and the

1Also known as Family Life Cycle Approach, or Developmental Approach.


notion of young adulthood and the empty nest in this century. The conception of life stages has changed over time. Stages also differ in different cultures where these are formulated according to different time schedules and with different definitions of the tasks at each stage.

According to Aldous, a stage is "a division within the lifetime of a family that is distinctive enough from those that precede and follow it to constitute a separate period." The most frequently used cycle of family life stages is that developed by Evelyn Duvall and Reuben Hill in a report for the 1948 White House Conference on the Family. These authors suggested three criteria for defining stages: changes in the number of family members, developmental stages of the oldest child, and the retirement status of the father/husband. According to this categorization, the list of family stages is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage I</td>
<td>Establishment stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage II</td>
<td>Families with infants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage III</td>
<td>Families with preschool children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage IV</td>
<td>Families with school children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage V</td>
<td>Families with adolescents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage VI</td>
<td>Families with young adults</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


4For a more detailed inquiry of Duval and Hill criteria and other alternative models, see McCubbin and Dahl, 26-28.
Stage VII  Families in the middle years (post-parental)
Stage VIII  Aging families.¹

Guernsey has given another listing of family stages. His approach is that of a Christian minister to families.

1. Between Families
2. Neo-Marital
3. Neo-Paternal
4. Young Children
5. First Teenager
6. Empty Nest
7. Retirement
8. Single Person
9. Single Parent.²

The Strong Family

A strong family unit is one that completes the issues of one stage and moves on to the succeeding stages.

During each stage, family members are expected to achieve certain developmental tasks. Some of these must be mastered at one stage, while others may be learned throughout the life cycle. For example, in the first year of marriage a couple must master the task of establishing their own household. In contrast, interpersonal communication develops throughout the life cycle.³

A family will be strong if it recognizes that each life cycle has several stages.

²Guernsey, 43.
³Balswick and Baswick, 41.
Each stage consists of a plateau and a transition period. The plateau represents a time of relative stability or homeostasis, while the transitions are times of rapid change, when the family may be in crisis.\(^1\) For example, the birth of the first child is different from that of subsequent children.\(^2\)

A strong family will recognize that during each stage there will be crises, both predictable and unpredictable. While many family crises are predictable, such as the birth of the first child and retirement, other crises are unexpected, such as illnesses or accidents. The stressors may be both vertical and horizontal.\(^3\) Even though developmental horizontal stressors of family transition are relatively predictable in time, vertical stressors are transmitted to the family unit through the mechanism of emotional triangling.\(^4\)

Figure 3 lists some of them and the system levels at which they occur.

Special Considerations Regarding the Life Cycle Approach to Families

The Family Life Cycle approach is commonly used among researchers. However this strategy should be grasped with caution regarding what normal life-cycle is and the impact of culture on the cycle.

\(^1\)Walrond-Skinner, 36, 37.


\(^3\)For more information, see Carter and McGoldrick, 8-10.

\(^4\)See Bowen, Family Therapy in Clinical Practice, 49.
A rigid application of what is considered to be a "normal" life cycle can have a detrimental effect. This may occur if it promotes anxious self-scrutiny that raises fears that deviating from the norms is pathological.

Cultural factors also play a major role in how families go through the life cycle. Not only do cultural groups vary greatly in their breakdown of life cycle stages and definitions of the tasks at each stage, but it is clear that even several generations after immigration, the family life cycle pattern differs by group.¹

A Christian Perspective of the Family Life Cycle

From the earliest times, religion and the family have been intimately related and have influenced each other. As David Moberg stated, "many of the deepest concepts of religion may be traced to family relationships. The church and the family are inter-related in a never-ceasing process of reciprocal interaction. Neither can be fully understood apart from the other."¹

Theories concerning the family were not a concern of earlier generations of Christians. The family and family life were taken largely for granted, even though from the earliest times Christian values have been passed on through families. At the time of the Reformation, Luther showed a lack of understanding of the relationship between Christian living and family life when he complained that marriage relations took so much time that he could hardly read, preach, or study.²

Presently, the thought and interest of the church have changed to the point where several denominations devote time and energy to the relationship between faith and family.³ Today, more than ever, churches are attempting to formulate a philosophy of


³Reiber found that the leaders of thirty-eight Protestant denominations, comprising altogether forty-five million members, felt that a total of twenty-two changes had taken place in the church in the past century in relation to family and the church. It was noted that nearly all of these were in the direction of the church focusing on more adequate methods of meeting the needs of the family. Stanley R. Reiber, "How Family Changes in the United States Between 1860 and 1960 Have Affected the
church-family interaction.¹ and to create a Family Life Department to institute special programs relevant to the family.²

According to Stanley Reiber, some of the principal concerns of the Christian churches in the area of marriage and family relationships are:

1. The value and stability of the marital vows, especially for the protection and rearing of children.
2. Cultivation of factors making for stable and fulfilling family life.
3. Encouragement of both fidelity and fulfillment in married life.
4. Encouragement of family stability for both the mental health and the Christian education of the children.
5. Discouragement of premarital intercourse through education concerning the seriousness of such practices.
6. The proper place and meaning of sex in human life.
7. The bases of family limitations.³

At a first glance, and from the human science standpoint, the primary impact of the Christian religious system on the development of family theory has been a "retarding force." Sociological and psychological theories of man's origin or development have frequently experienced opposition or hostility from the forces of Church," unpublished study, Department of Sociology, Florida State University, 1961.

¹In schools such as Fuller Theological Seminary and Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, doctoral students have shown an increased interest in thinking and proposing philosophical, sociological, and biblical frameworks for the family. For example see Kearns, Meyer, Gorton, and Kasischke.

²Congregational-Christian Church, 1947; Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (now known as the United Presbyterian Church USA), 1948; the Seventh-day Adventist Church, 1975, Roman Catholic Church through the Cana Conferences, about 1950.

organized religion. On the other hand, a number of researchers, such as Ray Abrams, have recognized the powerful influence of religion in family matters.

Although there is no organized school of social researchers that operates from a Christian framework, one of the areas into which many researchers have inquired has been the interaction of religion and the individual, or the family. Perhaps one of the earliest effective works is that of Gerhard Lenski, who found that religion is as great an influence on the behavior of individuals, families, and society as is social class. He also indicated that the person's religious life affects not only his family ties but also may affect such things as economic mobility.

Biblical Principles

The Christian framework starts from the idea of the sovereignty of God: that is, He has made us and not we ourselves (Gen 1:17; Ps 100:3). It is He who has established the universe and all that is in it (Isa 37:16; Ps 96:5; John 1:3). He has set up a moral order which has relevance for all of life (Exod 20:1-17). Each individual is a child of God and his life is sacred to God. The family is ordained by God (Gen 2:23, 24;...

1Ibid., 304.

"Religion is one of the most powerful and persistent of all social forces... Organized religion plays an important role in our society. These institutions and thought have influenced to a considerable extent our economic and political structure, the nature of our educational institutions, and the norms and values in family life." Ray H. Abrams, Organized Religion in the United States (Philadelphia: American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1948), vii.

4:1, 2), and regulated by His commandments (Josh 24: 1, 14-16; Deut 6:1-9). The life of the family is to benefit the individual members,¹ and to serve the kingdom of God.²

Life Stages

A Christian preventive ministry to the marriage and the family should take advantage of the predictability of the life cycle as well as of system theories. God is interested in the well-being of the institution as well as its constituents. Besides, no institution in society prepares the family to surmount the hurdles that are part of the life cycle stages. The novice is left to survive on his own. It is precisely this vacuum that provides the church with a golden opportunity for meaningful and effective ministry. The knowledge, skills, and motivation to cope could impact the current generation and provide a better future for the following one.

The model which will be used is based on the one Dennis Guernsey developed in his book, A New Design for Family Ministry.³ Referring to the categories in which the family cycles developed, Guernsey stated:

This model suggests that the socialization processes that are critical in the effective development of the family over time cluster themselves into four natural categories

¹From White, Child Guidance, 205; idem, Fundamentals of Christian Education, 155; and idem, "What Shall Our Children Read?," Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, January 23, 1913, 1.

²From Ellen G. White, Counsels on Sabbath School Work (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1938), 169; idem, Testimonies, 6:85; idem, "Our Talents," Signs of the Times, August 18, 1898, 1; and idem, "Individual Responsibility in the Church," Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, October 22, 1889, 1.

³Guernsey, 43.
or groups of related tasks with subcategories reflected in the stage of the life cycle. I have chosen to think of them as the Beginning Years, the Building Years, the Maturing Years, and the Single Years. The categories are not absolute but heuristics, that is, labeled so as to be easy to remember.¹

**Beginning Years**

The Beginning Years are characterized by two main tasks, differentiation and new roles. To be better equipped for a new, committed, exclusive, and permanent relationship both partners need to differentiate themselves from their family of origin. To be a good husband or wife, as well as a good father or mother, requires the acceptance of new responsibilities.

The church can minister to individuals and to family units in the Beginning Years. It can foster support groups for members who have similar needs and provide training in areas of need. Three sub-stages have their own specific needs.

**Pre-Marital Stage**

This developmental stage begins from the time a young person starts looking for a more intimate friendship with the opposite sex. It ends with the wedding of the couple.

*Characteristics and tasks.* At this stage, the single most important task is differentiation from one's family of origin. As Carter and McGoldrick stated, “the more adequately young adults can differentiate themselves from the emotional program of the

¹Ibid., 44.
family of origin, ... the fewer vertical stressors will follow them through their new family's life cycle."

According to family system theory, the usual alternatives are to become disengaged or to stay enmeshed. To be disengaged is to be someone "who handles the problems of relationships by walking away from them."² It is the position of the prodigal son in Luke 15. He had run away, putting miles between himself and his father. To disengage rarely solves any problem. At the other extreme is the response of enmeshment. Enmeshed people are so connected to their family of origin that they never become truly separate or distinct people. It is painful for them to be independent from their family of origin. Theirs is the story of the oldest son in Luke 15 who never left home. "To be a separate, distinct, differentiated person is the Biblical norm. To be disengaged or to remain enmeshed is not."³

Another task of the Pre-Marital Stage is the selection of a mate. Several theories explain mate selection.⁴ The first is that like marries like. Similar social backgrounds are key components; these include race, ethnicity, religion, education, occupation, and

¹Carter and McGoldrick, 13.
²Guernsey, 46.
³Ibid.
geographical proximity. Similar personal characteristics and interests are also significant; these include religious and political beliefs, moral values, hobbies, intelligence, and physical appearance. Murstein suggested that the selection of a mate based on similar personal characteristics goes so far as to lead a person with low self-esteem to marry another individual with a similar level of esteem.¹

Another theory says that opposites attract. Evidence for this posture is not as clear-cut as the evidence of the previous theory. Balswick and Balswick said that when opposites attract, usually personality factors are involved. "There is a tendency for dominant persons to marry submissive persons, and for nurturing persons to marry persons who need nurturing."²

The filter theory³ says that endogamy, homogamy, and complementary needs are three different filters through which a potential mate must pass. The first and broadest filter is endogamy, as most people date and establish relationships with individuals from similar backgrounds. The second filter is homogamy, which is narrower and more selective. Only those persons who have similar interests and characteristics pass through this filter. The last filter, complementary needs, is the narrowest. Whereas a


²Balswick and Balswick, 61.

number of potential mates may pass through the endogamous and homogamous filters, only a few will have the exact personality traits and meet one's most pressing needs.

The mate selection process for a Christian individual requires another element: the discernment of God's will. Marriage is an important and sacred event because it is necessary for the psychological well-being of most individuals, the social well-being of family life, the economic well-being of communities, and the biological survival of society itself. Three guidelines will help the individual to know God's direction in this matter. First, one should seek God's will directly through prayer and Bible study. Second, one should seek wisdom from parents. And third, one should seek counsel from other mature Christian relatives or friends. Ellen G. White's counsel on this matter stated:

This they will find in the word of God. Unless they are diligent students of that word, they will make grave mistakes, which will mar their happiness and that of others. . . . Take God and your God-fearing parents into your counsel, young friends. Pray over the matter. . . . The step you are about to take is one of the most important in your life, and should not be taken hastily.¹

A third task of the Pre-Marital Stage, besides self-differentiation and mate selection, is that of open communication with the future mate. Verbal and non-verbal means should be used to discuss topics such as role functions, time to be spent with friends, desire for children, career and educational planning, church involvement, money management, home buying, in-laws, conflict management styles, and others. The nature of later married life is largely dependent on the quality of this stage.

Church opportunities for ministry. The church, as a family of families, could assist the young people by mentoring the correct choices. The church should foster "relationships between the young adult and significant others whose experience and quality of life will be seen by the young adult to be copyable."\(^1\) Transparency from the adult population of the church, besides small group ministries and seminars on subjects mentioned above, is the most effective means to help young people through this stage.

Neo-Marital Stage

The Neo-Marital Stage starts at the wedding and ends at the advent of the first offspring. Marital partners are the "architects of the family,"\(^2\) the foundation upon which the family is established. This stage marks the birth of a new family, when two individuals from different family cultures form a new family system. It involves moving from their respective families of origin to that new and unfamiliar relationship of husband and wife.\(^3\) As Sonya Rhodes said, "the essential criterion of this stage is that the couple is making an investment in the relationship."\(^4\)

Characteristics and tasks. The fundamental task of this stage is to learn the new roles of husband and wife. The difficulty of the task lies in the biblical model of the

\(^1\)Guernsey, 47.


\(^3\)Duvall and Hill, 185.

\(^4\)Rhodes, 303.
book of Genesis, "a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife" (Gen 2:24). To "leave" is the task of differentiation. In the Pre-Marital stage, self-differentiation had to do with the partners being themselves. In the Neo-Marital stage, self-differentiation has to do with establishing a new system separate from the family system each one brought to the marriage.

To be a better husband or wife also requires assuming responsibility for oneself in the relationship, negotiating differences and conflicts with one another, resolving unrealistic expectations of one's partner, and finding mutually satisfying ways of nurturing and supporting one another.¹

In this stage the needs of husband and wife are different. The wife works on the task of establishing intimacy in the marriage, while the husband establishes ties of identity with his occupation in order to achieve status and provide security to the family.² These individual tasks will continue during the following stages, when the dyad become a triad, when the family system creates subsystems.

Although this stage is generally a "happy stage, a time of investment in the newly-formed system, building a pattern of sexual communication, confirming and being confirmed,"³ the new family system is at its most vulnerable stage of the developmental cycle. According to Barbara Thornes, almost 50 percent of all divorces


²Duvall and Hill, 194.

³Chetty, 170.
take place by the ninth year of marriage. Out of a sample of 520 divorced couples, 73 percent believed their marital problems had become severe by their fifth wedding anniversary.¹

To successfully pass this stage depends greatly on the couple's recognition that God must be at the center of their home. Daily worship will unite them and teach them about God's purpose for marriage.

Church opportunities for ministry. The church's opportunity to minister to these newlyweds includes modeling from other family systems which dealt with the issues of leaving and cleaving. Because of the newness, the couple is more open than at other stages to hear from others the how-they-did-it and the how-to-do-it. They do not expect to be taught by perfect people with perfect marriages. "They need to be led by real people who are survivors, whose marriages, by the grace of God, are getting better, people who love each other and see marriage as a process of becoming."²

Neo-Parental Stage

The third stage of the Beginning Years starts with the birth of the first child. It ends when the last child enters school.

²Guernsey, 48.
Characteristics and tasks. The main task is to accept the shift of the adult generation that comes with the parental role. Parents should shift from care receivers to caregivers. As Jack and Judy Balswick said, "While the family is the foundation of family life, children are the building blocks through which the family structure grows."

The popular idea of "parenthood as a crisis" derives from the observation that the couple, as an integrated social system, requires a major reorganization when adding or subtracting members. Role theory postulates that, with the addition of children, there is a disruption of affect and intimacy. Family systems with moderate adaptation are more likely to weather this period than those with rigid systems. Candyce Russell said:

Viewed in this conceptual system, married couples find the transition to parenthood painful because the arrival of the first child destroyed the two-person or pair pattern of group interaction and forces a rapid reorganization of their life into a three-person or triangle group system. Due to the fact that their courtship and preparenthood pair relationship has persisted over the years, they find it difficult to give it up as a way of life. In addition, however, they find that living as a trio is more complicated than living as a pair. The husband, for example, no longer ranks first in claims upon his wife but must accept the child's right to priority. In some cases, the husband may feel that he is the semi-isolate... In other cases, the wife may feel that her husband is more interested in the baby than in her.

The reorganization of the system is less stressful when the wedding has been recent. It also helps if the couple wants children.

Motherhood, more than fatherhood, of the first baby requires opportunity for

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1Bundick, 36-37.


refueling. Today's society, because of urbanization and industrialization, has emphasized the nuclear family. It is common to have the in-laws and other relatives far away from the new family home. The new mother is required to shoulder almost full responsibility for the infant at the precise time the child's needs for mothering exceed the mother's time and experience. Alice Rossi suggested, "What has been seen as a failure or inadequacy of individual women" is really "a failure of society to provide institutionalized substitutes for the extended kin to assist in the care of infants and young children."¹

As more children enter the family system, much of the aforementioned process is repeated. Greater demands are placed upon parents, but later children do not affect the family system to the degree that the first one does.²

As children grow, the main parental responsibility is to empower them. This can be mainly achieved by providing unilateral and unconditional love, acceptance of differences inherent and in the family constellation, and consistency between verbal and nonverbal messages. Furthermore, parents can empower their children by taking time to know how they think and feel about themselves, and by offering and expecting to receive forgiveness. In addition, children's empowerment is obtained when parents teach and show them that each family member serves and supports the other, as well as by creating an appropriate-to-the-age discipline such as natural, logical, and physical


²Terkelsen, 21-52.
consequences.

The first child, besides being a link to posterity, provides a vehicle for the continuation of the family name and its heritage. Family worship, one of the formal methods for achieving the transmission of values, should take place at the beginning of the triad, even if the infant may not understand what is being taught. God expects that parents will pass the torch to the younger generation by modeling and teaching as found in Deut 6: 6, 7. Since the child's character is formed in the first years of his or her life, parents should work to shape the characteristics that will make their children responsible citizens in their community and prepare them to become citizens of the New Jerusalem. As White states, "Too much importance cannot be placed on the early training of children. The lessons that a child learns during the first seven years of life has more to do with the forming of his character than all that it learns in future years."¹ Family worship ought to be twice daily, short and fun, pleasant and interesting; it should be the most enjoyable moment of the day.²

Church opportunities for ministry. Church opportunities to minister to the triad are ample. These may include new kinship structures to take up the slack many new parents feel in the inadequacy of their natural, extended families, or because of the geographical distance from them. The church may create and provide small groups where topics of child rearing can be openly discussed. It also may include seminars on

¹White, Child Guidance, 193.
²White, Testimonies, 7:43.
how to create a character-building atmosphere through formal and informal teaching encounters. The church needs to infuse these young couples with hope. Guernsey phrased it well:

Rather than anticipating that their children will bring agony in years to come, as is the case with many young couples, we can offer them the assurance that the Church as the new family of God will be there with them as they transit the coming rapids with their children. They will not be alone.1

Building Years

The second cluster in the family life cycle is called the Building Years. This refers to the time when double bridges need to be crossed: the bridge from child to adolescence and from youth to adulthood. It is also the time for growing on instead of growing up. Two stages make up the Building Years.

Young Children Stage

The Young Children Stage starts when the last child enters school. It ends with the first teenager.

Characteristics and tasks. Most of the developmental tasks continue the same as in the Neo-Parental Stage, however the empowerment process increases with the age and maturity of the children.2

This is a time of additional stresses. Many mothers who dedicate themselves

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1Guernsey, 49.

2Rhodes, 307.
entirely to the children feel a deflation of self-esteem as their competencies as caretakers of preschool children are no longer needed. A mother who had a career will consider returning to work. The husband, on the other hand, usually finds this the season to strive for highest attainment at work.¹

In the Young Children Stage the ecology of the family unit expands its boundaries to include the school community. The values children learn at school may not necessarily be the same set of values that parents have. This may bring stress.

Although the "financial crunch" came during the first-child stage, the "time crunch" comes during the school-age period.² It is also a time when children's energy, size, appetite, and social pressures require more dollars from the family system than ever before.

The marriage relationship is under more stress than in previous stages because the idealistic portrayal and the newness of having a child have already passed. Therefore the dyad has to allow for time and energy to strengthen the husband-wife relationship. Parents also need to begin to "de-parent," that is to allow children more opportunities for decision making and spend more time on their relationship.

For the Christian family unit this is a golden moment, since the children are blessed with excellent memory. It is a time to encourage them to memorize Bible verses. Since it is a time when the children's curiosity increases, family worship should

²Bundick, 41.
include variety and involvement. Children enjoy organizing and leading the spiritual experience. Worship is a valuable time to bring children to Christ, before rejection of moral values begins.

*Church opportunities for ministry.* The church has myriad opportunities to offer assistance. If the congregation is large enough, another support group can be formed. If not, parents will be part of the Neo-Parental or the First Teenager group, depending on their children's age and maturity. How to be creative in family worship, how to empower the children, how to transmit morals and values, and how to choose good friends are some subjects parents would love to consider in a nonthreatening manner within the family of families.

*First Teenager Stage*

The next life stage starts when the first child becomes a teenager. It ends when the first offspring leaves home.

*Characteristics and tasks.* The greatest conflicts within the family are likely to occur when children are adolescents. Two factors contribute: (1) adolescence is a recent creation of our society; and (2) at the very time children are in the difficult period of adolescence, their parents are likely to be reaching mid-life.

In Western society prior to the Industrial Revolution, youth were viewed as
young adults. This is the current view in a number of cultures. In medieval painting children were depicted as miniature adults. They learned to farm or acquired a trade by developing skills through the apprenticeship system. As they lived with and worked under the watchful eye of the master craftsman, apprentices occupied very clear-cut positions. Once the skills were mastered, one was ready for adulthood and marriage.

It is only within the last three hundred years that childhood has come to be recognized as a distinct stage of development. During that time children have come to be viewed as being qualitatively and not just quantitatively different from adults. They do not think like adults, they do not have a mature conscience, nor do they view reality in the same way.

This change came as a result of four different factors. The first was urbanization and industrialization. With the development of factories, the apprenticeship system declined. Children began to leave their homes in order to find work in urban factories. Because of the very low pay, and the lack of a need to achieve a high degree of skills, they became alienated from the rest of the society. Second, most jobs were outside the home, so parents were unable to provide a visible work model for their children. This is still true for the most part. Third, the extended family has been replaced by the nuclear family because of the high mobility of families forced to find place of work. A fourth factor is the affluence of youth. Either because they earn their

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2 Balswick and Balswick, 134, 135.

3 Ibid., 134.
own money or because their parents give them money, many youth possess a degree of independence not experienced by any previous generation.

In societies where youth are given meaningful, clearly defined roles to play, they have a clear sense of who they are. In our society, adolescents experience an identity crisis.

The creation of an adolescent subculture is an attempt to establish identity. One learns from peer groups to wear the right clothes, affect the right hairstyle, play the in music, speak the in language. The greater the adolescent’s insecurity, the greater the slavish obedience to doing all the right things as sanctioned by the peer group.1

While the youth are struggling with a lack of identity, parents are experiencing the mid-life crisis. Because of the rapid changes that are taking place in their world, parents suffer from lack of intimacy in their relationship and lack of identity in their workplace. They may realize that the job they were trained to do, and have been doing for most of their adult life, is becoming obsolete. Guernsey adds that mid-life crisis is also caused by the awareness that parents are beginning to experience the limitations of their own age.2

The main family task of the First Teenager Stage is to increase the flexibility and permeability of its boundaries. Parents can no longer maintain complete control of children. Because youngsters are in a greater contact with friends, the family is bombarded by a whole array of new values. Most of the adolescent heroes come from outside the family environment.

1Ibid., 137.

2Guernsey, 52.
At the same time, teenagers have a great need to know that there are rules, even though they may not agree with them. Adolescent rebellion comes more as a result of parental unhappiness, unwise child-rearing practices, unsatisfactory division of authority between mother and father, and lack of an appropriate amount of cohesion within the home than from the presence or absence of rules.¹

Because adolescents challenge their parents' authority, it is not surprising to find an increase in marital conflict.² Therefore parents should reinvent their marriage. As the teens get more involved outside the family, parents can spend more quality and quantity time together and for each other's interests.

For the Christian family that wishes to pass the adults' values to the children, this stage is the most difficult. Transitions, temptations, and independence are words that reflect the stage of the youngsters. Therefore, parents must remember that if they have waited until now to begin the religious formation of their children, there is little change to be obtained. This is the time when parents can see if the children have adopted the values they have tried to instill in them. Family worship should include meaningful application to the adolescent's daily life.

Church opportunities for ministry. The church's ministry to families in the First Teenager Stage is to provide meaningful networks of support so that the normal storms


of these years can be weathered appropriately and with dignity. The church can also provide meaningful ministries for the adolescents. Since adolescents are eager to have heroes, the church could provide young adults who can minister to them in such a way that the youngsters would like to imitate them.

**Maturing Years**

The Maturing Years constitute the third cluster of the life cycle of the family. It is a time of transition. In this span children leave home, life takes on new meaning with retirement, and often the loss of a spouse takes place.

*The Empty Nest Stage*

The Empty Nest Stage begins when the first child leaves home and ends at retirement. This phase is the newest and longest of all cycles of the family. The duration depends on the age span of the children and their desire to be on their own.

*Characteristics and tasks.* This phase is marked by a number of exits and entries of family members. It is the time when children leave home, but return with spouses and children. It is the stage when older parents often become ill or die. It is a time when meaningful new activities must be found. It is the time, second only to the early years of marriage, when the incidence of marriage breakdown is high.¹

The issue of responsibility brings two different dimensions into the empty nest period. First, parents often have the responsibility of their own aging parents. Second,

¹Waldrond-Skinner, 57.
parents have responsibilities toward their children. They become in-laws, then grandparents, or else receive their children back into the home sometime during their late twenties. George Barna, in his recent book *The Future of the American Family*, found a new pattern: "One of the more intriguing patterns of recent years is that of never-married adults abandoning their independence to move in with their parents."

Major changes also occur in the couple's relationship as opportunities for increased intimacy present themselves.

For some families this stage is seen as a time of fruition and completion and as a second opportunity to consolidate or expand by exploring new avenues and new roles. For others it leads to disruption, a sense of emptiness and overwhelming loss, depression, and general disintegration.²

In addition, the family system's boundaries expand to include new members.

Passing this stage successfully depends to a great degree on parenting style.

Paulina McCullough and Sandra Rutenberg state:

The existence of positive relationships with grown children represents the culmination of a long process of gradually 'letting go,' starting in childhood, gaining momentum in adolescence, and leading to some kind of physical separation of the young adult through college and work.³

Two unhealthy extremes of launching the children are "keeping them in" and "cutting them off." Referring to the first, Maureen Solomon comments, "If the solidification of the marriage has not taken place and reinvestment is not possible, the

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¹Barna, 122.

²Carter and McGoldrick, 19.

family usually mobilizes itself... to hold on to the last child."

The opposite is the "cutting off." Cutoff can look like emancipation but emotional dependence drives the process. It may be triggered by any event, for example, the marriage of a young adult that is opposed by the parents.

The Empty Nest Stage includes the happy times as grandparents. Neugarten and Weinstein, in their research on American grandparents, have classified five grandparenting styles:

1. Formal--Definite boundaries between parents' and grandparents' roles with grandparents interacting infrequently and doing little babysitting.
2. Fun Seeker--The grandparents take the children on outings or come over to play with them. They need the play as much as the children.
3. Second Parent--Grandmothers often take over while daughter or daughter-in-law works or is incapacitated.
4. Family Sage--Grandparents, especially grandfather, serve as a reservoir of family wisdom and teacher of special skills.
5. Distant Figure--Benevolent but infrequent visitor who appear for family rituals or holidays.2

Both members of the Christian couple have had the opportunity to deepen their relationship with God through their own parenting experience. Now is a time when the spouses can provide the needed support to the younger generation through such ways as babysitting, modeling, and housekeeping.


Church opportunities for ministry. The opportunity for ministry by the church as a family of families is to provide the adult who is in this stage with an environment which fosters deep friendship. When the children leave, friends become family. As Guernsey puts it, "There are no better friends than those who share a common commitment to Christ."\(^1\) Since friendship takes time, the church could provide ministry opportunities where they can spend time talking and serving others at the same time.

The Retirement Stage

Retirement is the final stage for intact, two-parent-plus-children families. It begins with retirement and ends with the death of one of the spouses. It is the stage when the family reaches maturity.

Characteristics and tasks. The main tasks in this stage relate to adjusting to retirement itself. Retirement usually brings a change in the daily routine, forcing spouses to be together more. Since there is no work to perform, retired adults need to find a sense of usefulness in their new stage of life. If one spouse dies, there is the task of adjusting to life without a partner. Failing health also requires adjustment.\(^2\) Froma Walsh indicates that "past and current family relationships play a critical role in the resolution of the major psychosocial task of later life, the achievement of a sense of

\(^1\) Guernsey, 56.

\(^2\) Froma Walsh, Normal Family Processes (New York: Guildford, 1982), 206.
integrity versus despair regarding the acceptance of one's own life and death."

The Christian couple who enjoys together the golden years continues to have opportunities to minister to their children and grandchildren. Since they have time for introspection, they can bring to the offspring’s attention the many ways God cares for each of them.

Church opportunities for ministry. The church can minister to and receive the ministry of the retirees of the congregation. Those who cope best with aging and the losses of the winter years seem to be those who have developed a system of mutual aid in which they are able to give aid and comfort to others and to receive aid and comfort as well. The system of mutual assistance works best when it is inter-generational, that is, when it allows aid to be given and received across the generations. A system of mutual assistance alleviates the problem of isolation, which commonly affects older people.

Single Years

The Single Years are not a developmental stage in the same way the other stages


2Guernsey, 56.

3For additional church opportunities, see Rogelio Nonini, "La importancia del adulto mayor en la iglesia," in La edad olvidada en la iglesia, ed. Pablo Nonini (Buenos Aires: Roberto Grancharoff, 1997), 44-60; and Pablo Nonini, ed., "Plan Jetro," in La edad olvidada en la iglesia, 61-68.
are. Guernsey calls them "an anomaly." However, "they must be included . . . but for the purpose of drawing special attention to their unique situations."\(^1\)

The Single Years are unique in that they include people who have deviated from the traditional norm of the nuclear family. Paradoxically, although they are not the norm, they are a growing group in society and the church.\(^2\) A growing proportion of the population is single, either never married or formerly married. People of the Single Years should be taken into account if the church is to be the family of families.

For the church to serve singles better, two different patterns should be merged. It is good for singles to be integrated into the life of the church because they are normal people like everybody else; on the other hand, it is appropriate to focus on their particular needs.

**Single Person Stage**

The single people most in need of help are those thirty or older, divorced, widowed, or never married. The Single Person Stage begins when an adult decides to stay single for a period of his or her life, and ends when his or her marital status changes.

*Characteristics and tasks.* The major task single people deal with is rootlessness. Many times they have never really settled down and established firm and

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\(^1\)Ibid., 57.

\(^2\)Barna notes that "before they reach the age of eighteen, two out of three children born this year will live in a single-parent household." Barna, 23.
continuing relationships. They can be habitually disconnected. As a result of rootlessness, they have a desperate need for belonging. In a society where social life is geared to couples, a single feels "different."  

If the single is divorced, the initial task is to accept the part he or she played in the failure of the marriage. Further, they must deal with other issues, such as custody and visitation of children, finances, and division of material belongings. Another important task is to maintain constructive contact with the extended families of both partners, and develop a different relationship with the former spouse. They must also achieve psychological stability and decide whether to make the decision to love again in the future.

Another task they need to work out is the issue of why they are single. If it is by personal choice, then comes the issue of what to do with the time that others spend in marriage. Single individuals need to build a social network, which includes a healthy connection with the family of origin and the extended family. If singlehood is due to negative personality characteristics or to negative qualities of previous relationships, the task is to work to change those characteristics or qualities.

Sexuality is another issue to handle. Christian expectations in the area of sexuality are different from those of society in general. Christian singles may find it difficult to conserve purity.

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1Guernsey, 59.

2Ibid.
The Christian single has more time to dedicate energies to the mission of proclaiming the gospel. Paul, considering the difficult times that lay ahead, the nearness of the end, and the vast mission to fulfill, advised the unmarried and widows in Corinth: "It is good for them if they remain even as I am" (1 Cor 7:8). However, Paul's advice continues in the following verse: "if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry" (1 Cor 7:9).

Church opportunities for ministry. The church has a ministry for singles. The ministry of the church should be inclusive rather than exclusive. The church should emphasize relationships that are broader than marriage and parenting. Although not all are married or have children, in Christ all are brothers and sisters, which is, according to Guernsey, the relationship that lasts the longest of all and has the greatest permanence.¹

Sports teams have chanted "we are family" and the world was impressed. The church must do more than chant; we must become family and in becoming family the single person will both have a people to belong to and a place to fit.

Single Parent Stage

Another aspect of the Single Years cluster is single parenthood. Single parents may be in this situation by choice or as the result of circumstances beyond their control.

Characteristics and tasks. The single parent is asked to perform the impossible task of being both mother and father to the children. Although the occurrence of single-parent families headed by a father is growing, in most cases it is the mother who has that impossible responsibility. She must try to be the provider and the disciplinarian as well as the care-giver and the comforter. According to Barna, single parents are different from the typical married parent. They tend to be younger, less educated, with a lower income level, and face greater difficulties in finding employment that provides stable hours and good pay.¹

The Christian single parent will benefit from remembering that he or she is not alone in the vast task he or she faces. God will be the Caregiver, the Comforter, the Provider, and the Disciplinarian. But the single parent has to remember that God alone will not do the tasks; He needs willing human vessels to execute His infinite plans. The single parent has the task of transmitting values and forming characters in his or her offspring, to make them heavenly citizens. By transmitting wholesome values, providing consistent and fair discipline, and creating in the child a sense of accountability for his or her behavior, a parent can instill in each child a strong, loving

¹See Barna, 107.

²Ibid., 107-108.
character.

Church opportunities for ministry. The church has a great opportunity to exhibit the servant qualities of Christ. Many single-parent families suffer from inadequate or dysfunctional extended families. They are alone with an enormous task. The opportunity for the church is to become family to them by support-group ministry, by responding to the single parent's specific concrete needs, and by offering sound and godly advice through programs, classes, or seminars.

In summary, presently there is no organism or institution helping the family system effectively enough in their transit through the different family life stages. The extended family system has been lost for many Americans, the schools are impotent, and the government is immobilized. And today, the needs of families are as great as ever.

Life cycle role changes are mostly predictable. The church can readily provide the information, skills, and motivation to meet the changes in the family.

Dennis Guernsey suggests a strategy for the church to start filling this vacuum:

First, the church that intends to launch a ministry to families needs not begin with a full-orbed organization. What is important is to start somewhere. Second, wherever you begin, someone needs to "own" the program; someone needs to have ultimate responsibility for its organization. Third, small groups probably provide the most natural primary relationships for the discussion of these stage-related issues. Fourth, the material is probably discussed best in informal settings--a living room, over dining room tables, on camping trips, etc. Fifth, who can lead it? Who can best communicate these issues and develop the kind of relationships within the nitty-gritty matters of life can be processed? We must seek a new kind of "expert." One who has experienced the realities of a particular stage and can speak with some kind of authority, even the authority of one who made mistakes. . . . They need not be perfect and probably will be more effective if they lead from
a position of vulnerability rather than a position of "having it all together." They need not be educated in a formal sense. However, they must be trained. It is the Biblical model of discipline, the older teaching the younger. We must look for those men and women in our congregations who can disciple best. They are the "experts."¹

The special place the church occupies in the lives of their members and also in the life of the community provides a great opportunity to minister to the family and to individuals in all their life stages.

¹Guernsey, 62-63.
CHAPTER IV

THE HISPANIC FAMILY IN NORTH AMERICA

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the Hispanic American family. However, in order to understand the family, the general situation of Hispanics in the United States must first be explored. The last section of the chapter contains an attempt to formulate the stages of the lower-middle-class Hispanic American family life cycle.

Thomas Weyr, in the opening statement of his book *Hispanic U.S.A.: Breaking the Melting Pot*, summarized what Hispanic Americans consider themselves to be:

Hispanics are unlike any other previous group of immigrants. Perhaps because so many do not consider themselves immigrants at all. They have been in the USA for more than 450 years. They may number 18 million or 20 million or twenty three million, even 30 million. They are establishing Spanish as a second language in the country alongside English. Hispanics are constructing a new culture and a new consciousness. They are changing the nation. They are breaking the melting pot. They want to assimilate and to remain separate, to be part of the mainstream and to retain their own identity. Not a national identity with a geographic enclave, not another Quebec, but identity conferred by a larger culture of history, myth, geography, religion, education, language, and affair of state.\(^2\)

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\(^1\)The word "Hispanic" is used with the same meaning given by Isidro Lucas: "a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race." Isidro Lucas, *Aqui Estamos* (Chicago: Chicago United, 1978), 3.

Hispanic Americans are an immigrant group that differs from previous immigrations such as the Polish, Italians, or Germans who became part of the "melting pot" of the United States. Hispanic immigrants keep their own language because of the number of Spanish speakers in this country. Hispanics are still entering and leaving American soil, keeping their Hispanic identity in this way; many in fact live "symbiotically with the 'old country,' returning frequently in a kind of 'revolving door' pattern."¹ Mexicans come to work for a season, and then return to their homeland for the rest of the year. Similar patterns are with Puerto Ricans, who are American citizens. Hispanics keep their language in the new country because of the advanced means of communication available today. People keep in touch with friends and relatives in their country of origin by telephone. There are many Hispanic radio and television stations in the United States. Hispanics keep their language because of today's active commerce with Latin America countries.

**Demographic Profile of Hispanics in the United States**

**Number**

During the last two decades the Hispanic population in the United States has increased dramatically. For each of the last two censuses, the counts exceeded expectations by more than a million. The 1990 census reported that Hispanic residents

in the U.S. numbered 22.4 million.\textsuperscript{1} 9 percent of the total population, which makes them the second largest minority group in the United States, smaller only than Blacks who comprise 12 percent of all Americans.\textsuperscript{2} More than half of the 22 million Hispanics counted by the 1990 census were added during the last two decades. "The growth of the Hispanic population has made the United States the fifth largest Spanish-speaking country in the world."\textsuperscript{3}

There is controversy over the accuracy of the census figures. According to the 1990 census, three-quarters of those considered Hispanics were only Hispanic by origin. But, the same census points out that 12.5 percent of Hispanics speak only English at home; an equal amount speaks both but prefers English; and 75 percent speak only Spanish or prefer to speak that language at home.\textsuperscript{4} In addition, more than three million Puerto Ricans are citizens of the United States, but were not included. Therefore, the

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\textsuperscript{2}Hispanic Policy Development Project, \textit{The Hispanic Almanac} (New York: Hispanic Policy Development Project, 1987), 22.
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number of Hispanics may be larger than that given by the 1990 census.¹

Justo González, a Methodist theologian and church historian, affirms that if all the United States borders would close to immigrants, Hispanic population growth would continue at double the national rate. Today Hispanic growth is twice that of the Baby Boomer generation growth. Hispanic population growth is decreasing, and by 2010 it will be at the level of the Baby Boomers, while the rest of the population growth will be zero.²

Given the unabated trend of immigration from "Mexico, Central and South America and the relatively young age structure of current Hispanic residents, guaranteeing a higher fertility rate than for other Americans, the Hispanic population is expected to reach 30 million by the year 2000, the present level of black Americans, and 47 million by the year 2020, nearly 15 percent of the total U.S. population."³

¹See Manuel Ortiz, The Hispanic Challenge: Opportunities Confronting the Church (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 27.

²González, "Hispanic Ministry." According to Diaz-Stevens and Stevens-Arroyo, "Latino birthrates are higher than in the general U.S. population and are the principal reason for yearly increases in the number of Latinos. When island Puerto Ricans are included, nearly 70 percent of Latinos in 1990 were born as U.S. citizens." Ana Maria Díaz-Stevens and Anthony Stevens-Arroyo, Recognizing the Latino Resurgence in U.S. Religion (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1989), 20.

Distribution

Cities, with their ethnic diversity, high population density, and quantitative growth, provide a living place for most Hispanics in the United States.

Cities in themselves are not unfamiliar to Hispanic families, but U.S. cities bring a cultural clash that often leads to fear and polarization. According to González, "in 1980, 50 percent of all Hispanics lived in central cities, with an additional 37 percent living in metropolitan areas . . . for a total of 87 percent urban dwellers."¹ By the 1990 census, the percentage of urban U.S. Hispanics had grown to 91.4 percent.²

States with the largest concentration of Hispanics are California, with 34 percent of its population; Texas, with 19 percent; and New York, with 10 percent. The Western states account for nearly half the Hispanic residents in the nation.

Economics

In 1990 the average income for non-Hispanic families was $43,735. At the same time the average income for Hispanic families was only $29,311.³ This means that the average Hispanic family earned over $14,000 less in 1990 that the average non-Hispanic family. Since Hispanic families are larger than non-Hispanic families, the

family income must serve more people: this would indicate an even lower per capita income than the official figures show. Hispanic women report the lowest weekly wages of any major group in the labor force, and the number of the Hispanic households headed by a woman with no husband was 23.8 percent in 1991.¹

Ortiz points out, that "in spite of so much poverty, however, the Hispanic community in the United States has more buying power than all 73 million people in Mexico."² This paradox explains in part why migration continues at such a high rate when conditions in the United States seem so negative for Hispanics.

**Education**

Unfortunately, Hispanics lag far behind non-Hispanics in achieving average educational skills. Only 51 percent of Hispanics complete four years of high school, compared to 77 percent of the total population in 1991.³ The dropout rate among Hispanics is at least three times higher than among non-Hispanic Whites.⁴ González pointed out that in education as well as in finances the Hispanic population is usually two and a half times lower than the rest of the population. That means that if the general unemployment rate is 9 percent, the Hispanics will have a 24 percent

¹González, *The Theological Education*, 27. See also Díaz-Stevens and Stevens-Arroyo, 22-24.

²Ortiz, 30.

³U.S. Bureau of the Census, Series P-20, No. 455, 10.

unemployment rate. González particularly singled out the area of pastoral formation, noting that in accredited seminaries only 2 percent of the student body are Hispanics, in spite of the blossoming church growth in Hispanic churches. "There is only one Hispanic woman with a Ph.D. in theology, and not more than two dozen men with similar degrees, in the United States."¹

Country of Origin

On the basis of the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey of 1988, the Hispanic population by country of origin is divided into Mexicans (62 percent), Puerto Ricans (13 percent), Cubans (5 percent), Central and South Americans (12 percent), and other Hispanics (8 percent).² The last category is comprised primarily of Hispanics of mixed parental origin and those of Spanish ancestry who have resided in the Southwestern states for generations.³

Specific subgroups within the Hispanic population tend to concentrate in certain areas. Mexican Americans are more likely to reside in California, Texas, and Illinois, while Puerto Ricans settle in New York, New Jersey, and Illinois. Cubans live in Florida, and the "other" subgroups are found mainly in California, New York, and New

¹González, "Hispanic Ministry."


³Lee and Potvin, 33.
There is a tendency in the United States to identify Hispanics as being all of one race. However, Joseph Fitzpatrick points out: "Mexicans and some Central and South Americans come from Indian or Mestizo background. Cubans of the 1960 migration and other South Americans are largely Caucasoid. Puerto Ricans and Dominicans range in color from completely white to completely black."2

Although discrimination is present in all areas of the Caribbean and Central and South America, it is expressed in different ways than in the United States. There it is closely associated with consciousness of social class differences; here it has more to do with color.3

Hispanics differentiate American Blacks from Blacks of their own nationality group. Among the mixture of white, brown, or black people which constitute the Hispanics, there is little hostility shown one to another.

**Age Distribution**

The Hispanic population is a very young population in contrast to the general population of the nation. The median age of the general population in 1990 was

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3Ibid.
reported at 32.2 years of age.\textsuperscript{1} Among the Mexican Americans the median age was 23.9, and that of Puerto Ricans, 24.9,\textsuperscript{2} a little over seven years younger than that of the general population. A younger population is the consequence of high birth rates and of recent migration, which is usually selective of young adults.\textsuperscript{3}

Religion

Statistics on religious membership are somehow difficult to verify because the census of the United States does not ask about religious affiliation. Lee and Potvin expressed the changing pattern of religious practices this way: "It is generally believed that the overwhelming majority of Hispanics in the nation are Catholic. While the proportion is indeed quite large, it has been steadily decreasing in recent years, from 77 percent in 1972 to 72 percent in 1989."\textsuperscript{4} According to the National Survey of Religious Identification (NSRI), 66 percent identify themselves as Catholics and 24 percent as Protestants.\textsuperscript{5}

Protestantism is highest among Puerto Ricans and lowest among Cubans. Among the Protestants, Baptists occupy the first place (7.4 percent), followed by the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{2}Frank L. Schick and Rene Schick, eds., \textit{Statistical Handbook on U.S. Hispanics} (Phoenix: Onyx, 1991), 5.
\item \textsuperscript{3}Lee and Potvin, 37.
\item \textsuperscript{4}Ibid., 39.
\item \textsuperscript{5}Díaz-Stevens and Stevens-Arroyo, 35.
\end{itemize}
Christian Church with 5.2 percent.\(^1\) According to a González and La Velle telephone survey, religion was found “more important to the Latino poor (86 percent) than to those earning more than $40,000 a year, of whom only 61 percent said that religion was important to them.”\(^2\)

Acculturation

Child observed that individuals who are caught between two cultures experience severe value conflicts. People in transition typically adopted one of three reactions. Rebels are noted for desire to establish themselves as Americans and dissociate themselves from the labels of folk culture. Those considered part of the in-group are characterized by a tendency to strive for affiliation with their previous culture and by an express hostility to the symbols of the American group. The third group, the apathetic, attempt to escape conflict by distorting memory or perception so that arousal tendencies to seek affiliation with either group are reduced.\(^3\)

Similar results were found in a study among Mexican Americans. Two groups were found in this study, the conservative and the anglicized. The conservatives are described as being hostile toward Anglos and suspicious of individuals outside their family group. Anglicized Mexican Americans tend to become alienated from their parents and often suffer severe health problems such as dizziness, vomiting, fever, and


\(^2\)Quoted by Diaz-Stevens and Stevens-Arroyo, 36-38.

memory loss, and a higher degree of anxiety, fear, and guilt.¹

Individuals within the in-group or anglicized people, using the terms of Charles Negy, have been acculturated. Acculturation refers to "the transferring of culture from one group of people to another group in response to contact with one another."² It is the "process of change experienced by minority group members toward the adoption of a majority group's culture."³

Negy found that the classical measures used to determine a person's degree of acculturation, language preference, and generation status may have two inherent problems. First, the assumption that the extent to which Hispanic-Americans master the English language strongly correlates with their adoption of Anglo-American beliefs and behaviors holds for some but not for others. Second, although a long stay should logically be associated with an increase of acculturation, numerous Hispanic-Americans reside in areas⁴ where, despite being within the United States' boundary for generations, Spanish is the predominant language and the majority of residents share similar familial, religious, and other cultural values commonly associated with traditional Hispanic or


⁴For example, southern Texas along the Mexican border or East Los Angeles.
Mexican culture. In general terms, the further the immigrant families get from the "old country" ideas and values, the more likely they are to embrace the prevailing perspectives of the culture in which they live. Bund's theory of acculturation postulates that "many Hispanics may acculturate towards the 'Barrio culture' rather than gravitate towards customs and beliefs of the Anglo-American culture."

Within the United States, where Anglo-Americans constitute the majority group, those of non-Anglo-American backgrounds are said to have become acculturated to the American lifestyle when they have acquired the language, customs, and values of the Anglo-American culture. Variations in acculturation should be strongly associated with variations in family and socialization, as Negy correctly pointed out. Ramirez developed a "Family Attitude Scale" which tapped into values thought to be relatively more important to Hispanics than to Anglo-Americans. He categorized those items in eight dimensions: loyalty to the family, strictness of child rearing, respect for adults, etc.

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1Negy, 1211. William Madsen finds that the organization of the Mexican-American family possesses many characteristics in common with the Mexican family. The Mexican-American family has retained the features of father dominance, masculine superiority, strict discipline of children, separation of sex roles, and emphasis on submission and obedience to authority figures, which also characterized the Mexican family. Madsen, The Mexican-Americans of South Texas (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), 48.

2Such conclusions have been drawn by various analysts based on a number of studies. See Daniel Yankelovich, Spanish USA, 1984: A Study of the Hispanic Market (New York: Yankelovich, Skelley and White, 1984).


4Negy, 1216.
separation of the sex-roles, male superiority, time orientation, religiosity, and cooperation versus competition.¹

A summary of traditional Mexican-American and Mexican-by-origin values will illustrate the current changing make-up of the Hispanic family, as caused by the acculturation phenomenon. According to Nathan Murillo, a psychologist, the major Hispanic cultural values are:

a) Material objects are usually seen as necessities and not ends in themselves.
b) Work is viewed as necessary for survival but not as a value in itself.
c) Higher value is assigned to activities other than work.
d) It is much more valuable to experience things directly through intellectual awareness and through emotional experience rather than indirectly through past accomplishments and accumulation of wealth.
e) Difference between the Mexican-American and Protestant-ethic American way of viewing time.
f) The Anglo is taught to value openness, frankness, and directness, while the traditional Latin approach is to use diplomacy and tactfulness when communicating with another individual.
g) The Anglo-American style of kidding can be offensive to the Mexican American who interprets and reacts negatively.
h) The Mexican American has a penchant towards utilizing his "full range of psychological senses to experience things about him . . . to touch, taste, feel or be close to an object or person on which his attention is focused."²

The church can enhance the Hispanic culture and values by encouraging Hispanic families to maintain their extended family ties. "The value of having an


extended family system has been well documented."1 Broader family relationships often prove to be helpful in transmitting important values, in supporting the efforts of young families, and in passing on a sense of heritage. The church should also encourage Hispanic families to convey their cultural heritage to their children. The values that Hispanics bring to America from their homelands not only make them unique but also shelter them from the often bankrupt ideas pushed at them by contemporary American society. The church should applaud their traditions that share similarities with biblical concepts. Rather than urging these people to become more like White, middle-class Americans, the church would be wise to appreciate and celebrate their uniqueness.

The Hispanic Family in the United States

While Hispanics share certain characteristics, they also have differences. For example, Cubans, who migrated to the United States in the 1960s, are different from other Hispanic groups in terms of economic and social standing. They are older, better educated, and richer as a group. They receive more help through various forms of government aid that any other Hispanic group. Mexicans are more family oriented and machistas than any other Hispanic group. Puerto Ricans, as U.S. citizens, have more mobility because they consider themselves as people in transition. They experience

1See Barna, 168.
notably more marital problems than other Hispanic groups.¹

Notwithstanding the differences among distinct Hispanic groups, there are similarities in values such as family and social support, gender roles, and parenting responsibilities. Since the largest number of Hispanics in the United States are those who come from a Mexican origin, emphasis will be given to the values and traditions of Mexican-Americans.

Among the factors that contribute to the formation of the Hispanic people in the United States, none is more important that their commitment to the family. The family is the central social group. According to Barna's research, "eight out of ten believe that God intended marriage to last a lifetime."² The family is seen as a "sanctuary in a hostile world full of envy and greed."³ The family is a source of emotional and material support.

As the family protects, so it demands. Every member of the family system is regarded as a "walking symbol of his family."⁴ To bring shame on one's family is a major mistake as a result of which all its members will suffer.


²Barna, 162.

³Madsen, 46.

⁴Ibid.
Kinship Support

The bond between parents and children not only includes the nuclear family but spans three generations. Grandparents enjoy respect and obedience, as do the parents' brothers and sisters. Uncles and aunts are well known and frequently visited. Leo Chavez noted: "Migratory labor trips are an occasion for visiting relatives in other parts of the country. It is common practice to plan the itinerary so as to include communities where relatives live." Families of Mexican origin are extended to include other adults more than most American households. As Chavez wrote, "Immigrants from Mexico are particularly involved in, and often dependent on, extended family networks."

Charles Mindel concluded that non-Hispanics, starting at the beginning of the dyad system, migrate away from kin networks while Hispanics migrate toward them. This is one reason why Hispanics live mainly in big cities where most of their kin network exists. Thus "close kinship ties are not merely a convenient form of aid but a well-known, enjoyable, and expected set of practices and attitudes." Alien status determines family links. Undocumented people, that is, those who do not have legal papers to be in the United States, tend to extend their families laterally, that is, "the additional relative is of the same kinship generation, for example,

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1Ibid., 48.


a brother, a sister, a cousin.\textsuperscript{1} The legal immigrants, such as Mexican-Americans, move toward upward extension, meaning that those who reside in a household include mother, father, aunt, or uncle.

The \textit{Compadre}

The range of kinship is extended beyond genetic links by the institution known as \textit{compadre} or godfather. \textit{Compadres} are sponsors who assume carefully defined roles in a religious ceremony establishing ritual kinship. \textit{Compadres} are selected for baptism, confirmation, weddings, and for the blessing of a new house. Parents try to choose godfathers who are respected, honorable, and good-hearted. Among Mexican-Americans and Mexican descendents, it is considered a mistake to choose a \textit{compadre} of higher social and economic status than oneself.\textsuperscript{2} Similar to the Mexican \textit{compadre} is the \textit{padrino} of the Puerto Ricans. According to Fitzpatrick, the Puerto Rican \textit{padrino} serves similar functions but from a different social position: "a person strategically placed in a higher position of the social structure to serve, when the need appears, as an intermediary between the poor person that chose him, who has neither sophistication nor influence, and the larger society of law, government, employment, and service."\textsuperscript{3}

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\textsuperscript{1}Leo Chavez, "Households, Migration, and Labor Market Participation: The Adaptation of Mexicans to Life in the United States," \textit{Urban Anthropology} 14 (Fall 1985): 323.

\textsuperscript{2}Madsen, \textit{The Mexican-Americans}, 48, 49.

\textsuperscript{3}Fitzpatrick, 227.
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Machismo

For the Mexican-American or the Mexican born, machismo\(^1\) has two different meanings. One has to do with the male desire to prove himself outside the home, to be a conquistador. The Mexican cultural complex implies that a macho is one who commands respect by virtue of his sexual prowess. The second meaning has to do with control of what is inside the home, the quality of the "bullfighter." Contrary to the meanings previously stated of machismo, Moore correctly asserted that the macho person "is not only a good and loving provider but one who commands respect by virtue of his steadfastness and moral strength."\(^2\)

For Puerto Rican people, machismo has a somewhat different meaning. According to Fitzpatrick, it is associated with sexual prowess, influence, and power over women reflected in a "vigorous romanticism and a jealous guarding of sweetheart or wife, or in premarital and extramarital relationships... Or it is linked to a style of personal daring by which one faces challenge, danger, and threat with calm and self-possession."\(^3\)

The Mexican-American young husband must show his male acquaintances that he has more sexual energy than his wife can accommodate. To prove his prowess, he often continues the sexual hunt of his premarital days. Second, he may demonstrate his

\(^1\)For additional reference to machismo, see J. Mayone Stycos, Family and Fertility in Puerto Rico (New York: Columbia University, 1955), 34-36.

\(^2\)Moore, 19.

\(^3\)Fitzpatrick, 227.
physical and financial resources by visiting Boys' Town with his drinking companions 
after an evening in a tavern. Or third, the most convincing way of proving machismo 
and financial stability is to keep a mistress in a second household.

Mexican-American society has a set of guidelines to prevent the male from 
threatening his home life with extramarital adventures. Foremost, is the community's 
expectation that a husband will not allow any activity to interfere with his obligations to 
his wife and children. If the welfare of his family diminishes as a result of his sexual 
activity outside the home, the husband must face social disapproval and the intercession 
of his in-laws. The second check mark is when exaggerated dedication to sex at the 
expense of friendship is also demonstrated. A third check on extramarital excesses is 
fear of venereal diseases. "A man who picks up a sexual disease and infects his wife is 
degraded forever."1

While husbands are accepted and even expected to show promiscuity, on the part 
of the wife it will be considered a heinous crime. "One sexual indiscretion inevitably 
will lead to a life of complete sexual abandonment."2 Mexican-American culture 
sharply defines the distinction between "good" and "bad" women.3 "Bad" women are 
those who provide husbands the escapism to his sexual prowess. "Good" women are 
the feminine group that constitutes the macho's family system.

1Madsen, The Mexican-Americans, 51.

2Ibid.

3Moore, 20.
Divorce

Barna points out: "Given the higher priority Hispanics place upon marriage and family, it is not surprising to learn that the divorce rate among Hispanics is lower than among the Anglo population." However, today's reality is not that optimistic: the divorce rate among Hispanics is increasing. It cannot really be said that the Hispanic marriage institution is stronger than other cultures because when separation is included in marital disruption, differences with the general population almost disappear.

Status of Women

Marital problems caused by sexual matters are meager compared to the role conflicts brought about by growing Anglo influences. The husband's authority and the wife's submissiveness are both changing in response to the Anglo example. Role conflict is "weak in the lower-lower class and begins to emerge in the upper-lower class." Therefore, it is primarily a middle-class phenomenon.

Wives who have been influenced by the Anglo example often try to improve their subordinate status by seeking an equal voice in family decision-making. "Hispanic

1Barna, 162.
4Madsen, The Mexican-Americans, 52.
women attain greater personal autonomy via external employment."¹ The gainful employment of Hispanic women outside the home is a common feature of Hispanic families. But "this is not a response to the pressure for upward mobility, as is the case with American families; it is more often the pressure for survival."²

Traditional husbands may help their wives with housekeeping tasks when they are working outside the home, but often they are unhappy about it.³ In addition, changes within the family that tend toward egalitarianism may bring opprobrium on the husband as having given in to a domineering wife.⁴

The outside financial resources that wives bring to the family are changing the family structure among Hispanics. Women gossip among themselves about the abusive husband, and receive support from one another to change the course of action. Women also go outside the home to reach for educational achievements. Women, as a result of greater contact with the Anglo-American culture, want to have a greater sense of independence from the authoritarian role of their spouses.

What is appropriate to the wives as they mingle with the larger culture is difficult for the male to accept because doing so involves a major change of his macho role. Consequentially, lower self-worth among Hispanic males increases as does


²Fitzpatrick, 229.


⁴Moore, 19.
Stages of the Lower-Middle-Class Hispanic-American Family Life Cycle

Characteristics of the intact middle-class American family life cycle are in principle applicable to the lower-middle class Hispanic-American family, but modifications are needed. Hispanics, as other immigrant groups, are integrated to the American culture depending on their economical level. Therefore, middle-class Americans and Hispanics share most of the same characteristics and dynamics explained previously. Differences have to do with the family and acculturation factors that Hispanics confront.

The Hispanic-American family life is somewhat similar to that of Black American low-income families. Although the history of Black and Hispanic groups is different, likeness exists in the function of extended kinship, in the closeness with which adults relate to younger generations, in the use and control of time, and in relationships with neighbors and casual acquaintances. Fulmer stated, "It appears that enough similarities exist between Black and Puerto Rican lower-income families to permit some generalizations." But there are two major circumstances that make them different, and probably will cause them to stay that way in the future: family history in the United States, and the role that religion occupies in the family value system.

1 Ibid.

Although developmental researchers and practitioners begin the cycles of the family with preparation for marriage, a linear development process, I have chosen to begin describing the stages of the Hispanic family with marriage itself. Due to children's dependency on their parents, especially their father, this is more representative of the Hispanic family life cycle. Self-differentiation of mid-teens in the traditional Hispanic-American family is significantly different from the transition researchers describe for other U.S. families. This also contributes to the importance of beginning discussion of the Hispanic family life cycle with marriage. Within Hispanic families, the family life cycle continues from marriage to include parenting, parental influence on the mate-selection process, and the later marriage stage.

Neo-Marital Stage

The neo-Marital Stage begins with the wedding ceremony of the couple, and ends with the arrival of the first child.

Within the home, interpersonal relations are dictated by rules of decorum and respect. Frivolity and disrespectful behavior are threats to the structure of the family relationships. Madsen comments:

While the Mexican born or Mexican American male may be felt a second-class in the Anglo-dominated world, he can be a king in his own home. He is entitled to unquestioning obedience from his wife and children. He is above criticism due to his 'superior' male strength and intelligence. No visitor is ever expected to enter a home or be seated without a specific invitation from the head of the household.¹

*En mi casa mando yo* (In my home, I command) is the byword of the Mexican-American.

¹Madsen, The Mexican-Americans, 51.
American husband. No matter who gives orders outside his home, inside, he is in control.

The wife is expected to give comfort and pleasure to her husband. She must acknowledge his authority and superiority and think of his needs before her own. She is supposed to accept abuse without complaint and avoid resentment of her husband’s pastimes and extramarital affairs.1

Marital conflicts take place because of machismo, divorce, and women’s liberation or egalitarianism. concepts already examined. Of these, the last two cause added marital conflicts because of the new culture in which the couple live. Degree of acculturation is the main cause of these conflicts. While the couple lived in their own country, role assignments were clear. However, changes related to the lifestyle of the adopted country affect them both. If both husband and wife reject or accept the new culture to the same degree, conflicts are limited. On the other hand, the greater the difference in this area, the more conflict a couple is likely to experience.

There are plenty of opportunities for the church to minister to the couple, but the way the family of families would support them should reflect that the dynamics previously mentioned are understood. Hispanic men are afraid of losing control of their home, the only place where they can exercise dominion. The most appropriate environment to convey this in a non-threatening way is by informal, casual dialogues in small group settings where all can share their concerns. Small groups, in addition to

1Ibid., 50.
public presentations and an appropriate role model from church leaders, will help deal
with the acculturation differences the couple experiences at this stage.

Neo-Parental Stage

The Neo-Parental Stage of Hispanic family life begins with the arrival of the first child. It ends when the firstborn reaches puberty.

The role of the mother is to be responsible for the well-being of the children. In order to teach children what is expected from them in life, she seeks counsel from her mother, sisters, and other close female relatives.

The role of the father is to keep the children in line and to punish their transgressions. He often sees his role as that of policing the family to preserve its public image as an integrated and honorable unit.

The relationship between parents and children is relatively permissive during the period of early childhood, with the exception of the lower class where children may be assigned household tasks while both parents work in the fields. The small child is regarded as an angel. He receives adoring affection from mother and father alike. Such behavior is confined to the home.

At the Neo-Parental Stage there are no additional stressors that were not present in the Neo-Marital Stage. And, because of the emphasis motherhood puts on children in the Hispanic culture, even some of the marital conflicts are resting. It is at the time of puberty that the process of acculturation shakes, as never before, the Hispanic family in the U.S.
Since the Hispanic culture puts great emphasis on motherhood, women are anxious to receive orientation, by example and by explanation, of how to be effective mothers. Small groups in the church are suitable for the discussion of these stage-related issues in the most natural primary relationships.

Growing-Up Parental Stage

The Growing-up/Parental Stage starts with the oldest child’s onset of puberty and ability to "reason," and ends at the time when preparation for the oldest child’s marriage takes place. It is in this stage when acculturation differences between parents and children show. It is the most difficult stage of the Hispanic family in the United States because of the challenges the family system receives from the outside environment through the offspring.

The authoritative role of the father becomes clearly crystallized with the arrival of his children's puberty. He avoids demonstration of affection, a change from the previous stage. The father also demands that the children show him respect.

At the time when father appears as the aloof enforcer of the child’s proper behavior, the ties between the mother and child are strengthened. The close affection with both parents which the youngster enjoyed during childhood is now usually limited to the mother. Taking problems to the father may be an admission of misbehavior. And since "worldly problems" or "sinful problems" are not supposed to be taken to the mother, adolescents begin to build even stronger ties with the environment.

1To a great extent, this section follows Madsen, The Mexican-Americans, 53-55.
Children are expected to display great respect to the father. and to show adoration to the mother. "The slightest expression of anger by the father is sufficient to stop the improper behavior. When the children are older, either parent may punish a daughter, but a son is disciplined only by the father, as a rule."!

Brothers and sisters are punished for failing to show respect to each other. Brothers are supposed to stand together in time of trouble and form a protective group for their sisters. The oldest child protects younger brothers and sisters, and the youngsters seek advice from their oldest brother.

During the teen years, female relationships in the home (mother-daughter, and between sisters) are especially close, partly due to the female tendency to group together, and to the custom of protecting the daughter's purity. The teenage daughter of a traditional Mexican-American or Mexican-born family stays home and helps her mother with the housework after school in order to develop her talents as a cook and housekeeper. "She is not allowed to be alone with a boy."2

The case of the teenage boy is different. It is during his teens that he becomes a man, and this transformation takes place outside the home. He spends most of his free time with male friends away from home. Mexican-American youths tend to form loosely knit play associations known as \textit{palomillas}.3 The \textit{palomilla} system is an

\footnotesize

1Ibid., 54.

2Ibid., 55.

3\textit{Palomillas} are not to be confused with \textit{Pachuco} or juvenile gangs. \textit{Palomillas} do not claim territory, develop distinctive dress and speech, play at the fringes of the
informal organization where teenage boys learn to develop interpersonal skills, and to know what life is really all about. The leadership and membership of the group constantly change. Discussions take place in vacant lots or other secluded places, or when age progresses boys go to beer parlors for their gatherings. The younger boys engage in sports and explore new activities, while later they talk about sex and learn a rich variety of dirty jokes. It is inside the palomilla circle where one finds the closest friends, but they do not discuss intimate and confidential matters because they may be enemies later.

The main interest during the life of the teenage boy who participates in palomillas is girls. "A typical pastime is cruising around in a car and admiring the girls. Every palomilla knows of several girls from ‘scandalous’ families who can be dated and seduced. The ‘easiest marks’ are said to be Anglos and anglicized Latin girls."¹

Teens, through their outside environment, learn the Anglo-American individualistic and human-rights approach to life, which are very well taught in schools. At the other side of the spectrum is the Hispanic family. The Hispanic family is family oriented instead of individual oriented. And as such, it does not allow other rights than those already established for the interest of the family’s well-being.

Immigrant families acculturate at a slower pace than their children; this leads to profound intergenerational conflicts. In turn, these conflicts are aggravated by parental law, or openly violate it.

¹Ibid., 58.
efforts to gain control over the children. And children can move even further in the
direction of rejecting parental expectations.¹ As Ortiz stated, "children were forced to
choose one world or the other."² The parents are living in the Hispanic culture in their
homes. The children are being brought up in an American school, where American
values are being presented. A gap is built between two generations.³ Cleveland and
Longaker propose an explanation which seems appropriate: Whenever people who find
themselves caught between two opposing sets of values decide to reject one of the sets,
they become overwhelmed by feelings of guilt and self-derogation. This occurs because
the values rejected are associated with someone important, usually a parent.⁴

Hispanic families have frequently lamented the behavior patterns of even good
boys in the United States. Hispanic parents consider them to be disrespectful.
"American children are taught to be self-reliant, aggressive, and competitive, to ask
'why,' and to stand on their own two feet. A Hispanic child is generally more
submissive."⁵ When the children begin to behave according to the American pattern,
the parents cannot understand it.


²Ortiz, 63.

³Fitzpatrick, 233.


⁵Fitzpatrick, 232.
The generational gap suffered is profound. The change in roles of husband and wife is a serious challenge for the Hispanic family. Even more difficult to cope with is the shift in the role of children. But there is no more severe problem of control in the Mexican-American family system than to provide their unmarried girls the same kind of protection they would have given them back home. When the girls reach their early teens, they wish to do what American girls do, that is, go to dances with boys without a chaperon, and associate freely with girls and boys of the neighborhood or school. But "for a good [traditional] Hispanic father to permit his daughter to go out unprotected is a serious moral failure."¹ In traditional Hispanic towns, when a father has brought his daughters as virgins to marriage, he can hold up his head before his community; he enjoys the esteem and prestige of a good father. To ask the same father to allow his daughters to go free in Chicago, New York, Miami, San Antonio, or Los Angeles is to ask him to do something that the men of his family have considered immoral. It is psychologically almost impossible for him to do this. This tension between parents and daughters is one of the most difficult for Hispanic parents to manage. It is frequently even more complicated because Americans, including school teachers and counselors, advise the parents to allow the girls to go out freely. Statistics tell of the pressure young girls experience between the two cultures when they show that teen pregnancy among Hispanics is increasing.²

¹Ibid., 233.

²McKay, 4.
While the parents' frustration and stress may appear to increase. Olson found that low-acculturation parents were more likely to be low in stress and to be satisfied with family life and spouse personality during the stage of raising pre-adolescent children than acculturated ones.¹

The church can enrich the troubled family system by explaining at the beginning of this stage what parents can expect. The circumplex model may help parents as well as children to understand the effects acculturation may bring into the family system. The church can minister to those troubled families, first by understanding and supporting them with love. The church also may assist by giving the adolescents meaningful activities for them as well as ministries in which they can take responsibility and achieve. Parents will minister better through a non-threatening atmosphere, which can be achieved through a small group.

Pre-Marital Stage

The Pre-Marital Stage starts at the time a young person begins looking for a more serious and intimate friendship with the opposite sex, and ends with the wedding of the couple.

When the time comes for a man to marry, he does not want a girl of the type he has been carnally pursuing. He wants a wife from a family that has protected her

chastity, and trained her for her wifely duties.

In the past, it was common for parents to pick out a suitable girl for their son to marry, but today it is more likely the son will request his parents’ consent to marry a girl of his choice. "If there is reason to suspect that the parents may not consent to the proposed match, the young couple may politely hint at the possibility of elopement. This hint is often sufficient to elicit the consent of the parents even though they may have some reservations about the marriage."

Formal courtship begins when the boy asks the girl's parents for permission to call on her. If permission is granted, he can visit her at home, but never when she is alone. If he chooses, especially when the fear of refusal is high, he can make arrangements through a portador, whose services are secured by his parents. If the request is denied, the couple will elope and stay away until they are welcomed back. If the eloping couple have been married in a civil ceremony, parents frequently will organize a religious wedding ceremony in the church, which, depending on the social class of the families, may include an outdoor barbecue or a party in the ballroom of the largest hotel in the area, where champagne and imported French delicacies will be served. To the traditional Mexican-American family, "it is considered improper to consummate a marriage before the church ceremony."

\[1\text{Ibid.}\]

\[2\text{A portador, which means carrier, is a respected member of the community who may be an older woman of good family or a man of good reputation.}\]

\[3\text{Madsen, The Mexican-Americans, 59.}\]
If possible, the newly married couple establish their own home. And thus the new household follows the patterns of the parents' home in establishing the husband's authority and the wife's submissiveness.

In the church, acculturation must continue to be a central topic in the fourth stage of the Hispanic family. New generations will benefit from seminars on topics such as love, acceptance of individual differences among peers and older people, pitfalls of marriage, communication, and role expectations.

Grown-Up Marriage Stage

The fifth stage of the lower-middle-class Hispanic-American family life cycle starts from the time the first child leaves home and ends at the time when a spouse passes away. Children, because of the lower degrees of differentiation among young people and cultural expectations, stay home until they marry. When they marry and leave home, parents stay close to them not only geographically but emotionally. It is common for a woman to call her parents frequently, especially her mother.

Retirement is not a traumatic age as it is among Americans. Women, in general, have not worked outside home. Men's work required a strong physical body, and by retirement, physical strength is not sufficient for the required tasks. For this reason, most Hispanic-American men look forward to retirement. Another reason for retirement not being as traumatic as among the general American population deals with the strong familial ties; both parents look forward to spending time with their grandchildren. This is the time when grandparents and grandchildren become more
closely bonded.

The loneliness caused by the death of a partner is sensed less because of ties with the extended family. The middle generation is considered responsible for the care of their physically dependent parents. This pattern is more noticeable when one parent has passed away.¹

Church ministry topics to people who are in the Grown-up Marriage Stage will include meaningful primary relationships. These can include small groups, seminars on topics such as the role of grandparents in the transmission of moral principles to the younger generation, the principles involved in rediscovering their marriage, preparation for the absence of a spouse, and the role in relation to the middle generation, especially if they live together. The third area of ministry will be to provide opportunity to minister to others. Those who cope best in this stage are those who have developed a system of mutual aid, that is, they were able to give aid and comfort to others, and, by the same token, were able to receive aid and comfort from others around and close to them.

**Summary**

America's Hispanics are a diverse population that share some very important common threads. They hold in common a similar cultural heritage, with variations.

Even a superficial look at the family structure shows that, in all groups, the traditional family's makeup is stronger than in the Anglo-American culture. Because of economic pressures, differences in acculturation, and the changing role of women in American society, the Hispanic family is changing. These changes can and do cause problems, but major features of the family structure persist and remain a resource to individuals and their communities.

In the coming decade, the attitudes and values of Hispanic families will greatly influence the character of families in the United States. During the latter half of the nineties, the White population will be producing children at a zero population growth rate. At the same time the Hispanic population will grow at a pace well beyond the rate of replacement.

Given their pride in their heritage and their attachment to community, Hispanic families stand a better chance of retaining many of the values and strengths inherent in traditional family systems.

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1Notwithstanding certain permissible generalizations, the Hispanic family has to be seen according to "region, recentness of migration, education, social class, age, urban-rural locale, and cultural assimilation." Angela R. Carrasquillo, Hispanic Children and Youth in the United States (New York: Garland, 1991), 70.

2Zero population growth rate means that there is not enough biological growth to maintain current numbers in the overall population.
CHAPTER V

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

This chapter contains a description of the project. This includes the initial procedures, the training seminars, and the special events organized to build the Family Life Ministry Department among the Hispanic churches in the Michigan Conference.

Initial Procedures

In 1995 the Michigan Conference had seven Spanish churches and one Spanish company. Three were located in the Grand Rapids area (Grand Rapids Central, Wyoming, and Maranatha), while the others were spread over the southern part of the State. One part-time and four full-time pastors ministered to these congregations. In 1995 the total membership for the Hispanic congregations was 971. The membership, location or name of each congregation, and the name of each pastor can be seen in table 2.

Approval of Program

Approval for the project was given by Michigan Conference officers on December 28, 1994. Before that, one part-time and three full-time pastors of Spanish churches in the Michigan Conference were asked if they saw a need to form a ministry...
to improve family dynamics in their churches. The pastors' responses were affirmative and supportive.

TABLE 2
GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT SPANISH CHURCHES IN MICHIGAN CONFERENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Congregation</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Name of Pastor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berrien Springs Spanish Church</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>Jorge Mayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detroit Spanish Church</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>David García-Marenko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Rapids Central Spanish Church</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>Eduardo Valdés</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holland Spanish Church</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Héctor Jurado</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lansing Spanish Church</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>David García-Marenko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence Spanish Company</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Jorge Mayer/Pedro Pérez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maranatha Spanish Church</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>Héctor Jurado</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming Spanish Church</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>Eduardo Valdés</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Selection of Church Family Life Co-directors (CFLDs)

It was important to use an appropriate selection process because there was no previous experience in the churches regarding the Family Life Department. The pastors were asked to bring to the local church board the name or names of leaders who would meet the following criteria:
1. The leaders would preferably be a married couple, in order to provide male and female perspectives to the ministry.

2. These leaders would demonstrate interest in the progress and well being of their local church, as shown by faithful tithing, support of church authority and teachings, willingness to spend time in church work.

3. The couple would show signs of growth and maturity in their marriage and/or family dynamics.

4. They would be willing to support other marriages or family units, both in the church and outside of it.

5. They would have the respect of other families in the church.

Each pastor was provided with a CFLD Job Description (see Appendix A), an adaptation of the job description made by the North American Division Family Life Department. Pastors were asked to complete the selection process within forty-five days, to give the CFLDs their job description, and to tell them that they would receive additional orientation regarding their new assignment through personal visits, letters, and training weekends.

Visit with CFLDs

Once the pastors provided the names of the couples, all CFLDs were visited in their homes in February and March 1995.¹ During the course of the project, CFLDs

¹Holland, February 13; Detroit, February 14; Wyoming and Grand Rapids Central, March 7; Berrien Springs, March 20; and Lansing, March 21. The Lawrence company did not chose its CFLD.
were visited six times.

The first visit had four objectives: (1) to review the job description the CFLDs had received from their pastors and church boards; (2) to inform them regarding the two training weekends; (3) to explain Family Life Ministries; and (4) to encourage them to minister to other families. A folder was given to each with a copy of the CFLD job description, information on the training weekends, the schedule for the Family Life special activities, and a list of the seven CFLDs from the Hispanic churches in the Michigan Conference.

While the CFLDs were glad to be part of this new ministry, several expressed concern about their ability to accomplish the task. They recognized that they were not perfect as a family or couple, and therefore they felt they might not be the appropriate family unit to serve in this office. Some observed that they should be learners from those whom they saw as more mature and stable than themselves. After hearing an explanation of the selection process followed and being reminded that there is no "perfect family," they felt more confident in themselves and what they could offer to this ministry. They accepted the challenge to foster better family dynamics through the best example possible and special events, such as retreats and seminars they would lead themselves or to which they would invite guest speakers.

Couples in Detroit, Wyoming, and Holland saw this ministry as a means to reach former Adventists, non-Adventist relatives and friends, and unchurched people in a nonthreatening environment. This ministry would benefit the larger community and also serve as a means of public relations for the Adventist Church. Naturally, the
principal target would be the Spanish-speaking families.

**Training Seminars**

Two training seminars were held. The time span between them was seven weeks. Each is described in detail in the next pages. The participant’s manual, the instructor’s manual, and the transparencies used appear in Appendixes A-C.

**Family Life Training Weekend I**

After the initial visit, a letter of appreciation was sent to all CFLDs to express gratitude for accepting the task, and to remind them of the dates for the first training weekend. They were also assured that the Family Life Ministry would be a positive asset to their churches and to their communities. This letter was followed by a telephone call to make sure it had been received.

**Letter of Invitation**

About three weeks before the first training weekend, all CFLDs were sent a reminder of the training weekend. They were also reminded of the ministry CFLDs were chosen for and the blessing they could be to many families as they mingle with and minister to them. Also included in the letter were directions on how to get to the hotel, the weekend program, and their responsibility to cover travel expenses. They were encouraged to bring a deep desire to learn about Family Life Ministry.

**Location and Date**

A hotel setting was chosen rather than a retreat center. Such an environment
would provide unfamiliar surroundings, not associated with the participating families and place of ministry.

A number of hotels were visited to find an appropriate place for the two training weekends. Criteria for the selection of hotels included a central location, an affordable price, meeting rooms, and other amenities, such as an indoor pool, exercise room, and restaurant. Among the hotels visited, two were selected: Best Western Governor's Inn in Lansing, and Days Inn in Albion. Both had conference rooms and other amenities which could make of the weekend a special occasion to be remembered. The date for the first training weekend was April 22 and 23, 1995.

Participants

Since this ministry was new not only to the chosen leaders but to the churches, the pastors of the participant churches were also invited to attend. As table 3 shows, there were ten male and ten female participants at the first training weekend. Of these, seven couples and one woman were CFLDs, while the rest, two couples and one man, were pastoral staff. The group was quite evenly balanced by age and gender.

Program

The training weekend was done at the Best Western Governor’s Inn in Lansing on April 22 and 23, 1995. It was scheduled to start Saturday evening and end Sunday noon so that the CFLDs could attend their own Sabbath morning church services. Since the distance between the chosen hotel and the most distant church was approximately two hours, CFLDs could arrive in plenty of time. The Sunday noon dismissal time was
planned so the participants would have time for a leisurely return home without interfering with the work week.

TABLE 3

PARTICIPANTS’ AGE GROUP AND GENDER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26-32</td>
<td>33-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Saturday evening*

The opening meeting started at 6:00 p.m. with a song service, with music chosen to relate to the family. The devotional consisted of the reading of two statements on the family by Ellen G. White and a prayer by one of the participants. After a word of appreciation for those attending the training weekend, a questionnaire was administered to all, including the pastors.

The rest of the evening, until 9:45 p.m., was dedicated to provide information regarding the family. The presentation began by pointing out the challenges families

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"The greatest evidence of the power of Christianity that can be presented to the world is a well-ordered, well-disciplined family. This will recommend the truth as nothing else can, for it is a living witness of its practical power upon the heart." White, *Testimonies*, 4:304. "Our work for Christ is to begin with the family in the home... By many this home field has been shamefully neglected, and it is time that divine resources and remedies were presented, that this state of evil may be corrected." Ibid., 6:429, 430.
face today. It was emphasized that, although the family is under serious stress, the
family as an institution established by God in Eden will not disappear.

The seminar continued with the presentation of the six foundations of Family
Life Ministry. Such a ministry should (1) be primarily preventive; (2) operate on the
basis of the divine instructions about marriage and the family; (3) take into
consideration the systemic vision of the family; (4) be based on the developmental
vision of the family; (5) offer special programs or events and be integrated into each
aspect of church life: and (6) expand to include the community.

Then the general steps to organize the Family Life Department, as well as the
specific strategies for organizing this department among the Spanish churches in the
Michigan Conference, were presented. At the end of the Saturday evening seminar, the
group was dismissed with prayer.

Sunday morning

Sunday morning started with a continental breakfast served in the lobby, near
the meeting room.

The first two hours of lectures dealt with "Biblical Perspectives on Marriage and
the Family" and the "Family-System Framework." In the last hour, time was spent
answering questions, reviewing the specific steps to organize the Family Life
Department in the local churches, already given the night before, distributing the Family
Life Planbook from the General Conference,1 and looking at a display of books, audio tapes, and seminars CFLDs could use to enhance their ministry. Special attention was drawn to the seminars available in Spanish, which attendees were encouraged to present in their churches.

Before concluding the seminar, participants filled out a second survey. This instrument was similar to the previous with the addition of questions 36 to 39. Its purpose was to find out whether, because of the lectures given, CFLDs' attitudes and knowledge about their ministry were changed.

The content expected to be covered during this seminar was not totally covered. The questions and comments participants brought to the weekend took more time than scheduled.

Evaluation

Two surveys were developed for evaluating the impact of the training seminar on the participants. Both contained questions dealing with knowledge and attitude. Both asked for personal data in order to correlate the pretest and the posttest. To the thirty-six questions of the pretest the post-test added another four questions. The instrument, as it was applied, is given in Appendix D.

Both instruments had two parts. The first asked for personal information from participants, while the second contained a series of questions. The questions have been

1Karen Flowers and Ron Flowers, Making Families Whole (Lincoln, NE: NAD Church Resources, 1994). It was provided by the Michigan Conference Family Life Director to every CFLD.
organized by topics to ease their analysis.

**Personal data**

Twenty participants, 10 males and 10 females, completed the survey. The largest group, 8 (40 percent) were between ages 33 and 40, while 4 participants each were in the other age groups (26-32, 41-50, and 51-62), as table 3 indicates. The personal information requested was used to measure difference between the pretest and posttest, if any, in responses by gender. Birth dates were used to identify the participants on both questionnaires.

**Knowledge questions**

The knowledge questions—numbers 1-25, 27-29, 31, 32, and 37—evaluated the previous knowledge and learning of material presented in the lectures. They contain statements to which the participants could respond on a scale of 1-4: 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Strongly agree. For questions framed in the positive, the optimum answer was 4; for those presented in the negative, the best answer was 1.

The questions are grouped for analysis. For each group of statements the information is given for the total responses, and for males and females.

**Statements related to the family as institution.** Seven questions asked about the family as an institution (1-4, 10, 20, 21). The results are summarized in table 4.

1. The institution of the family is at risk of extinction (optimum score=1). The responses to this statement showed, both in the pretest and the posttest, a diversity of
responses. The overall mean for the pretest was 2.90, while the mean for the posttest showed a slight improvement (.20), with the responses of the females accounting for most of the improvement. This question seems to have been unclear to the respondents.

TABLE 4
THE FAMILY AS INSTITUTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Numbers</th>
<th>Optimum Score</th>
<th>Pretest Scores</th>
<th>Posttest Scores</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Males N=10</td>
<td>Females N=10</td>
<td>Mean</td>
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<td>2.90</td>
<td>2.90</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>3.80</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>3.10</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>1.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>3.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Families are being attacked both from outside and inside (optimum score=4). On this statement there was almost total agreement. Scores for males and females were the same on both pretest and posttest. The improvement (from 3.80 to 3.90) was minimal. Evidently this was a fact everyone knew.

3. The role of the traditional family is better defined than that of modern families (optimum score=4). On this statement there was little difference overall between pretest and posttest (3.40 versus 3.45). However, the scores of the males were better than those of the females on the pretest (3.70 versus 3.10) whereas they were
lower on the posttest (3.30 versus 3.60). Respondents were aware of the unclear role the modern family plays.

4. Those who are sexually active before marriage have better chances of a lasting marriage (optimum score=1). No difference was seen between male and female responses in the pretest. On the posttest the responses improved and differed slightly between genders (1.10 for females and 1.20 for males). Overall, respondents were clear that premarital sexual activity did not make for lasting marriages.

10. Federal and State organizations are effectively assisting families (optimum score=1). In the pretest, the mean score was 1.95, with females slightly ahead of males. On the posttest, the scores of the males improved by .50, while those of the females only improved by .10. Of this group of statements, this item showed the largest improvement from pretest to posttest (.30). The participants clearly recognized the lack of assistance the family is receiving.

20. A flexible family is synonymous with a healthy family (optimum score=4). On the pretest there was considerable difference between the responses of males (3.50) and females (3.00). This lead improved on the posttest (3.90 versus 3.10). Evidently the females found it difficult to think in terms of family flexibility. The overall score improvement was .25.

21. A healthy family is one that allows the individual development of its members (optimum score=4). The overall agreement with this statement was strong (3.85 in the pretest; 3.80 in the posttest). Of this group of statements, this was the only one to which the response was further from the optimum answer in the posttest than in
the pretest (difference of .05). In any case, participants understood the need for the individuality of family members.

*Statements related to the Bible*. Two questions asked about the teachings of the Bible related to family issues (13, and 23). The results can be seen in table 5.

13. **Marriage was instituted in Eden** (optimum score=4). The responses to this statement showed, both in the pretest and posttest, the optimum answer on all participants (4.00). Obviously, no improvement could be accomplished. Evidently respondents knew that God instituted marriage at the creation.

23. **The Bible is the safest guide for the selection of a mate** (optimum score=4). On this statement males and females also chose the optimum answer on both tests (4.00), and therefore no improvement was recorded. Respondents were aware that the Bible is the safest place to find the answers to questions related to the selection of mates.

**TABLE 5**

**STATEMENTS RELATED TO THE BIBLE**

<table>
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</table>
Statements related to divorce and remarriage. Three questions asked about divorce and remarriage (5, 6, and 24). The results are summarized in table 6.

5. The divorce rate among evangelicals is lower than the general population (optimum score=1). The responses to this statement showed that both males and females were far from the correct answer in the pretest (2.90 for males and 2.60 for males). The overall mean for the pretest was 2.75, while the mean for the posttest showed a slight improvement (.45), with both genders showing similar improvement. The fact that in the United States evangelicals divorce at approximately the same rate as the general population was difficult for the participants to grasp.

6. Those who remarry have better chances of a lasting marriage than those who have married once (optimum score=1). In the pretest, the mean score was 1.75, with females slightly ahead of males. On the posttest, the scores of the females improved by .70, all giving the optimum answer, while those of the males improved by .50. Of this group of statements, this item showed the largest improvement from pretest to posttest (.60). Participants recognized that people who remarry have greater difficulty to effect lasting marriages.

24. Most divorces happen after the children leave home (optimum score=1). No difference was seen between male and female responses in the pretest (1.90). In the posttest the scores were lower for the females (2.20), while males kept the same. The overall score decreased by -.15. What was said in the lecture seems not to have had a lasting effect on the participants.
TABLE 6
DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

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*Statements related to parents and children.* Two statement asked about the relationship between parents and children (19. and 22). The results are summarized in table 7.

19. **Children will gain wisdom if they listen to their parents** (optimum score=4). On this statement there was general agreement. Scores for males and females were the same on the pretest (3.90), while on the posttest females scored slightly better than the males (3.90 versus 3.80). The improvement between tests was only .10. Evidently participants already agreed with the statement.

22. **Young people should seek parents' counsel regarding the selection of a mate** (optimum score=4). No difference was found between male and female participants in the pretest (3.70). On the posttest, responses improved and differed slightly between genders (3.80 for males and 3.90 for females). Overall, respondents were clear that parents are a trustworthy source of counsel in this regard.
TABLE 7

PARENTS AND CHILDREN

<table>
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Statements related to religious practice and the church. Three questions asked about Christian practice in the home and the role the church plays for the family (8, 27, and 32). The results are summarized in table 8.

8. It would be good for the Sabbath School department to present topics about FL during the time for classes (optimum score=4). Of this group of statements, this item showed the largest improvement between the pretest and posttest (.89) with similar improvements for both genders (.89 for males and .90 for females). Male respondents showed more openness to incorporate family topics into the Sabbath School curriculum.

27. Family worship must study the Sabbath School lessons of each family member (optimum score=1). On the pretest the mean score was 2.64, with females slightly ahead of males. On the posttest the respondents improved and differed slightly between genders (2.44 for males and 2.10 for females). Participants were used to the tradition of the study of the Sabbath School lesson of each member at family worship and did not see other possibilities.

32. The best place to talk about family enrichment is the church (optimum
In the pretest, the male score was higher than that of the females (3.67 versus 2.00). Of this group of statements, this was the only one to which the response was further from the correct response in the posttest when both tests were compared (-.87). In any case, this question may have been unclear to respondents.

**TABLE 8**

**RELIGIOUS PRACTICE AND THE CHURCH**

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**Statements related to the ministry of the Family Life Department.** Nine statements—the most extensive group—asked about the part the Family Life Department plays in the enrichment of the families (7, 9, 11, 12, 25, 28, 29, 31, and 37). Results are recapitulated in table 9.

7. **Education or prevention is the main task of the FL department** (optimum score=4). On this statement there was major agreement. Scores for males were slightly ahead on the pretest (3.80 versus 3.70), while in the posttest they were inverted (3.70 for males and 4.00 for females). Evidently this fact was clear to all participants.

9. **The Family Life Department only cares for the well-being of the families who are members of the church** (optimum score=1). A similar pattern is repeated from
the previous statement. In the pretest, the mean score was 1.85, with males slightly ahead of females (1.80 versus 1.90). On the posttest, the scores of the males improved by .40, while those of the females improved by .60. The participants clearly recognized that the Family Life Department cares for those within and outside the church.

TABLE 9
THE MINISTRY OF THE FAMILY LIFE DEPARTMENT

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11. Those who lead the Family Life Department at the church level should be people who have knowledge of the behavioral sciences (optimum score=1). On the pretest, responses of males (2.60) and females (2.50) were similar. This lead improved on the posttest (1.40 versus 1.30). Of this group of statements, this item showed the largest improvement from pretest to posttest (1.20). Evidently this was a fact everybody learned.
12. The ministry of the Family Life Department begins at the couple’s wedding and ends when the children enter school (optimum score=1). The responses to this statement showed, both in the pretest and the posttest, a diversity of answers. The overall mean for the pretest was 1.50, and for the posttest was 1.90. Female participants showed a slight improvement on the posttest (.30), while for the males were further from the optimum answer (.10). This question may not have been clear to participants, especially the males.

25. The Family Life Department could enhance families by creating small groups (optimum score=4). On this statement there was a slight difference overall between pretest and posttest (3.65 versus 3.95). However, the scores of the females were better than those of the males on the pretest (3.80 versus 3.50), whereas they were lower on the posttest (3.90 versus 4.00). Respondents increased their awareness of the benefits that small groups could bring to family well-being.

28. The Family Life Department does not have responsibility for ministering to singles (optimum score=1). The overall mean for the pretest was 2.30, while the mean for the posttest showed a slight decrease (.10), with the responses of the males accounting for the distance of the optimum answer. The diversity of responses seems to indicate that participants were not clear that the ministry of this department could include singles.

29. I see that the Family Life Department is of a great importance to the general well-being of the church (optimum score=4). On this statement there was almost total agreement. Female respondents were ahead of males in the pretest by .10, while at the
posttest all males and females chose the optimum answer. The overall improvement (from 3.95 to 4.00) was minimal. Evidently respondents were already aware of the important role the Family Life Department could have in the life of the church.

31. The Family Life Department should be led by experts and well-prepared people like family therapists and counselors (optimum score=1). On the pretest, the scores of females were slightly ahead of males (1.90 versus 2.10), while in the posttest no difference was found for either gender (1.30). The overall score indicated an improvement from 2.00 to 1.30. Respondents learned that not only professional therapists and counselors could lead the Family Life Department.

37. I have learned that Family Life Department not only cares for the well-being of the families within the church but of the surrounding community (optimum score=4). Because of the way this statement is expressed, this question was asked only on the posttest. Overall responses on the posttest indicated minimum difference between genders; the response was 4.00 for males and 3.90 for females. Evidently this statement was clear to everyone.

*Attitude questions*

Attitude questions—numbers 26, 30, 33-36, and 38—evaluated the attitude respondents showed toward their role as leaders of the Family Life Department. They contained statements to which participants could respond on a scale of 1-4: 1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Agree; 4=Strongly agree. For questions framed in the positive, the optimum answer was 4; for those presented in the negative, the best answer was 1.
Four statements were presented on the pretest and posttest (26, 30, 33, and 34), while three, because of their nature, appeared only on the posttest (35, 36, 38). The results are summarized in table 10.

\textit{Statements on both questionnaires.} 26. \texttt{At this time I do not feel prepared enough to lead the Family Life Department} (optimum score=1). No difference was seen between female responses when the tests were compared (2.30 and 2.30), while for male participants there was an improvement of .30 (2.20 in the pretest; 1.90 in the posttest). Apparently the impression made by the training seminar was not as significant for females as for males.

30. \texttt{I think that I cannot lead the department because I have had misunderstandings lately with my spouse} (optimum score=1). In the pretest, the mean score was 1.90, with no difference between genders. On the posttest, the score for males was lower (from 1.90 to 2.00), while among females it improved by .20 (from 1.90 to 1.70). Evidently females understood that misunderstandings with the spouse do not necessarily interfere with the ability to lead the department.

33. \texttt{Yes, I would like to start the Family Life Department in my church} (optimum score=4). The overall agreement with this statement was strong (3.45 in the pretest; 3.75 in the posttest). On this group of statements, this item showed the largest improvement from pretest to posttest (.30). Evidently respondents became committed to involve themselves in the Family Life Department leadership.

34. \texttt{I have doubts about my role as Family Life director} (optimum score=1). In
the pretest, the mean score was 1.90, with males slightly ahead of females. In the
posttest, male respondents improved by .50, while females kept the same score. In any
case, males were more clear on their roles as leaders than were females.

TABLE 10
ATTITUDE TOWARD FAMILY LIFE LEADERSHIP

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*Statements only on the second questionnaire.* 35. I have been challenged to give
a better service to the families of my church (optimum score=4). All 20 respondents
selected the optimum answer. Among the group of statements only on the second
questionnaire, this item showed the highest score. Evidently the training weekend
assisted them to see the benefits the Family Life Department can provide to the families
of the church.

36. I leave this place committed to do something for the well-being of the
homes of my church (optimum score=4). The posttest showed that most of the females
lose the optimum answer (mean score of 3.90), while among males the optimum answer was chosen less often (mean score of 3.80).

38. Now I have a clearer vision on how to lead this department (optimum score = 4). As on the previous statement, 90 percent of female participants chose the optimum answer, which is seen in the 3.9 score. Among males, the response was a little less sure.

The differences in scores from pretest to posttest on knowledge questions show some improvement over all. However, the differences suggest a need for more clarity in teaching and testing. On the other hand, the responses to attitudinal questions, especially those referring to the participants’ commitment to their new task, were encouraging.

Follow-up

A letter was sent two weeks after the training seminar weekend. In that letter CFLDs received the instructor’s and participant’s manuals of the seminar they had chosen to conduct. In the letter they were reminded that they could receive other seminar manuals once they had presented this one to their churches.

A month latter each CFLD was visited at his/her home.¹ The purpose of this visit was (1) to give them another opportunity to review their role in the Family Life Ministry, (2) to answer questions they might have regarding their office, (3) to receive a

¹On March 20, CFLDs from Holland, Grand Rapids, Maranatha, and Wyoming were visited. The next day was for CFLDs from Lansing and Detroit. Berrien Springs was visited on March 12.
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Family Life Training Weekend II

Location and Date

The hotel chosen for this weekend was the Days Inn at Albion. Although this hotel did not have the amenities the Best Western Governor's Inn had, it was selected because of its central location. The weekend took place on July 10 and 11, 1995.

Participants

The second training weekend had two fewer CFLD participants than the first. Because the weekend was scheduled during the summer months, only one pastoral couple attended. Nevertheless, the pastors' encouragement of CFLDs to attend the training weekend was positive. They made comments like: "Now I have somebody that I can count on to foster healthier family interactions in my churches"; "I like it because I have a couple who promotes healthier family relationships"; "I like to see my Co-Directors visiting families to enhance family activities in my churches and even among other Spanish churches."

Program

The seminar had a similar pattern to the previous training weekend. Couples came from their church service to the hotel since the ones who came from the greatest distance had a two hour drive to get there. By the time the training started, at 6:00 p.m., all CFLDs, including one recently appointed from the Lawrence Company, were present.

Since CFLDs did not work on Sundays, the weekend ended on Sunday noon with full attendance. Each participant could arrive home before evening and be ready to start
a work week without interruptions.

Two hours prior to the training session, the banquet manager informed us that a reunion party was scheduled that Saturday evening in the conference room next door to the one assigned for the training seminar. Because of the distraction expected, a smaller room was assigned by the hotel manager.

*Saturday evening*

The seminar started promptly at 6:00 p.m. with a song service that included "God Is So Good," "The Family of God," and "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus." A series of quotations from Ellen G. White regarding the purpose of the family followed. ¹ A prayer by a participant completed the opening service.

A word of appreciation was expressed to CFLDs for their positive role in leading the Family Life Ministry as well as for their attendance at the second training weekend. After these words, a questionnaire was administered to all.

Church Family Life Co-directors gave reports on what they had accomplished, and shared their plans for the near future for more than two hours. In the last hour of the Saturday session, the subject of study was the Hispanic family in North America. Special attention was given to describe the family and culture of Mexicans and Mexican descendants, since more than 70 percent of the Hispanics living in the State of Michigan

belong to this population group. It was interesting to notice how CFLDs reacted to the characteristics of the traditional Mexican Family. Those participants who were not Mexican or Mexican descendants did not know much about the typical Mexican family, while the two couples from Mexico felt it was unrealistic. They had reservations about my analysis of the traditional Mexican or Mexican-American family.

A reference was made on how the Hispanic immigration to the United States of America differed from previous immigrant groups such as the Italians, Germans, and Irish. As Thomas Weyr indicates,

They are unlike any previous groups of immigrants, perhaps because so many do not consider themselves immigrants at all. They have been here for 450 years and for 45 seconds. They may number 18 million or 20 million or 23 million, even 30 million. They are establishing Spanish as a second language in the United States alongside English. . . . They are constructing a new culture and a new consciousness. They are changing the country. They are breaking the melting pot. They want to assimilate and to remain separate, to be part of the mainstream and to retain their own identity. Not a national identity with a geographic enclave, not another Quebec, but identity conferred by a larger culture of history, myth, geography, religion, education, language, and affairs of state.1

In addition to demographic analysis, the group studied the characteristics of the Hispanic family in the United States. At the end of the Saturday meeting, couples were dismissed with a prayer.

1Weyr, 1.
Sunday morning

Sunday morning, after the continental breakfast, the two hours of lecture covered part of the "Family-Development Framework." By the end of this period, and because of the enthusiastic interaction, which took one-third of the time, only the first two of nine cycles were studied.

In the last hour of the morning session, time was given to review the job description, the specific steps to organize the Family Life Department in the local churches, and the materials available for their use.

Until now CFLDs were encouraged to concentrate on fostering the intact family unit (father, mother, and children), since this is what was brought into existence by God and therefore the ideal (intact) family structure. Since three months had passed from the first training weekend, and six months from the time they were elected into office, it was considered appropriate now to broaden the ministry of the department by creating the Family Life Committee. This committee would assist the Co-directors to include other family forms besides the intact one such as single parents, divorced and singles, and blended families. CFLDs were encouraged to include in the Committee people from those non-intact family units.

The group requested an additional meeting to complete the material from the manual, as well as to better know and interact with each other as couples. That meeting was scheduled to take place two months later at the Holland Spanish Church (September 16, 1995). Participants decided that they would attend Sabbath morning services at that church. The church then would provide a lunch for the CFLD families, after which a
two-hour lecture would follow. Later the families would go to a nearby park to have fellowship together. While for the training weekends, participants were asked not to bring the children with them, this third meeting would include the entire family since more than training would take place.

Books and seminar materials were on display. Attention was called to seminars available in Spanish. These were offered without cost if they would conduct them at their churches.

**Evaluation**

As in the first training event, two surveys were developed for evaluating the impact of the training seminar on the participants. Both contained questions dealing with knowledge and attitude. Both asked for personal data in order to correlate the pretest with the posttest. To the thirty-five questions of the pretest, the posttest added another three questions. While the pretest was given at the beginning of the training session, the posttest was administered at the home of the CFLDs three to nine weeks later to measure the retention of information and attitude toward Family Life Ministry. The instrument, as it was applied, is given in Appendix D, while the analysis of the data obtained is given in the text.

**Personal data**

Eleven participants, 5 males and 6 females, completed the survey. No participants over 50 years of age were included in the response. The personal data were used to measure differences, if any, in responses by gender. Birth dates were asked to
identify the participants of both questionnaires.

Knowledge questions

The knowledge questions-numbers 1-12, 14-18, 20-22, 24-28, 30-33, 35, and 37-evaluated the previous knowledge and learning of material presented in the lectures. They contained statements to which participants could respond on a scale of 1-4: 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Strongly agree. For questions framed in the positive, the optimum answer was 4; for those presented in the negative, the best answer was 1.

The questions are grouped for analysis. For each group of statements the information is given for all the respondents, and for males and females.

The overall improvement of scores on knowledge questions, between pretest and posttest, was slightly lower than that of the first training seminar weekend.

Statements related to demographics. Six statements asked about the demographic of Hispanics in the United States (1-6). The results are recapitulated in table 11.

1. Hispanics are different from other migrant groups that came to the United States (optimum score=4). The responses to this statement showed, both in the pretest and the posttest, a diversity of responses. The overall mean for the pretest was 2.47, while the mean for the posttest showed a slight improvement (.23). The responses of the females accounted for all of the improvement (.67), while the male participants chose responses further from the optimum answer. The question seems to have been unclear to
TABLE 11

DEMOGRAPHICS

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2. According to the 1990 census, there are more than 20 million Hispanics in the United States (optimum score=4). In this group of statement, this question showed the largest improvement overall between pretest and posttest (2.35 versus 3.30). In the pretest, males scored significantly lower than females (2.20 versus 3.50), while in the posttest male respondents surpassed the females by .60. Since several different figures were given of the number of Hispanics in the United States, the diversity of responses could indicate that the question was not clear, especially to the females.

3. The Hispanic numerical growth is tied to the numerical birth rate (optimum score=4). In the pretest, the mean score was 1.89, with females ahead of males by a mean difference of .57. On the posttest, the scores of the males improved by 1.00, while those of the females only improved by .83. Overall, respondents learned that the
Hispanic growth in the United States is tied to the birth rate.

4. The state of California has the largest number of Hispanics of any state (optimum score=4). On this statement the overall improvement between pretest and posttest was .55. In the pretest there was considerable difference between the responses of males (3.60) and females (3.17). This lead was reduced on the posttest (3.80 versus 3.50). Respondents clearly recognized that this item was true.

5. The earnings among Hispanics are lower than the average earnings of the Anglo-Saxon population (optimum score=4). On the pretest there was difference between the responses of males (3.40) and females (3.00). On the posttest the mean score was 3.75 with females coming closer to male respondents (3.67 versus 3.80). In any case, participants saw that the income from Hispanics is lower than from the Anglo-Saxon population.

6. The Hispanics from Mexico and Mexican descendants represent more than 70 percent of the Hispanic population in the United States (optimum score=1). The responses to this statement showed that females improved from the pretest to posttest (3.83 versus 3.17). The males were further from the optimum answer in the posttest (difference of .40). Evidently participants believed that those born in Mexico or descendants of Mexican parents were almost three-quarters of the Hispanic population. This is not true; only 62 percent are of Mexican descent.

*Statements related to family relationships.* Four questions inquired about the topic of family relationships among Hispanics families (7, 8, 11, and 27). The results
7. "Familism" means that the emphasis on the family is unhealthy, that it creates excessive emotional dependency (optimum score=1). The answer to this statement showed, both in the pretest and the posttest, a diversity of responses. The overall mean for the pretest was 2.02, while the mean score for the posttest was further from the optimum answer (2.33). Familism refers to a healthy emphasis, clearly seem in Hispanic society.

8. Hispanic family ties are tighter than those of the Anglo-Saxon (optimum score=4). The overall agreement with this statement was strong (3.29 on the pretest; 3.90 in the posttest). On the pretest males gave better responses (3.40 versus 3.17), while in the posttest females made perfect responses (4.00 versus 3.80). Of this group of statements, this one showed the largest improvement from pretest to posttest (.61). Evidently, respondents agree that Hispanic families have stronger ties than do Anglo-Saxon Americans.

11. The divorce rate among Hispanics is lower than that of the general population of the United States (optimum score=4). On this statement there was little difference over all between pretest and posttest (2.55 versus 2.60). However, the scores of the males were better than those of the females on the pretest (2.60 versus 2.50), whereas they were lower on the posttest (2.20 versus 3.00). Respondents were not sure the divorce rate among Hispanics was lower than the general population.

27. In general, the majority of divorces happen after the children leave home (optimum score=1). In the pretest, the mean score was 2.37, with females slightly ahead
of males. On the posttest, the scores of the males improved by .20, while those of females improved by .64. Based on the optimum answer, the responses seem to indicate that the statement may have been unclear to participants.

TABLE 12

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Numbers</th>
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<th>Posttest Scores</th>
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Statements related to the family life cycle. Five questions were asked about different family life cycles (15, 18, 20, 21, and 26). Statements are analyzed following the family life cycle rather than by the question numbers. Of all the groups of questions on this questionnaire, this group of statements showed fewer correct responses. The results are summarized in table 13.

18. Palomillas is a term referring to the younger siblings (optimum score=1). On the pretest the males score showed a slight edge over the females (1.60 versus 2.00), while on the posttest female participants improved .50 over the pretest, while males’ assertiveness dropped by .60. The overall score improvement was -.05. Evidently, respondents did not recall the meaning of the term palomillas, which really means street.
gangs, those neighbor informal gatherings where youngsters learn about life.

**TABLE 13**

**FAMILY LIFE CYCLES**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Question Numbers</th>
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<td>3.33</td>
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</table>

20. The ratio of unwed pregnancy among Hispanics is higher than that of the general population (optimum score=4). The overall agreement with this statement was strong among males (3.60 in the pretest; 3.60 in the posttest). Females showed a low score in the pretest (1.67), but improved in the posttest (2.83). It is evident that females had difficulty accepting the reality of a high number of unwed mothers among Hispanics. Of this group of statements, this item showed the only improvement from pretest to postest (.58).

26. Young people should seek counsel from their parents about the selection of a mate (optimum score=4). On this statement there was major agreement. All male participants chose the optimum answer on both pretest and posttest, while the scores of the females decreased on the posttest by .33 (3.83 in the pretest; 3.50 in the posttest). This difference between males and females may suggest resistance to cultural traditions.
15. The "Neo-Parental" cycle comprises the time from the couple's marriage to the birth of their first child (optimum score=1). In the pretest, the mean score was 2.67, with females slightly ahead of males. On the posttest, the scores of the males improved by .40, while those of the females showed greater divergence from the optimum answer (.84). The overall score declined by .22. This statement seems to have been unclear to respondents.

21. The retirement cycle is the most traumatic life cycle for both Hispanics and the general population (optimum score=4). In the pretest the mean score was 3.17, while in the posttest there was considerable difference between the responses of males (1.80) and females (2.67). Of this group of statements, this one registered the largest decline between pretest and posttest scores (3.17 in the pretest: 2.24 in the posttest). Evidently the content of this item was not clearly expressed at the seminar.

Statements related to the uniqueness of Hispanic family dynamics. Five questions were asked about the uniqueness the Hispanic family dynamics (10, 14, 16, 17, and 24). The results are recounted in table 14.

10. Acculturation means the degree of acceptance or rejection a person has toward a new culture (optimum score= 4). Almost no difference was seen between the responses of males and females in the pretest (3.80 for males and 3.83 for females). On the posttest, 100 percent of the female respondents used the optimum answer, while males kept the same score from the pretest. The overall improvement between pretest and posttest (.09) was minimal. Evidently this was a fact everyone knew.
TABLE 14
UNIQUENESS OF THE HISPANIC FAMILY DYNAMICS

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<tr>
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<td>2.60 3.50</td>
<td>3.05 1.60</td>
<td>1.83 1.72</td>
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</table>

14. Hispanic men living in the United States tend to have lower self-esteem than the Hispanic women (optimum score=4). In the pretest, the mean score was 2.62, with females slightly ahead of males. On the posttest there was considerable difference between responses of females (3.83) and males (3.00). The overall score improved by .80. The participants clearly recognized the higher tendency of males to suffer low self-esteem.

16. Usually, Hispanic parents are permissive with their children while they are small (optimum score=4). On this statement there was little difference between males and females at the pretest (2.60 for males and 2.33 for females), whereas on the posttest female participants’ improvement almost doubled the progress of males (1.17 for females and .60 for males). The overall score improvement was .88.

17. The process of acculturation produces greater family tensions when children become adolescents (optimum score=4). On the pretest there was almost no difference
between males and females (3.80 and 3.83), while on the posttest female improvement surpassed males' responses by .20. Evidently this item was a known factor for almost everyone.

24. In the next decades the Hispanic family will be absorbed by the country's dominant culture (optimum score=1). The overall mean for the pretest was 3.05, while the mean for the posttest showed a considerable improvement (1.72), with the responses of the females accounting for most of the improvement. Of this group of statements, this question showed the largest improvement from pretest to posttest (1.33). Evidently respondents recognized that the Hispanic family will not melt into the dominant culture.

Statements related to religious practice and the church. Four statements were asked about the religious practice at home and the role between the church and the family (25, 30, 33, and 35). The results are summarized in table 15.

25. The church is a center that could aid the Hispanic family (optimum score=4). On this statement there was total agreement. In both the pretest and posttest, all male and female participants chose the optimum answer. Evidently this was a fact that everyone knew.

30. In family worship we should study the Sabbath School lesson of each family member (optimum score=1). On the pretest there was a slight difference in the score between gender, with females slightly behind males (2.33 for females; 2.20 for males). On the posttest a similar pattern is observed (2.67 for females and 2.40 for males), with a decline toward the optimum answer of .27. Apparently respondents were unclear of the
question or still held to traditional views regarding lesson study for worship.

TABLE 15

RELIGIOUS PRACTICE AND THE CHURCH

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33. One of the best places to talk about topics such as family enrichment is the church (optimum score=4). On the pretest there was considerable difference between the males' scores (3.20) and those of the females (2.17), while on the posttest most of the improvements was because of the females (1.33). Of this group of statements, this question showed the largest improvement from pretest to posttest (.76). Participants saw that the church could be a safe place to talk about family matters.

35. The most reliable guide about the selection of a mate is the Bible (optimum score=4). As happened with statement 25, no improvement was achieved on the overall score since all participants chose the optimum answer on both the pretest and posttest. Evidently this was also a fact that everyone knew.

Statements related to the ministry of the Family Life Department. Seven questions asked about the ministry of the Family Life Department (9, 12, 22, 28, 31, 32,
Among the statements of this questionnaire, these are the core questions because of their relevance. Interestingly, answers to this group of statements were the closest to the optimum.

9. The responsibility of the Family Life Department is only to take care of the well-being of families within the church (optimum score=1). On the pretest there was considerable difference between the responses of males (2.20) and females (1.00). On the posttest both chose only the optimum answer, which caused an overall score improvement of .60. Evidently this fact was clarified to all participants.

12. The ministry of the Family Life Department embraces the family from the time when children are born until they leave home (optimum score=1). The responses to this statement showed, both in the pretest and the posttest, a diversity of responses. The overall mean for the pretest was 2.02, whereas the mean for the posttest showed improvement (.47), with the responses of the males accounting for the main improvement (.60).

22. I see that the Family Life Department is essential for the general well-being of the church (optimum score=4). On this statement there was no overall improvement because all 11 out of 11 participants chose the optimum answer on both the pretest and posttest. This general recognition of the importance of the Family Life Department was encouraging.

28. The Family Life Department will encourage other church departments to create activities for the strengthening of the family (optimum score=4). In the pretest the
mean score was 3.90, with females slightly ahead of males. In the posttest no difference was seen between male and female respondents (4.00). The overall improvement (from 3.90 to 4.00) was minimal.

TABLE 16
THE MINISTRY OF THE FAMILY LIFE DEPARTMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Numbers</th>
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</table>

31. The Family Life Department is not responsible to minister to singles in the church (optimum score=1). On this statement scores did not differ between male and female participants (2.00), while in the posttest females accounted for most of the improvement (1.00). The mean score in the pretest was 2.00, whereas in the posttest it was 1.30. Overall, respondents learned that singles are also part of the Family Life Department ministry.

32. The Family Life Department should only be led by experts, people prepared as family counselors and therapists (optimum score=1). For this question on both tests
participants also chose only the optimum answer. Evidently this was a clear fact to every respondent.

37. I learned that the Family Life Department not only takes care for the well-being of the families within the church but also of the community (optimum score= 4). There was evidence that respondents recognized that the Family Life Department also includes families from the community as part of their role because all of them chose the optimum answer on the pretest and the posttest.

*Attitude questions*

Attitude questions--numbers 13, 19, 23, 29, 34, 36, and 38--evaluated the attitude respondents showed toward their role as leaders of the Family Life Department. They contained statements to which participants could respond on a scale of 1-4: 1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Agree; 4=Strongly agree. For questions framed in the positive, the optimum answer was 4; for those presented in the negative, the best answer was 1.

Four statements were asked on both the pretest and posttest (13, 19, 23, and 29), while three, because of their nature, were asked only on the posttest (34, 36, and 38). The results are summarized in table 17.

*Statements on both questionnaires.* 13. At this time I do not feel prepared enough to lead the Family Life Department (optimum score=1). On this statement males showed the same score (2.20) in the pretest and posttest, while the females' score declined by .34. The overall mean for the pretest was 2.27, while the posttest was 2.44, a decline of .17. Evidently, participants did not feel prepared enough for the task they
have ahead of them. When both tests are compared, a cautious attitude towards the task is evident in both, but slightly accentuated in the second test (2.10 versus 2.44).

TABLE 17
ATTITUDE TOWARD FAMILY LIFE LEADERSHIP

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Numbers</th>
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19. Yes, I would like to start the Family Life Department in my church (optimum score=4). On this statement there was little difference among males and females in the scores of the pretest (4.00 for males; 3.67 for females). In the posttest, both groups showed a decline of .20 for males and .34 for females, which led to an overall decline of .27. Evidently participants still wanted to start this ministry, but showed themselves more cautious. A comparison of the scores on this question on both tests reflects a positive, yet more cautious, attitude (3.75 versus 3.57).

23. I think that I cannot lead this department because I have had misunderstandings lately with my spouse (optimum score=1). On the pretest there was
considerable difference between the responses of males (1.00) and females (1.50). On the posttest, while females did not change scores, males dropped by .50. Apparently respondents showed a more cautious attitude about their leadership role and their relationship with their mates. Of this group of statements, this item showed the closest scores to the optimum score. When both tests are compared, the second test shows an improvement over the first one (1.85 versus 1.75).

29. I have doubts about my role as Family Life director (optimum score=1). In the pretest the mean score was 1.94, with females ahead of males by .53. On the posttest, the scores of the males improved by 1.00, while those of the females declined .66. The overall score improved by .17. While scores improved from the first pretest to the first posttest, this gain was lost by the second pretest. The final mean score is slightly lower than that of the first posttest.

Statements only on the second questionnaire. 34. I have been challenged to give a better service to the families of my church (optimum score=4). The scores were high, with all participants choosing agree or strongly agree as their answer. The female response showed a greater degree of surety than that of the males.

36. I leave this place committed to do something in favor of the church homes (optimum score=4). All males chose the optimum answer, while the score for female participants was lower by .17. Evidently respondents had the commitment to enhance the families of the church. Of the statements asked only at the posttest, this item showed the highest score (3.92). The score on this question improved from 3.80 in the first
posttest to 3.92 in the second one. This was an indication of a strong commitment.

38. Now I have a clearer vision on how to lead this department (optimum score=4). On this statement there was little difference between females and males (3.83 for females and 3.80 for males). The overall agreement was strong (3.82). The difference with scores from the first posttest was minimal (3.83 versus 3.90) and came from a lower score of the females.

The differences on scores from pretest and posttest on knowledge questions show some improvement over all. However, the differences suggest a need for more clarity in teaching and testing. The second questionnaire included fewer general items than the first. On the other hand, the response to attitudinal questions, especially those referring to the participants’ commitment to their new task, was encouraging.

While interesting, a comparison between the scores on attitude questions in the first and second posttests cannot be considered conclusive. The time elapsed after the training program had an impact on responses. In addition, only eleven respondents completed both pretest and posttest the second time.

**Follow-up**

Between July 28 and 30, 1995, Church Family Life Co-directors were visited for the fifth time. The purpose of such visit was (1) to administer the questionnaire, (2) to express appreciation for their active participation in the second Family Life Training Weekend, (3) to monitor the implementation of the church Family Life Committee, which one church had already organized, (4) to encourage them to minister to family
forms and structures other than the intact (original) family, (5) to remind them about the third training in Holland, Michigan, and (6) to encourage their continuing promotion and personal involvement in the "Father/Son Camp."

Family Life Training Sabbath

The third training seminar was not part of the project. It resulted from a request made from CFLDs at the previous training weekend.

Location and Date

The Holland Spanish SDA Church was chosen by CFLDs as the location for this training session. In preparation for the event, the district pastor was consulted to avoid any scheduling conflicts and to have his support. The date was September 16, 1995.

Participants

Participants in this training day were all CFLDs with their families. Previous weekends, because of the extensive lectures, couples were asked not to bring their children. But this Sabbath day was not only a day for additional knowledge about the family, but a time to enjoy with the Lord and with each other as family. All CFLDs for the Hispanic congregations in the Michigan Conference came for the day.

Hispanic pastors were again invited to attend, but because the event involved a Sabbath morning, their schedules made it difficult. Pastors were supportive of the special day by encouraging CFLDs to attend and by providing financial assistance to some.
Program

The program of the day consisted of Sabbath School and worship, potluck, a lecture, and a visit to a nearby park for fellowship.

The Holland Spanish Church pastor asked the visiting CFLDs to conduct the worship service under the leadership of his local CFLD. The Holland CFLD involved several visiting CFLDs couples in the service. The message of the sermon was related to the family.

After the meal provided by the host church, the CDLDs listened to the last presentation of the seminar. Child care was arranged by the Holland Church. The active participation of CFLDs through questions and discussions of case studies allowed the learning process to be maximized.

After the seminar all but one of the CFLDs with their families went to a nearby park to chat until sundown. In that informal conversation CFLDs interchanged experiences on how they managed their own family transitions. When they left the park they committed themselves to support each other by prayer and by repeating family reunions like this.

Follow-up

Between July 27 and September 12 the sixth visit took place. This was the last visit made as part of the project. The purpose was to thank CFLDs for their support of the project. CFLDs were told that the following steps and activities would not be part of the doctoral project but of their ongoing ministry.
Special Events

Three special events were organized: a Marriage Enrichment Weekend, the Family Retreat Camp, and a Father/Son Camp. The Family Retreat Camp was already in place among the Hispanic Churches, while the other two were created.

Marriage Enrichment Weekend

Location and Date

The Ramada Inn of Benton Harbor was selected because of the attractive price and amenities provided. The hotel was recently remodeled, has a large romantic atrium with an indoor swimming pool, meeting rooms large enough to hold up to sixty participants, and an adjacent restaurant. The dates when the Marriage Enrichment Weekend took place was May 6 and 7, 1995.

To encourage couples to attend, couples were asked to pay $20.00 of the $63.20 that the weekend cost. Included in the package were: a night’s hotel lodging, three meals, non-alcoholic cider, three different surprises at each room, and rent of a video and video equipment.

Advertisement

CFLDs were designated to be the promoters of this, as well as the other special events. Pastors were to support CFLDs’ role in this regard, but they were not expected to invest time in being the front-line promoters.

A number of brochures were given at the end of the first training weekend to the CFLDs to promote this activity in their churches. A letter was sent to all CFLDs, and a
week prior to the Marriage Enrichment Weekend they were called to provide the names of each participating couple.

Participants

Participants of the Marriage Enrichment Weekend were couples. Because of the programing they were asked not to bring their children. Some churches provided childcare for the participating couples, while most participants found it with family and friends. A total of thirty-three couples participated.

Program

The Marriage Enrichment Weekend was based on John and Millie Youngberg's manual entitled Marriage Commitment Mini-Seminar: A Complete How-to Guide. During the weekend, besides the lectures, couples had time to talk privately and in small groups about communication, gender differences, and specific needs of each spouse. Time was set aside for romance and love building, for re-commitment, and for relaxation in the hotel’s indoor swimming pool.

A climate of surprise and romance was enhanced by putting presents such as Hershey kisses, Andes mint-chocolates, and non-alcoholic cider with crystal goblets engraved for the occasion in the participants' rooms. Couples found the surprises when, after a lecture session finished, they were asked to leave the conference room and go to their rooms.

On Sunday morning each participating couple was asked to support their church Family Life Co-directors on a regular basis through a small group ministry they would start in their churches. Specific dates were given.

The weekend ended in a high spiritual tone with a foot washing and communion service. Right after the Johnny Lingo film was shown, couples were asked to go to their rooms for the foot washing ceremony. Husbands were assigned to ask their wives for forgiveness. First they would ask them about emotional or physical wounds that they might have generated, in order to specifically ask their partners' forgiveness. Then husbands were asked to ask God in prayer for His forgiveness. And finally they would wash their wife's feet. Wives were asked to follow the same process. And when both finished, they returned to the conference room to end the service with the communion and re-dedication of marriage vows.

An evaluation was handed out to all participants as they left the conference room at the conclusion of the weekend. Among several questions, they were asked to give an overall rating of the weekend on a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being the highest. The average score was 9.2. In the evaluation form the couples were encouraged to make comments on how the weekend could be improved in the future.¹

¹These are some of the comments: "We preferred a hot meal on Saturday evening dinner"; "Everything has been well planned with dedication and meticulously. Thanks, and may God bless you"; "We would prefer a little more time for dialogue with the spouse"; "We should have weekends like this more often"; "I want to thank the Pastor and his wife for the example of love they showed us. They are tremendous people, and may the Lord continue to bless them"; "Instead of one Marriage Enrichment Weekend every year we should have two although we would have to pay a little more"; "I believe that this seminar should be given to the young couples before marriage"; "I love you. You saved my marriage. May God bless you. THANK YOU";
Follow-up

CFLDs and participant couples were visited. They were asked to meet together in geographical groups such as those from Grand Rapids and those from the Berrien Springs areas. The visitation took place between May 22 and 25, 1995. Different groups responded differently to the appointment. Twenty-three percent of those from the Grand Rapids area attended (three out of 13), while 83 percent from Detroit (4 of 6), and 72 percent from Berrien Springs (8 out of 11).

Each meeting started with a relational Bible study followed by a conversational prayer. The second hour was dedicated to evaluating the Marriage Enrichment Weekend, and to encourage everybody to organize small groups based on family life cycles, and to participate actively in them. Manuals on how to organize and what to discuss in the meetings were displayed.

The Berrien Springs CFLD organized a meeting a week later to start those family-life-cycle small groups. Leaders of such groups were assigned to the life cycle groups in which they were in or in the cycle they had just passed in order to assure an agenda more relevant to the participants.

At each meeting groups were asked to support the Family Retreat at Camp Au Sable. They were to do this by recruiting church families to attend and by attending themselves.

CFLDs shared how Family Prayer Partners work. They also told how such prayers were impacting their families as well as the families for whom they were

"What a fantastic weekend! Thank you."
praying.

After some weeks, a letter was sent to CFLDs as well as to each participant couple at the Marriage Enrichment Weekend. Its purpose was to ask for their support for the Hispanic Family Retreat at Camp Au Sable by their attendance, and by encouraging other family units from their churches and community to participate. The letter also included good reports on what CFLDs were doing regarding the family life cycle small group ministry.

Hispanic Family Retreat

Location and Date

The location for this event was Camp Au Sable, the Michigan Conference campground. Although somewhat far from the Hispanic churches, Au Sable is an ideal setting to bring families into contact with God and nature. The camp provided affordable lodging, a private lake, horseback riding, canoeing, water skiing, mountain biking, and go-cart riding; the Spanish churches provided the meals. The date for the retreat was May 26 through 28, 1995.

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CFLDs were asked to promote this event with their pastors. Since the event had already being in existence among the Spanish churches, pastors were already promoting it. Pastors were thankful when they knew that CFLDs wanted to assist them in promoting the event. As a result, attendance surpassed the previous year’s attendance by 47 percent (from 154 in 1994 to 227 in 1995). As one pastor said, “this can be attributed
to the commitment of the CFLDs, and the participants in the Marriage Enrichment Weekend."

Program

Recognizing that family units come in “different sizes and shapes,” the presentations given were geared to assist needs of couples, traditional families, single parents, and youth. Two guest speakers gave the presentations during the weekend.

Social activities in which family units were encouraged to participate together were planned for Saturday night and Sunday.

As a result of the weekend, families returned home with a stronger sense of family. Several families decided to take time regularly for family activities in order to continue building on what they learned and experienced during the weekend.

Follow-up

Between June 13 and 21, 1995,¹ CFLDs were visited for the fourth time with several purposes in mind. These were (1) to express gratitude for their support in the Hispanic Family Retreat; (2) to continue assisting them in their planning and implementation steps of their church Family Life Department; (3) to monitor the prayer partner concept; (5) and to invite and remind them of the second training retreat coming in three weeks.

Based on the questions and comments CFLDs made, they were more

¹Detroit and Lansing were visited on June 13 and 14 respectively. Grand Rapids and Holland on June 19 and 20, and Berrien Springs and Lawrence on June 21.
knowledgeable of what their ministry was all about and their role in it. These are examples of statements they made: “How can I integrate Family Life ministries into the church life?” “How can I better minister to these family dynamics?” “Where do I go from here?” “I did not receive the support I expected from my church leaders.” “Does the Family Life Department assist young people who are making plans to get married?”

“Does the Family Life Department also include retired people?”

Every CFLD was told that in the coming training weekend they would have time to share what they were able to plan and/or implement in their churches.

Father/Son Camp

Location and Date

The chosen campground was a family-owned property that offered an attractive place for this event: a small petting zoo, hay rides, a private lake, foot trails, primitive and full hook-up spaces, a private sector used by the group, and a food store with reasonable prices. The time scheduled for the camp out was July 28-30, 1995.

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At the fourth visit to CFLDs a brochure and other information were given to them to promote the Father/Son Camp, the third and last special activity planned to start the Family Life Department in the Hispanic Churches in the Michigan Conference.

Participants

Among the different interrelations that exist in a family, the father-son relation
tends to be the weakest because of the father’s emotional or physical absence from home and the casual level of communication of men, which probably rates a 2 on a scale of 1-5. In order to build this relationship, the “Father/Son Camp” was planned.

Program

In order to nurture a relationship between father and son or sons, the program included little time assigned for meetings. Father-son teams had the chance to spend time together while preparing their meals, reading the morning devotionals, studying the Sabbath School lesson, walking the foot trails, visiting the pet zoo, swimming in the lake, and playing.

General sessions were provided at the beginning of the weekend, when materials were distributed and the weekend schedule was explained. On Sabbath morning a special speaker presented the sermon. On Saturday evening several father-son teams worked together on Bible sketches.

At the last general meeting on Saturday evening a verbal evaluation was made by the participants. The children as well as the adults gave their opinion. One son said: “I liked having my daddy all weekend just for me.” Another commented: “Daddy is always busy; it is hard to catch him during the week because of his work, and during the weekends because of the church activities and sports. But now we spent all weekend with each other.” A third child publicly said: “Daddy, thank you for giving me this weekend; I love you.” Fathers’ comments can be summarized by this statement: “I love

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you son, and I knew you love me; but I do not remember telling you that. I want to spend more time with you.”

Summary

The training of the Church Family Life Directors among the Hispanic churches in the Michigan Conference project was accomplished by selecting the Church Family Life Co-directors, by training weekends, letters and personal visits to CFLDs, and by special events.

The training weekends were the most systematic means used in the project. In the training of the CFLDs, appropriate information was considered key to the process. That is why they received information about how to organize the department, about the foundations of the ministry, and about the systemic and development approaches to the family. Notwithstanding the importance of the information and the visual devices used, it was also important to consider the appropriate place, the time of year, and the length of the training weekends to achieve maximum results. The questions and case studies brought by participants contributed in the learning process.

The most personal means used in the project was visitation. Through it, and assisted by the letters, a family mood was generated between myself and the Family Life Co-director couples. And because of that, the level of trust grew before the training weekends, thus achieving a higher level of learning at these sessions.

The letters helped to keep the flame alive. Because of the distance and the limited financial resources, letters allowed CFLDs to keep in mind what was expected from
them as Family Life Co-directors. Letter also announced future activities.

The special events gave to the department and to CFLDs the chance to establish a positive image of the Family Life ministry among the Hispanic churches. CFLDs could see that, through their leadership, several homes were enriched.

Among the means used to accomplish the training of the CFLDs, the more objective was the analysis of the data of the four questionnaires, two for each training weekend. As the data showed, CFLDs increased in knowledge of the ministry of the Family Life Department at both training seminars. The knowledge scores increased more on the first weekend than the second. This may be related to the delay in applying the posttest the second time. The posttest on both occasions showed a high degree of commitment to the task.

In summary, CFLDs caught the vision of what the Family Life Department is and of what their role as leaders of that new ministry was. They also pledged commitment by their interest in attending the training seminars and by supporting the special events.
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, REFLECTIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter attempts to present a brief summary of the dissertation, reflections on the project, and recommendations for future implementation of similar projects and further investigation on this topic.

Summary

Chapter 2 presented the biblical findings on marriage and family. The origin of the family lies at the heart of the creative purpose of God. The Bible begins and ends with a family portrait.

Different Hebrew and Greek words, often understood as relating to the family, show that family may refer to a nuclear family: a small group of people related by blood, marriage, or adoption; and even to a house, tribe, or nation. Although there is no biblical word for a nuclear family, the fifth commandment and Christ’s exhortations show it as central to the divine plan.

Both Old and New Testaments speak of the marriage as a permanent, monogamous relationship between a man and a woman. Hebrew history shows other family styles and deviations--such as polygamy, concubinage, and divorce--but they were not sanctioned by the Creator. Two restrictions for marriage were noted in the Old
Testament: no marriages within close degrees of relationships, and no marriages of the children of Israel with persons of other nations.

Among the different family relationships, the two basic interactions were examined: the relationship between husband and wife, and between parents and children. While the Bible clearly depicts wifely subordination, several biblical references support a mutual and equal relationship between the couple. In regard to the relationship between parents and children, Scripture indicates that parents are responsible for the nurture of their children in love by teaching, modeling, and disciplining; children are to honor their parents, obeying them when young, and honoring and caring for them when mature.

The Bible shows five purposes for the family. While the first two determine the existence of a family—procreation and sexual expression—the last three have to do with the quality of a family.

Chapter 3 provided an overview of the socio-theoretical conceptual frameworks used to study the family. Of all approaches to marriage and family, the family-development framework seemed to provide the best basis for the Family Life Ministry in the church, since such a ministry is preventive in nature. There are nine cycles or stages, of which seven are developmental, while "single person" and "single parent" stages are circumstantial.

For a family to be strong and healthy, it should complete the issues of each stage before moving to the succeeding stages. The first cycle is called "Pre-Marital." It covers the time when a young person starts looking for a more intimate friendship with
the opposite sex until the wedding of the couple. The main tasks at this stage are differentiation from one’s family of origin and the selection of a mate. The "Neo-Marital" stage, the second one, starts at the wedding and ends at the birth of the first child. The fundamental tasks of this stage are to learn the roles of husband and wife and to accept and celebrate their differences. The third stage, the "Neo-Parental," begins with the birth of the first child and ends when the last child enters school. Its main task is for the parents to shift from care receivers to care givers.

The "Young Children" stage is the fourth. It starts when the last child enters school and ends with the first teenager. The main task adults have in this stage is to increase the empowerment as the age and maturity of their children increase. The fifth stage is called "First Teenager." It starts from the time the previous stage ends, and ends when the first offspring leave home. The main task at this stage is to provide flexibility and permeability of the family boundaries. While children are small, family is the center of their lives. But when children come to adolescence, the outside-of-the-family environment takes priority in their lives.

The "Empty Nest" is the following stage. It starts when the first child leaves home and ends at retirement. This stage is the longest of all family cycles. The main tasks are to regain intimacy with the partner and to open the family boundaries to include new members. The last of the developmental stages is called "Retirement Stage," which starts with retirement and ends with the death of a spouse. The main tasks are to find a sense of usefulness in life, and to adjust to life without a partner.

The "Single Person" stage is the eighth stage of the family-development
framework. It begins when an adult individual decides to stay single for a period of time, and ends when the marital status of that person changes. The major task is to deal with the sense of rootlessness and disconnectedness. The last stage is the "Single Parent," which covers any time a parent with one or more children is alone. The main task is to perform the impossible task of being provider and care giver at the same time.

Chapter 4 dealt with the Hispanic family in the United States. According to the 1990 census, there are more than 20 million Hispanics, making the United States the fifth largest Hispanic country in the world. The largest number of Hispanics is in California (34 percent) and Texas (21 percent). More than half of them are of Mexican origin (62 percent), followed by Puerto Ricans (13 percent). Hispanics tend to live in metropolitan areas. The median age of the Hispanic population is 25.5 years of age, compared to 32.5 years in the general population. The religious preference is Roman Catholic, although the percentage is declining (77 percent in 1972 versus 66 percent in 1998).

Hispanics share some characteristics, but each group has its own differences. For example, Cubans are older, better educated, and richer. Mexicans are more family-oriented and value machismo. Puerto Ricans, as United States citizens, have more mobility. The most notable similarities among Hispanics are familism, the social support systems, and similar gender roles.

The word "family" has a broad meaning to Hispanics. It is not limited to the nuclear family, but spans three generations. The extended family, which provides control over the children, provides the adolescent with a sense of security and
connectedness. The large size of a family tends to make older children parents of the younger one. The *compadre* or godfather adds support to the nuclear family; the godfather takes on the role of an additional parent, providing emotional, and sometimes political and financial, support to the younger generation.

Hispanics are usually more traditional than North Americans in the distinction of the roles of man and woman in the family. Females are caretakers, followers, and child rearers, while males are the providers and *macho* leaders. Today, circumstances are causing a shift of this traditional gender role with the males losing ground, thereby creating conditions which make them defensive and lead them to experience low self-esteem.

Chapter 5 described the project, which included the formation of the FLD in the Hispanic churches in the Michigan Conference, the training of the CFLDs, and the planning and execution of special events to strengthen the newly formed department.

With the support of local church pastors and approval from the Michigan Conference officers, local church boards, following previously determined criteria, nominated CFLDs. All CFLDs were visited to confirm their nomination and to review their job description and expectations.

Three training sessions were held. In all of them time was devoted to present the foundations of the FLD and the general steps to organize the department and to affirm the bases of this new ministry, as well as to answer questions from the participating couples. In the first session there were lectures on the biblical perspectives on marriage and the family, and the family-system framework; in the second, the lectures spoke
about the Hispanic family in the United States. The lectures of the third session, which was an addition to the project requested by the CFLDs, presented most of the stages of the family life cycle according to the family-development framework.

Two questionnaires were administered to all participants at both planned training sessions to measure changes in knowledge and attitude regarding the family, FLD, and the participants' role as leaders. The same basic questionnaire was given at the beginning and end of each session. Both showed an improvement on the posttests over the pretests, with the first session questionnaire having the largest improvement.

Three special events were organized to focus interest on the department. The Marriage Enrichment Weekend was intended to strengthen the husband and wife relationship. During the weekend, besides the lectures, couples had time to talk privately and in small groups about communication, gender, and temperament differences. Time was set aside for romance and love building, for re-commitment, and for relaxation.

The Hispanic Family Retreat was the second special event. Using the Michigan Conference camp property, participating families had opportunity to spend time together while walking the trails, playing games, visiting nature centers, and worshipping together on the Sabbath.

The third special event was the Father/Son Camp. This camp was planned and organized because the father-son relation tends to be the weakest in a family. With few organized meetings, teams of fathers and sons spent time together cooking, studying the Bible, hiking, visiting the petting zoo, and playing.
Personal Reflections

The study of marriage and the family from the biblical and the socio-theoretical perspectives greatly extended my understanding of the complexity of marriage and the family. The analysis of the Hispanic family in the United States opened my mind to better ascertain, respect, and accept the core similarities and differences that, according to their origin, exist among the Hispanics.

The implementation of this project had an impact on my ministry. I saw growth within the CFLDs, as well as in the relationship among themselves, and between them and myself. The friendship and the trust that I gained from visiting them and writing to them was a meaningful experience. I saw the CFLDs grow in their marriages and families, and lovingly implement ideas expressed at the training sessions to offer better alternatives to family challenges.

Judging from numerous conversations following the sessions and special events, those CFLDs who attended the training sessions were sincerely grateful for the information that was shared. Based on the written evaluation given by the couples at the end of the Marriage Enrichment Weekend, and the public expressions from fathers and sons at their Father/Son Camp, I foresee stronger homes and more intimate relationships among these family units.

In talking and visiting the pastors, I sense that the churches were strengthened, since better homes create better churches. It was surprising to see that, among many other opportunities I had to influence the life of the Hispanic churches, to provide tools for the enrichment of the couples and family relationships gave me the most respect
from them. Even today, when I visit those churches, family members do not recall my sermons or even personal visits, but do recall the experience they gained at those special events.

**Recommendations**

A number of recommendations could validate the usefulness of this model for training CFLDs, especially, but not only, in Hispanic churches within the Seventh-day Adventist Church:

1. It takes more than one successful application of a new model to validate it as an effective tool. More testing needs to be done to discover whether or not the positive results achieved through this model of the CFLDs of the Hispanic churches in the Michigan Conference can be replicated elsewhere. Therefore it is recommended that this model be presented in other conferences or local churches.

2. If this model of training CFLDs is to be an effective strategy, it is recommended that the process be redesigned. Two major needs seem to be for more time for interaction and discussion, and more clarity in teaching and testing at the training sessions.
   
   a. Since change takes between two and three years to be integrated into lifestyle, the program should include three sessions a year over a two-year period.

   b. At each training session the foundations of the Family Life Ministry and the steps to organize this department should be emphasized, based on the
premise that repetition is the mother of learning.

c. More time should be devoted to questions and discussion in each session.

d. The questionnaires should be refined to obtain a more reliable analysis of the participants' responses.

3. If the model is found to be useful and if it is redesigned, this approach to training CFLDs could be made available for widespread use in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT'S MANUAL
DEPARTAMENTO DE VIDA FAMILIAR

CURSO DE ENTRENAMIENTO I

preparado por Jorge Mayer
West Western Governor's Inn de Lansing
22 y 23 de abril de 1995
Objetivos:

1. Capacitarnos mejor para cumplir nuestra tarea de directores de VF por medio de información concerniente al estado actual de la familia

2. Identificar las características de un hogar saludable

3. Conocer mejor el plan de Dios sobre el hogar

4. Organizar el plan de acción para el departamento

5. Crear conciencia de la importancia del Dept. de VF
CONDICIÓN ACTUAL DE LAS FAMILIAS

1. Actitudes hacia el ________________:

2. ________________ en los roles:

3. Presiones financieras:

4. Revolución ________________:
   Homosexuales:
   Fornicación:
   Cohabitation:

5. Complejidad de la tarea paternal:
6. Hogares con ____________________________:

7. __________________ familiar:

8. Aumento en los índices de __________________:
   Estadísticas:
   Leyes laxas:
   Evangélicos

9. Matrimonio en segundas nupcias:

10. Cadena ____________________________ de la familia:
    Los hábitos familiares tienden a repetirse: si funcionan bien o mal
tenderán a repetirse. Las relaciones familiares pobres promueven hábitos,
actitudes y emociones negativas en los hijos.

11. ____________________________ de los medios de comunicación:
    Novelas (soaps) y programas de entrevistas (talk shows)
    Películas de Hollywood
Sin embargo, a pesar de las dificultades que atraviesa la familia, no perecerá. Fue una institución edénica de origen divino con un propósito permanente (por lo menos en esta tierra). Las últimas estadísticas dan un cuadro algo halagüeño.¹

¹Barna, 39-64
1. El ministerio familiar debe ser primariamente _________________________.
   Aunque será sensitivo para con quienes la prevención es demasiado tarde, el blanco del ministerio de vida familiar es equipar y edificar a las familias en un modo preventivo. Reflejará una enseñanza positiva enfocada a los problemas y conflictos mientras son manejables.

2. El ministerio familiar debe operar sobre las __________________________
del matrimonio y la familia.

3. El ministerio familiar debe tomar en cuenta las ______________________
que suceden en la familia y no solamente los ______________________ que viven en él.

4. El ministerio familiar debe orientar y guiar sobre los ________________
de_______________________________ de la vida familiar.

5. El ministerio familiar debe ofrecer tanto ______________________
____________________ para las familias como también estar integrado en cada aspecto de la vida de la _________________________.
a. Actividades especiales
b. Desarrollando programas dentro de los ministerios ya existentes

c. Creando una atmósfera familista que permee el ser y el propósito de la iglesia.

6. El ministerio familiar debe expandirse para incluir a la
PASOS PARA ORGANIZAR EL DEPARTAMENTO DE VIDA FAMILIAR

1. **Seleccionar a los dirigentes:**
   a. Co-directores:
      Las cualidades ideales de sus dirigentes serán:
      (1) Preferentemente una pareja.
      (2) Deberán estar interesados en el crecimiento de su hogar y en ayudar a otras familias a crecer.
      (3) Gozar del respeto de los demás hogares de la iglesia.
      (4) Tener una relación creciente de comunión con Dios.
      Sus funciones serán:
      (1) Recolectar, con la orientación del pastor, datos estadísticos de la iglesia. Ver *Cuidemos a las Familias de Hoy*, 47.
      (2) Definir, con la ayuda del pastor, las necesidades de los miembros de la iglesia para proveer educación e instrucción, consejo y programas de enriquecimiento.
      (3) Diseñar, planear, e implementar, con la cooperación del pastor, programas especiales para las familias.
      (4) Fomentar un espíritu de compañerismo en la congregación, enfatizando en los diferentes departamentos y programas de la iglesia, que la familia es algo muy especial.
      (5) Cooperar con el director del Ministerio de Vida Familiar de la Asociación para fomentar el fortalecimiento de las familias de la Asociación.

b. Comisión de Vida Familiar:

2. **Determinar las necesidades de la iglesia:**
   a. Por observación:
b. Por recolección de información específica a través de:

(1) Entrevistas a un grupo especial:

(2) Entrevistas a un grupo clave:

(3) Entrevistas individuales:

(4) Encuestas:

c. Por recolección de información general en artículos de revistas, de periódicos, estadísticas nacionales y libros actuales.

(1) Bureau of the Census: "Actualmente, hay más de 14 millones de familias con un solo padre en Estados Unidos. Esto representa más de 1 de cada 7 familias en la nación, un aumento del 36% desde 1970".2

(2) George Barna: "Los hijos de los divorciados generalmente reciben menos cuidado y disciplina del progenitor que tiene consigo, se prestan menos para jugar con los compañeros de la escuela, sufren de peor salud, tienen elevado índice de problemas emocionales y sexuales como también conductas antisociales, tienen una visión más negativa del mundo, y sienten un profundo nivel de soledad y rechazo".3

(3) George Barna: "Nuestro estudio, realizado entre adolescentes, halló que en hogares donde la madre vive con el hijo, los jovencitos dijeron que ellas dedicaban un promedio de 50 minutos a la semana en una interacción significativa con ellos. En hogares donde el padre vive con él, el adolescente respondió que el padre dedicaba 15 minutos a la semana en contacto significativo con él. Se estima que un siglo atrás los padres dedicaban 54% de su tiempo despierto en actividades


3Barna, 86.
relacionadas con la crianza de los hijos. Hoy, el cálculo es de 18%".4

3. **Formar y organizar programas o actividades.**
   a. Clases:
   b. Asignación de responsabilidades:

4. **Evaluar los resultados.**

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4 Ibid, 106.
PASOS A SEGUIR EN NUESTRA ESTRATEGIA ORGANIZACIONAL

1. Fortalecer el núcleo fundamental del hogar que es el matrimonio. Una de las maneras de resaltar ese ideal es animando a las parejas a participar de reuniones de enriquecimiento matrimonial tales como Encuentro Matrimonial.  
   6 y 7 de mayo

2. Fortalecer la unidad familiar EE.UU.ndo como uno de los medios el Retiro de las Familias Hispanas en Camp AEE.UU.ble. 26 al 28 de mayo

3. Reunión con parejas participantes del Encuentro Matrimonial, directores de Vida Familiar y Coordinador del Ministerio Hispano para iniciar los grupos pequeños entre parejas.
   (1) Lunes 22 de mayo Iglesias de Berrien Springs y Lawrence 7:00 pm
   (2) Martes 23 de mayo Iglesias de Holland, Maranatha, Grand Rapids y Wyoming 7:00 pm
   (3) Miércoles 24 de mayo Iglesias de Lansing y Detroit 7:00 pm

Arreglos para esa reunión: Se espera que los directores de vida familiar hagan los arreglos con las parejas para que asistan y traigan un liviano refrigerio (refresco, galletas).

Propósito: dar inicio a grupos pequeños de apoyo e instrucción preventiva en un ambiente informal.

Formato: social con una breve y práctica charla a cargo del director de vida familiar o de quien el pastor haya decidiido.

4. Participación del Retiro de las Familias en Camp AEE.UU.ble: 26 al 28 de mayo

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5. Inicio de los grupos matrimoniales. Tales grupos no son cerrados. Por el contrario se anima a invitar a toda pareja de la iglesia y de la comunidad.  

*Primera mitad de junio*

6. Determinar las necesidades de la iglesia: EE.UU.ndo la encuesta, entrevistas, información general, o sugerencias del pastor.  

*Segunda mitad de junio*

7. Si la iglesia tiene jovenes en edad de matrimonio o amistad del sexo opuesto, sería oportuno que se iniciara orientación pre-matrimonial EE.UU.ndo el formato de clases o seminarios en la iglesia. Si así se hiciese, sería oportuno incluir a un joven adulto soltero en la comisión de Vida Familiar, siguiendo los criterios mencionados en el inciso 10.

8. Comenzar la promoción del **Campamento Papi y Yo**  

*28 al 30 de julio*

9. Participar del **segundo fin de semana de entrenamiento**:

*8 y 9 de julio en Albion*

   a. Se presentará las caracaterísticas de la familia hispana en EE.UU.
   b. Se darán explicaciones acerca de cómo continuar ampliando otras áreas de las relaciones familiares.
   c. Los directores de Vida Familiar podrán traer inquietudes para trabajar juntos en las soluciones.
   d. Se informará sobre los grupos de matrimonios y las clases para jovenes solteros (si se las hubiese iniciado ya).

10. Nombrar la Comisión de Vida Familiar y estudiar juntos los resultados de las encuestas:  

*9 al 20 de julio*

Será oportuno incluir en ella aquellos miembros que han pasado o están pasando exitosamente la etapa del ciclo familiar que la encuesta ha demostrado...
que hay mayor necesidad. A la vez se nombrará a esa persona como responsable, coordinadora y directora de ese ciclo bajo la dirección de los co-directores del departamento de VF.

**Sugerencia:** durante el resto de 1995, iniciar un grupo pequeño más adicional al de matrimonios, y dirigir o coordinar 1 ó 2 seminarios o clases en las iglesias.

11. Participar o animar a otros a participar del campamento Papi y Yo:

   28 al 30 de julio

12. Dar inicio al siguiente grupo pequeño siguiendo patrones similares al primero:

   agosto-octubre
INSTRUCCIÓN BÍBLICA SOBRE EL MATRIMONIO Y LA FAMILIA

1. **Origen**: Génesis 1:27-28 y 2:18. 21-24 nos declaran que Dios es el Creador del matrimonio y la familia. EGW lo confirma: "El sábado y la familia fueron instituidos en el Edén".\(^5\)

2. **Significado del término Familia**

3. **Características de la**

   a. 
   
   b. **Ley del levirato**
   
   c. **_del cónyuge**
   
   d. Recién casados
   
   e. **_para el matrimonio**
   
   f. En el NT

4. **Relaciones familiares**

   a. **Esposos: referencia primaria previa a la caída**
   
   (1) Imagen de Dios incluye ______________: Dios, que existe en relación, creó la raza humana a su imagen (para que tengan relación)

---

Referencia primaria después del pecado Ef 5:21-33.

(1) Mutua ___________________________ (v. 21)
EGW: "Ni el esposo ni la esposa deben exigir el dominio".  

(2) Respeto o ___________________________ de la esposa
EGW: "Cuando los maridos exigen de sus esposas una sumisión completa, declarando que las mujeres no tienen voz ni voluntad en la familia, sino que deben permanecer sujetas en absoluto, colocan a sus esposas en una condición contraria a la que les asigna la Escritura. Al interpretar ésta así, atropellan el propósito de la institución matrimonial. Recurren a esta interpretación simplemente para poder gobernar arbitrariamente."  

(3) Cabeza del esposo
(4) Amor del esposo

b. Padres e ___________________________

(1) Hijos son ___________________________ divino
(2) Padres no deben ___________________________: no deben tomar ventaja de su ___________________________
(3) Hijos deben ___________________________ a sus padres; deben oírlos para ganar sabiduría (Prov 1:4,8; 6:20-29).
EGW: "No hay periodo de la vida en el cual los hijos están

6White, Testimonies, 7:47.
7White, El Hogar Adventista, 101-02.
6. Propósito de la familia

a. de la familia (Gen 1:28). Razones:
   
   (1) Llenar la tierra con hogares y escuelas que fuesen _____________
       ________________ del Edén.
   
       "De ese modo, con el transcurso del tiempo, toda la tierra debía
       ser ocupada por hogares y escuelas donde se estudiara la Palabra
       y las obras de Dios y donde los estudiantes se preparasen para
       reflejar cada vez más plenamente, a través de los siglos sin fin, la
       luz del conocimiento de su gloria".9
   
   (2) ________________ el cielo.
       "Era el propósito de Dios repoblar el cielo con la familia humana,
       si se manifestaban obedientes a cada palabra suya".10
   
       * En el AT se da énfasis a familias _________________. Sin
       embargo el NT enfatiza la ________________ responsable (1 Tim 5:8).
   
       * Hogar sin hijos no es castigo de Dios.

b. Ofrecer un lugar de ________________,
   ________________ y compañía mutua
   EGW: "en su día reserva a la familia la oportunidad de tener comunión
   con él, con la naturaleza y unos con otros".11

b. Lugar para la expresión ________________ No es impuro a no
   ser que se lo practique fuera del matrimonio (Ex 20:14; 1 Cor 6:16-19).

8White, Testimonies, 2:80.
9White, La Maravillosa Gracia de Dios, 343.
10Ibid, 344.
11White, Conducción del Niño, 508.
d. Transmitir la ______________ religiosa a la siguiente generación.

e. ______________ el reino de Dios: la familia no es un fin sino un medio del discípulo de Cristo.

EGW: "La tarea de los padres cristianos... debe comenzar con sus propios hijos. Presente a la iglesia y al mundo una familia bien disciplinada, y habrá presentado uno de los argumentos más fuertes en favor del Cristianismo".12

Debe comenzar en casa y luego, por ejemplo y palabra, al mundo.

EGW: "Sus propios corazones deben estar embuidos con el Espíritu de Dios. y sus labores deben comenzar en casa: sus familias deben tener el beneficio de su influencia... Entonces el círculo debe ampliarse".13

---


13 White, Spirit of Prophecy, 1:24.
LA FAMILIA SALUDABLE DE ACUERDO CON EL ENFOQUE SISTÉMICO

El enfoque teórico sistemico no enfoca tanto a los miembros de la familia como a sus relaciones y dinámicas.

Definiciones o conceptos claves:
1. ________________ (la familia o el matrimonio) es más que la suma de sus miembros.
2. ________________ (el círculo alrededor de la familia que limita lo que es la familia y lo que no es) es lo que rodea por fuera al sistema.
3. ________________ (lo que está fuera de la familia) es todo aquello que está afuera del borde del sistema.
4. El borde puede ser ________________ o ________________. Si es cerrado la familia no recibe influencia del medio ambiente; si es abierto hay gran influencia.
5. ________________ (partes interrelacionadas dentro de la familia) son partes del sistema que se relacionan entre sí.

Características de la familia saludable:
1. __________ En la familia saludable hay individualidad y sus miembros se consideran parte de la familia
   En la familia débil están enmarañados (enredados) o desconectados.
2. ________________ La familia saludable es entre flexible y estructurada.
   En la familia débil la adaptabilidad va del extremo de estar en caos al de rigidez.
3. ________________ La familia saludable es clara en su transmisión y percepción.
   La familia débil transmite y percibe los mensajes en forma confUSA.
4. _______________ La familia saludable tiene roles designados claramente como también son claros los límites de una generación con la otra.

La familia débil vive en disputas por los roles, y los límites entre una generación y otra son confusos.
LA FAMILIA SALUDABLE DE ACUERDO CON EL ENFOQUE DEL DESARROLLO

El método del desarrollo mira a la familia en un sentido lineal. Cada adulto pasa por períodos predecibles en su desarrollo. La familia saludable es aquella que ha cumplido con éxito las tareas requeridas en cada etapa o ciclo de la vida familiar adulta.

Conceptos básicos:
1. La familia o sistema tiene ______________ que cumplir en diferentes etapas de su vida.
2. Si la familia lo lleva a cabo con ______________ avanza mejor al siguiente ciclo.
3. Hay tareas que son ______________ a un ciclo, otras continúan desarrollándose en las etapas subsecuentes.

Ciclos de la vida familiar:
A. Los años iniciales
   1. Pre-matrimonial
   2. Neo-matrimonial
   3. Neo-paternal

B. Los años constructivos
   4. Hijos escolares
   5. Hijo adolescente

C. Los años maduros
   6. Nido vacío
   7. Jubilación

D. Los años solos
   8. Persona sola
   9. Padre solo

A. LOS AÑOS INICIALES
Las dos tareas principales de este grupo es el ______________ y ______________
1. **Pre-matrimonial**

   a. **Duración:** comienza con el tiempo cuando el joven busca desarrollar __________ ___________ con el sexo opuesto. y concluye con el ____________ de la pareja.

   b. **La tarea más importante** es la de diferenciarse de su familia de origen.
      
      (1) Es relativamente fácil caer en los extremos de desasociarse o confundirse con los progenitores.
      
      (2) El hijo pródigo y su hermano mayor.

   c. **Otra tarea es _____________** el futuro cónyuge. Los investigadores Kerckhoff y David crearon la teoría del filtro:
      
      (1) el primero y más ancho filtro es llamado endogamia: las personas establecen relaciones con personas con _________________ (raza, gustos, trabajan juntos. etc).
      
      (2) El segundo, más angosto y selectivo es homogamia: salen sólo con aquellos con quienes tienen intereses comunes (entretenimientos, lectura, número de hijos, iglesia. etc).
      
      (3) Y el tercero, el más angosto, es que las personas se buscan porque tienen necesidades complementarias (temperamentos).

      (4) El joven cristiano requiere otro filtro: el conocer la ______________ ___________ de _____________. Tres principios:
      
      (1) Buscar a Dios por medio del estudio de la Biblia y la oración.
      
      (2) Buscar consejo de los padres.
      
      (3) Buscar consejo de familiares y amigos cristianos.

   EGW: "En éste, el período más importante de sus vidas, necesitan un consejero que no se equivoque, un guía infalible. Esto lo hallarán en la Palabra de Dios. A menos que sean estudiantes diligentes de esa palabra, cometerán graves errores, lo que afectará su felicidad y la de otros...

   "Toma a Dios y a tu padres temerosos de Dios para pedir consejo. Oren sobre este asunto... El paso que están por dar es
uno de los más importantes en sus vidas, y por ello no deben tomarlo apresuradamente".  

**c. La tercera función** es aprender a desarrollar una comunicación ____________ y ____________ con el futuro cónyuge sobre temas concernientes al futuro de la relación, tales como: roles, administración del dinero, hijos y cuántos, tiempo con los amigos, planes de carrera y educativos, familiares políticos y otros.

**d. La iglesia podrá ministrarlos:**

(1) Dando ejemplos dignos de ser imitados.

(2) Dando seminarios sobre temas mencionados anteriormente.

**2. Neo-matrimonial**

**a. Duración:** comienza con el _______________ de la pareja y concluye a la llegada del _______________.

**b. La tarea más importante es _______________ el rol de __________ y ___________.**

El pasaje bíblico de Gén 2:24 comprueba que es difícil. "Dejar" tiene que ver con diferenciación. En la etapa previa, diferenciación era ser diferentes al vivir con los padres. Ahora la diferenciación requiere salir del nido y ser plenamente otro junto a otro que está queriendo ser otro también.

**c. Otra tarea es _______________ la responsabilidad de la nueva relación:**

**d. La tercera tarea es recordar que _______________ tiene una diferente:**

(1) Ella está en la tarea de establecer ___________ en el _____________

matrimonio

(2) Él está en la tarea de establecer ______________ en su trabajo

e. Período ______________ aunque "feliz"

f. **La iglesia tiene una gran oportunidad de ministrarlos.**
   (1) Dando ejemplos de otras familias que han superado ________ esta etapa
   (2) Ofreciendo seminarios y ______________
   (3) Organizando y dirigiendo _________ de apoyo y educación con otras parejas de la misma etapa

3. **Neo-paternal**
   a. **Duración:** comienza con la llegada del primer hijo y concluye cuando el último hijo va a la ______________
   b. **La tarea principal** es de manejar la tensión creada por la ____________ ______________ de una nueva persona en el sistema familiar
   c. **Otra tarea** es pasar de receptores de atención y cuidado, a ser los ______
   d. **Maternidad,** debido a la ruptura de la familia extendida, exige su casi total ________ ______________
   e. **La tercer tarea** es ______________ los hijos
      (1) Amor condicional unilateral
      (2) Aceptando las diferencias de cada hijo dentro del sistema familiar
      (3) Manteniendo consistencia entre mensajes verbales y no verbales
      (4) Tomando tiempo para saber qué piensan y sienten los hijos sobre sí mismos
      (5) Ofreciendo y estando dispuestos de recibir perdón
      (6) Enseñando y mostrando que cada miembro de la familia sirve y apoya al otro
      (7) Creando una disciplina apropiada para sus edades tales como las consecuencias naturales, lógicas y físicas.
   f. **La familia cristiana** estará velando por la ________________ de la
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en su trabajo.

e. **Otra tarea** es abrir los __________ del sistema familiar a la ____

f. Es la etapa del "tiempo ________________" cuando el tiempo no alcanza para hacer todo.

g. **La familia cristiana** aprovechará de la época de la memoria de ______, para continuar con la transmisión de la herencia religiosa.

h. **El ministerio de la iglesia**
   (1) Si la iglesia tiene suficientes padres con hijos en esta etapa y si es suficientemente grande (sobre 150 miembros) puede ofrecer grupos pequeños
   (2) Seminarios, charlas. En esta etapa y la siguiente los seminarios son muy beneficiosos
   (3) La iglesia hará bien en dar clases ______________ a estos jovencitos

5. **El primer adolescente:**
   a. **Duración:** comienza con la entrada del primer hijo en la adolescencia y concluye cuando el primer hijo __________ de la casa.
   b. **La tarea principal** es la de aumentar la ______________ y ______ ____________ de los bordes del sistema familiar.
   c. **La adolescencia traes crisis a la familia**
      (1) Adolescencia es creación de la revolución industrial
      (2) Brecha ________________
          (a) Hijos tienen crisis de ____________: quién soy, por qué estoy aquí, cuál es mi futuro.
          (b) Madre tiene crisis de ______________ en la relación matrimonial
          (c) Padre tiene crisis de ________________
d. **Otra tarea** es la de ________________ a la relación matrimonial

e. La familia cristiana que desea transmitir su herencia religiosa a la siguiente generación se halla en la etapa ________________ del ciclo.

f. **El ministerio de la iglesia**

   (1) Ofrecer ________________ para que la tormenta se sienta menos severa

   (2) Ofrecer seminarios para los padres

   (3) Ofrecer seminarios, retiros, campamentos para los adolescentes

   (4) Adolescentes están hambrientos de ________________

C. **LOS AÑOS MADUROS**

6. Nido vacío:

   a. **Duración**: comienza con la salida del __________ hijo de la casa y termina con la ________________ de uno de los cónyuges.

   b. La característica sobresaliente que lleva a la tarea más importante, es la de tener la mayor ________________ y ________________ de miembros en la familia

   c. **Otra tarea** es la de velar por la doble responsabilidad de ________________ de ambas generaciones inmediatas.

   d. **La tercera tarea** es de llevar la relación con el cónyuge a un grado ________________

   e. **Otra tarea** es seguir abriendo los bordes del sistema familiar para incluir a nuevos ________________

   f. **La pareja cristiana** tendrá oportunidad de:

   (1) Desarrollar una relación más íntima con Dios. Hay menos distracciones, menos tiempo dedicado a la paternidad.

   (2) Proveer apoyo a la generación joven por medio del ________________
La iglesia puede ministrar mediante
(1) la creación de un ambiente donde se pueda profundizar la amistad.
(2) Charlas en pequeños grupos sobre cómo otros hicieron frente positivamente a esta nueva y larga etapa.

7. Jubilación:
   a. Duración: comienza con la jubilación de uno de los cónyuges y concluye con la __________ del compañero.
   b. La tarea principal es de ________________ a la jubilación.
   c. La pareja cristiana todavía puede ayudar en la transmisión de valores morales a los hijos por medio de su ejemplo, y a los nietos por ejemplo e instrucción.
   d. El ministerio de la iglesia a ellos se centra en ofrecerles un lugar donde puedan ser __________. Aquellos que mejor hacen frente a esta etapa final de la vida son aquellos que han desarrollado un sistema de ayuda mutua: dan y reciben ayuda.

D. LOS AÑOS SOLOS

8. Persona sola:
   a. Duración: son las personas que están entre los ________________ o más. Pueden ser divorciados, viudos o adultos solteros.
   b. La tarea principal es doble. Ambos crean un elevado sentido de ______ ________
      (1) "______________________" se debe a la existencia de
relaciones no resueltas del pasado

(2) "__________________________" se debe a que los temas que se hablan en las actividades en las que generalmente participan no son aplicables directamente a ellos.

c. **La tarea principal específica de los divorciados** es ____________
   su parte en la ruptura de la relación matrimonial y ____________
   en contacto con las familias extendidas de ambos cónyuges

d. **La tarea principal específica para los adultos solteros** es ____________
   por qué no lo hicieron y formar una ____________
   ____________________________ que incluya conexiones saludables con la familia de origen y la familia extendida.

e. Para ambos grupos el tema de ________________ es otra tarea especial que se debe desarrollar

f. **El individuo cristiano** puede dedicar sus energías a la tarea de la salvación más extensamente que los que tienen familia (1 Cor 7:8).

g. **El ministerio de la iglesia**
   (1) Reconocer sus diferencias y ofrecerles algunas oportunidades para estar ____________, y a la vez los ____________ en las actividades y reuniones generales de otras etapas de la vida familiar
   (2) Presentará seminarios y retiros que abarquen las áreas especiales que confrontan.

9. **Padre solo:**
   a. **Duración:** comienza cuando el padre o madre decide permanecer solo/a y concluye con su casamiento
   b. **La tarea principal** es poder hacer frente a la ________________ tarea de ser padre y madre para sus hijos.
   c. **El padre solo cristiano** hará bien en recordar que Dios, el Protector, el
Consolador, el Proveedor, y el Disciplinador estará con él/ella mientras quiera ser ______________ por Él

d. El ministerio de la iglesia

(1) Llegar a ser ______________ para ellos
CONCLUSIÓN

1. Los ciclos de la vida familiar ofrecen un modelo preventivo apropiado para indicarnos el grado de ___________________________ de la familia.

2. El método sistémico ofrece un modelo preventivo y corrector apropiado para indicarnos el grado de ________________________________ de la familia que estará integrado al de las etapas familiares.

3. Siendo que no hay organización o institución a nivel federal, estatal o local que esté ayudando eficientemente a la familia, que las dinámicas que ofrecen las relaciones con la familia extendida han sido perdidas para muchos Norteamericanos, que las escuelas son impotentes y el gobierno está paralizado, la iglesia tiene una oportunidad única de ser el medio de asistencia y apoyo para las familias de la iglesia y de la comunidad.

4. Pero, ¿cómo podemos llenar ese ____________________________?
   (1) La iglesia que desea lanzar un ministerio para las familias no necesita comenzar organizando todo el espectro de la vida familiar. Lo que es importante es ____________________________________________
   (2) Dondequiera que se empiece, alguien tiene que _____________________ ___________________________ del programa. Alguien tiene que tomar la responsabilidad final del departamento
   (3) Los __________________________________________ proveen las condiciones para que se desarrollen las relaciones primarias para la discusión sobre los temas relacionados con cada etapa
   (4) Es mejor comentar el material en un ______________________________
        ____________________________ --un living room, alrededor de la mesa, en una caminata o campamento, etc.
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DEPARTAMENTO DE VIDA
FAMILIAR

CURSO DE ENTRENAMIENTO II

preparado por Jorge Mayer
Days Inn de Albion
8 y 9 de julio de 1995
LA FAMILIA HISPANA EN LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS DE NORTEAMÉRICA

¿Por qué los hispanos no se han fusionado en el crisol de razas que constituye esta nación?

1. Mayor número de ____________________

2. Van y _______________ a su tierra

3. Avances de las _________________: teléfono, estaciones de radio y televisión

4. Comercio _________________ con Latinamérica

Thomas Weyr al inicio de su libro Hispanic EE.UU.: Breaking the Melting Pot presenta en pocas palabras cómo se consideran los hispanos en EE.UU.:

Los hispanos no son como otros grupos de inmigrantes previos, tal vez porque no se consideran inmigrantes. Ellos han estado en EE.UU. por más de 450 años. Ellos pueden ser 18 millones o 20 millones o 23 millones o aún 30 millones. Están estableciendo el español como la segunda lengua junto al inglés en este país. Los hispanos están formando una nueva cultura y una nueva conciencia. Están cambiando la nación. Están quebrando el crisol de razas. Ellos quieren ser asimilados y mantenerse separados, ser parte de la corriente principal y retener su identidad. No una identidad nacional con una zona geográfica habitada por extranjeros, no otro Quebec, sino una identidad conferida por la amplia cultura que contiene historia, mitos, geografía, religión, educación e idioma.17

LOS HISPANOS EN LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS: ESTADÍSTICAS

Número de hispanos

De acuerdo con el censo de 1990, hay más de __________ millones de hispanos ________________

residiendo en EE.UU., la _______________ minora (9%) despues de los afro-
Norteamericanos (12%).

El crecimiento se debe a la _______________ y al numero de _______________
_____________.

Dónde viven los hispanos

_______________.

Los estados con mayor indice de hispanos son: _______________ (34%), ________
______________ (19%) y ________________ (10%).

Economía de los hispanos

Mientras que el promedio de los ingresos de una familia en EE.UU. en 1990 era
de $43,735 el promedio de la familia hispana era de $______________. A esto se debe
agregar que la familia hispana es más ________________.

LA FAMILIA HISPANA EN LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS: CARACTERÍSTICAS

Familismo

De entre las características del pueblo hispano, no hay otro que lo identifique
con más claridad. Como Madsen lo expresó: "la familia es como un santuario en un
mundo hostil lleno de envidia y codicia.” Cada miembro de la familia es considerado como un “símbolo caminante de la familia.”

El familismo se ve a través de dos expresiones sociales

1. Apoyo de los ________________:

2. El compadre:

El proceso de aculturización

Posibles reacciones:

a. La aceptación ___________ de la nueva cultura y su desasociación con la anterior

b. La aceptación _______________ de la nueva cultura, sin perder contacto con la anterior

c. El _______________ pleno de la nueva cultura y mantenimiento total de la anterior

¿Cómo se mide el grado de aculturización?

a. Por el uso del idioma que se habla en el ___________

---

b. Por cuanto más alejada está la familia de las ________________ del “viejo país”.

Machismo

1. Deseo de probarse _________ del hogar como un “______________”.
2. Deseo de probarse _________ de la casa por medio de la actitud del _______ _________________.

Mujer: Aunque el hombre puede demostrar promiscuidad, si la mujer lo hace es considerado como un horrendo ________________.

Divorcio

Como George Barna indica, “dada la alta prioridad que los hispanos ponen en el matrimonio y la familia, no es sorprendente ver que el índice de divorcio es menor que el de la población Anglosajona.”\textsuperscript{19} Sin embargo la realidad de hoy no es tan optimista. El índice de divorcio está aumentando. Si se toma el número de separaciones junto al de los divorcios de los hispanos las diferencias del índice de divorcios de la población en general, casi desaparecen.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{19}George Barna, \textit{The Future of the American Family} (Chicago: Moody Press, 1993), 162.

\textsuperscript{20}Ver Frank Bean y Marta Tienda, \textit{The Hispanic Population of the United States} (New York: Sage, 1987), 43.
Condición de la mujer

Al ir a trabajar fuera de casa la mujer obtiene mayor _____________________
como también oportunidades para _____________________ educacionalmente.

Para el esposo la nueva cultura afecta su _____________________, mientras que para la mujer la ________________. Ésto produce muchos ___________________
hogareños.

CICLOS DE LA FAMILIA HISPANA DE ACUERDO CON EL ENFOQUE DEL DESARROLLO

Ciclo Neo-marital

1. Duración:

2. Características principales: _________________________ de roles.

3. Oportunidades para la iglesia: Será importante que se presenten temas sobre el familismo, la aculturización, el machismo y el rol de la mujer. Para reducir el nivel de amenaza que sufre el hombre hispano, será bueno presentarlos esporádicamente e intercambiar temas que puedan afirmar la estima propia. El mejor ambiente es el de grupos pequeños o reuniones públicas con personas con intereses o necesidades similares (Encuentro Matrimonial).
Ciclo Neo-paternal

1. **Duración:**

2. **Características principales:**
   a. Rol de los ____________:
   b. Relación padres-hijos:
   c. ____________ roces maritales.

3. **Oportunidades de la iglesia:** Ayudar a la madre hispana a ser mejor madre por medio del ejemplo y de palabras. Para tal instrucción los grupos pequeños, asistidos de instrucción pública, será la más apropiada. Recordamos que los grupos pequeños son el mejor ambiente para favorecer las relaciones primarias.

Ciclo Post-paternal

1. **Duración:**

2. **Características principales:**
   a. ___________________________:
b. Respeto entre ________________.

c. Afianzamiento de los ________________:

d. ________________ de la hijas:

3. **Oportunidades de la iglesia**: la iglesia puede ayudar anticipando a los padres lo que les puede suceder al inicio de esta etapa o antes de arribar a ella. La iglesia también puede ayudar dando apoyo a los padres y ofreciendo actividades atractivas para los hijos. Será de gran ayuda permitir a esos adolescentes participar públicamente en actividades de la iglesia como también teniendo voz y voto en el proceso de decisiones de la iglesia.

**Ciclo Pre-marital**

1. Duración:

2. **Características principales**:

   a. Elección de ________________

   b. Noviazgo
3. **Oportunidades de la iglesia:** La iglesia podrá asistir a la futura pareja orientándola sobre lo que pueden esperar en el matrimonio como también en mostrarles cómo reducir la brecha generacional. Los ambientes más apropiados para tales instrucciones son seminarios, retiros espirituales, campamentos y especialmente grupos pequeños.

**Ciclo del Matrimonio Maduro**

1. **Duración:**

2. **Características principales:**
   
a. **Jubilación:**

   b. ______________ del cónyuge:

3. **Oportunidades de la iglesia:** Los temas con los cuales la iglesia puede ayudar son: el rol de los abuelos, cómo transmitir los principios morales a la generación joven, los principios para redescubrir el matrimonio, la preparación para la
muerte del ser querido y el rol de la generación del medio (especialmente si viven juntos). Tales temas pueden ser dados en charlas públicas o en grupos pequeños. Estos últimos son los más provechosos ya que permiten desarrollar las relaciones primarias. En segundo lugar la iglesia podrá ministrar a quienes pasan por esta etapa ofreciéndoles oportunidades para ministrar (voluntarios). Quienes mejor salen adelante en esta etapa son aquellos que ofrecen apoyo y asistencia a otros.

CONCLUSIÓN

La familia hispana, aunque no existe como tal, tiene algunos elementos en común tales como el espíritu familista y el proceso de aculturización. Este último, unido a las diferencias subculturales que cada grupo trae, hace que sus diferencias sean más marcadas que en ningún otro grupo cultural. Debido a las presiones económicas, las diferencias en el grado de aculturización y al rol cambiante de la mujer en los Estados Unidos, la familia hispana está cambiando.

En la década siguiente, las actitudes y valores de los hispanos influenciarán grandemente el carácter de las familias nortenorteamericanas. Durante la segunda mitad de los 1990 la población blanca estará produciendo un crecimiento de población de cero, mientras que los hispanos crecerán a un nivel bastante por sobre el índice de reemplazo.
La iglesia podrá ser un centro importante para permitir el crecimiento y desarrollo saludable de la familia hispana en los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica.
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<td>Cómo prepararse para la jubilación/ayuda para la edad media</td>
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<td>Enseñanza bíblica sobre relaciones familiales</td>
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<td>Cómo desarrollar mejores relaciones con los suegros</td>
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<td>Ayuda para los padres solos</td>
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**ÁREA III - Instrucción familiar**

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<td>Cómo enseñar valores cristianos a mis hijos por medio de mi ejemplo</td>
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<td>Cómo enseñar valores cristianos a mis hijos en una manera informal</td>
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<td>28.</td>
<td>Cómo enseñar valores cristianos a mis hijos a través de salidas familiares, devociones y otras clases de instrucción formal</td>
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<td>29.</td>
<td>Cómo enseñar a mis hijos las bases de la fe cristiana</td>
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<td>30.</td>
<td>Cómo guiar a mis hijos para que se entreguen a Cristo</td>
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<td>31.</td>
<td>Cómo ayudar a mis hijos a establecer una vida devocional diaria</td>
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<td>32.</td>
<td>Cómo ayudar a mis hijos a tener amistades cristianas y a escoger un cónyuge cristiano</td>
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<td>33.</td>
<td>Cómo preparar a mis hijos para la adolescencia</td>
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<td>34.</td>
<td>Cómo guiar a mis hijos para que sean exitosos</td>
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<td>35.</td>
<td>Cómo hacer para hablar del sexo con mis hijos</td>
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**ÁREA IV - La familia sirviendo**

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<td>36.</td>
<td>Proyectos, ideas y motivaciones para ayudar a nuestra familia a servir dentro de la iglesia</td>
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<td>37.</td>
<td>Proyectos, ideas y motivaciones para ayudar a nuestra familia a servir en el vecindario</td>
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<td>38.</td>
<td>Orientación acerca de cómo nuestra familia puede ser un ejemplo para otros</td>
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<td>39.</td>
<td>Cómo testificar como familia</td>
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¿QUÉ CLASE DE AYUDA NECESITAN HOY LAS FAMILIAS?

Tenga a bien responder a cada declaración siguiendo la siguiente escala como guía y haciendo un círculo alrededor del número apropiado:

1  no me interesa
2  estoy interesado
3  es crucial

1. Comunicación en la familia
2. Enseñar a los hijos los valores cristianos
3. Disciplina de los hijos (cómo, cuánto)
4. Ideas para el culto familiar
5. Roles bíblicos del esposo y esposa
6. Formando la estima propia del niño
7. Cosas para hacer y lugares para visitar como familia
8. Finanzas en el hogar (administración del dinero)
9. Instrucción sexual para el matrimonio
10. Secretos de la vida matrimonial y familiar exitosa
11. Edad media/jubilación
12. Divorcio/padre solo
DEPARTAMENTO DE VIDA FAMILIAR

CURSO DE ENTRENAMIENTO I

MANUAL DEL INSTRUCTOR

preparado por Jorge Mayer
West Western Governor's Inn de Lansing
22 y 23 de abril de 1995
CONDICIÓN ACTUAL DE LAS FAMILIAS

Las familias están siendo atacadas desde adentro y desde afuera. Los cambios en el mundo industrial, tecnológico, político y económico han traído cambios sociales con su respectiva complejidad han llevado a algunos ha predecir que la familia, como institución, desaparecerá para dar paso a nuevas formas de vida en comunidad.

1. **Actitudes hacia el casamiento:**
   De familia *tradicional* (padres e hijos asociados por matrimonio, nacimiento o adopción en una relación permanente y exclusiva) a familia *nueva* (dos o más personas interesadas en el bienestar mutuo, sin necesidad de estar casados, ni tener que ser de sexos opuestos). Dos de cada tres Norteamericanos consideran apropiada la definición de la familia nueva.\(^{21}\)

2. **Conflictos en los roles:**
   La familia tradicional tenía bien delimitados los roles del hombre y la mujer constituyendo así un hogar más estable aunque rígido. La mujer quedaba en casa encargándose de los quehaceres hogareños y de la crianza y educación de los hijos. El esposo iba a su campo a trabajar para traer el sustento. Hoy muchos hogares tienen ambos cónyuges trabajando afuera.

3. **Presiones financieras:**
   El creciente costo de la vida y el deseo de posesiones materiales ha llevado a muchos a buscar trabajos adicionales, más educación para obtener mejores sueldos.

4. **Revolución sexual:**
   Homosexuales: piden terminología más neutral como "estilo de vida alternativo". Las presiones han llevado a tres denominaciones (Metodistas, Presbiterianos de EE.UU. y Episcopales) a decir que debemos reinterpretar las Escrituras en el tema de la homosexualidad. Fornicación: se dice que es una forma saludable de experimentación sexual que ayuda al establecimiento sólido del futuro matrimonio, mientras que los estudios indican que aquellos que tienen relación prematrimonial tienen 80% mayor riesgo a una ruptura matrimonial que aquellos que esperan al matrimonio para iniciar su vida sexual activa.\(^{22}\)
   Cohabitation: el vivir acompañado aumentó 740% entre 1970-1989. En los últimos tres años el aumento entre los jóvenes de 18 a 25 años fue de 1892%.\(^{23}\)

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5. **Complejidad de la tarea paternal:**
   La sociedad tiende a degradar el rol de la paternidad; muchos padres tienen dificultad en mantener un equilibrio entre el trabajo y el hogar, o incluso entre los pasatiempos o salir de compras y el hogar. Las presiones de la TV y las amistades crean dinámicas más complejas para los padres de hoy.

6. **Hogares con un solo progenitor:**
   Producido por la ruptura del matrimonio o por el creciente aumento de madres solteras. Tarea casi imposible de madre/padre sola/o, necesidades emocionales no satisfechas de padres solos, etc.

7. **Violencia familiar:**
   El abuso de los niños ha alcanzado proporciones alarmantes, aunque la violencia sucede entre todos los miembros de la familia.

8. **Aumento en los índices de divorcio:**
   Conflictos matrimoniales no resueltos, leyes más laxas, y mejores condiciones económicas para la mujer han ayudado al aumento de la tasa del divorcio. Desde 1980 uno de cada dos matrimonios se divorcian (1980-50%; 1990:48%). Estas cifras no revelan precisamente la realidad ya que incluyen subsecuentes nuevos divorcios. De todas maneras uno de cada cuatro matrimonios termina en divorcio.24

   **Leyes laxas:** a partir de 1970, cuando California introdujo el divorcio "sin falta" (no fault divorce), el índice aumentó ya que no hay litigaciones dolorosas tanto en el ámbito económico como emocional.25

   **Los evangélicos,** que representan el 13% de la población general, tienen el 16% de los divorcios de la nación.26

9. **Matrimonio en segundas nupcias:**
   Dos de cada tres nuevos matrimonios terminan en divorcio, segundas o futuras nupcias acortan el período de matrimonio (5 años en contraposición a 7 años de primeras nupcias).27

   Resultado en los niños: padrastro/madrastra con sus respectivos hijos aumentan tensión al querer unificar los diferentes miembros.

   24Barna, *The Future of the American Family*, 67


   26Ibid, 70.

   27Ibid, 71.
10. **Cadena disfuncional de la familia:**
   Los tipos de familias tienden a repetirse: si funcionan bien o mal tenderán a repetirse. Las relaciones familiares pobres promueven hábitos, actitudes y emociones negativas en los hijos.

11. **Influencia secular de los medios de comunicación:**
   Las novelas (soaps) y programas de entrevistas (talk shows) dan la impresión de que todas las familias funcionan mal y por lo tanto la mejor solución es el individualismo (cuidar de mí mismo a toda costa).

   **Las películas de Hollywood** dan la impresión de que las relaciones monógamas y permanentes ya no existen. Se muestra a las familias tradicionales en cuadros desfavorables o embarazosos.

   **Los periodistas de la página impresa** escriben historias asumiendo que las familias están, a duras penas, sobreviviendo; que los homosexuales están creciendo rápidamente; y que es imposible para las organizaciones o instituciones existentes proveer apoyo confiable para los patrones de la familia tradicional.

   *Sin embargo, a pesar de las dificultades por las cuales atraviesa la familia, no perecerá. Fue una institución edénica de origen divino con propósito permanente (por lo menos en esta tierra). Las últimas estadísticas dan un cuadro algo halagüeño.*

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28 Barna, 39-64

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II. FUNDAMENTOS DEL MINISTERIO DE VIDA FAMILIAR

Después de ver el cuadro del estado actual de la familia, la tentación es de comenzar programas y actividades al azar a medida que nos llegan a la mente como resultado de nuestro entusiasmo por ayudar a las familias. Sin embargo esta falta de dirección y corto fundamento podrá durar por poco tiempo.

Todo ministerio está edificado sobre una serie de suposiciones. Cada actividad que hace la iglesia tiene suposiciones teológicas o de procedimiento que las sustentan. La diferencia entre los hogares que se mantienen en pie y los que se derrumban radica en el reconocimiento y contribución de las suposiciones básicas sobre las cuales están edificados. El buen constructor dedicará tiempo en planificar y conocer las implicaciones a largo alcance de lo que va a edificar. Así, cuando el diluvio de la realidad golpea la casa, se podrá mantener en pie.

Dediquemos un tiempo para observar algunos de los fundamentos del ministerio de vida familiar que le darán estabilidad, buena dirección, propósito y adhesión.

1. **El ministerio familiar debe ser primariamente preventivo.**

   El Departament de Vida Familiar no es un complejo deportivo (centro social), ni tampoco una clínica de terapia familiar (consejería). Aunque será sensitivo para con quienes la prevención es demasiado tarde. el blanco del ministerio de vida familiar es equipar y edificar a las familias en un modo preventivo. Lo hará equipándolas con las suficientes herramientas como para que puedan hacer frente a las crisis antes que estas lleguen. Reflejará una enseñanza positiva enfocada a los problemas y conflictos mientras son manejables.

2. **El ministerio familiar debe operar sobre las instrucciones divinas del matrimonio y la familia (visión teológica de la familia)**

   De especial interés será: el origen de la familia, el significado del uso de la palabra familia, características de la familia, relaciones familiares, y propósitos de la familia. También cubrirá entre otros temas: el divorcio y el rematrimonio, la homosexualidad, la paternidad y la permanencia del matrimonio.

3. **El ministerio familiar debe tomar en cuenta las dinámicas que existen en la familia y no solamente los individuos que viven en él (visión sistémica de la familia).**

   En años recientes en lugar de estudiarse a los miembros que componen la familia se toma interés especial en el "y". Además, el método sistémico ha permitido estudiar las condiciones de una familia sana, en lugar de los casos patológicos, como otras teorías lo hacían.

4. **El ministerio familiar debe orientar y guiar sobre los periodos de desarrollo de la vida familiar (visión del desarrollo de la familia).**

   En los últimos años se ha tenido mayor interés en estudiar el período de la vida...
humana desde una perspectiva del desarrollo. Los adultos también pasan por periodos de desarrollo como los niños. Vida familiar tomará interés en advertir y preparar a las personas en los periodos de transición, además de ofrecer organización y dirección de esa experiencia en el periodo inicial de cada etapa. Los resultados positivos de esta estrategia son visibles ya que quienes han recibido orientación pre matrimonial son quienes pasarán más exitosamente la etapa del matrimonio.

5. El ministerio familiar debe ofrecer tanto programas especiales para las familias como también estar integrado en cada aspecto de la vida de la iglesia.
   a. Hay tres clases de actividades especiales que el departamento desarrollará: programas especiales a nivel de la Asociación, programas especiales a nivel de la iglesia, y un ministerio contínuo en la iglesia. Vida Familiar es más que agregar un programa, seminarios, retiros, aunque también lo incluye, a los que ya llenan el calendario de la iglesia. Necesita estar integrada a la vida total de la iglesia. Lo podrá hacer de dos maneras:
   b. Desarrollando los programas dentro de los ministerios ya existentes, como por ejemplo el departamento de jóvenes planea actividades familiares intergeneracionales (campamento padres-adolescentes, retiros de familia, etc). O el departamento de Escuela Sabática ofrece clases sobre temas de vida familiar como parte regular o especial de su currículum. Otros departamentos pueden ser evangelismo, Dorcas, Ministerio de las Damas, etc. Ver Cuidamos a las Familias de Hoy, 53-66.
   c. El segundo, y más importante medio para la integración de Vida Familiar al desarrollo general de la iglesia es creando una atmósfera familiar que permea el ser y propósito de la iglesia. Esto incluirá también el estilo de liderazgo de sus dirigentes. La soledad y aislamiento de los miembros de la iglesia requiere que sus dirigentes creen una atmósfera que satisface las necesidades de relaciones interpersonales. Charles Sell, escritor renombrado en círculos evangélicos, dice que la "creación de una atmósfera de familia-iglesia es la tarea más crucial de la iglesia hoy".29 La iglesia será fuerte solo en la medida que sus familias lo sean.

6. El ministerio familiar debe expandirse para incluir a la comunidad
   Generalmente las actividades del ministerio familiar están orientadas hacia dentro de la iglesia. Un modelo preferido tendrá dos direcciones, una dando énfasis a las familias de la iglesia, y la otra a las familias de la comunidad.
   La familia, el enriquecimiento del matrimonio, la paternidad, las crisis y

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superación de la adolescencia, la comunicación, las finanzas y otros son temas de poca controversia y de mucho interés. Todos están interesados de una manera u otra en tener mejores hogares y relaciones interpersonales.
III. PASOS PARA ORGANIZAR EL DEPARTAMENTO DE VIDA FAMILIAR

1. Seleccionar a los dirigentes:
   a. Co-directores:
      Las cualidades ideales de sus dirigentes serán:
      (1) Preferentemente una pareja.
      (2) Deberán estar interesados en el crecimiento de su hogar y en ayudar a otras familias a crecer.
      (3) Gozar del respeto de otras familias de la iglesia.
      (4) Tener una relación creciente de comunión con Dios.
      Sus funciones serán:
      (1) Recolectar, con la orientación del pastor, datos estadísticos de la iglesia. Ver *Cuidemos a las Familias de Hoy*, 47.
      (2) Definir, con la ayuda del pastor, las necesidades de los miembros de la iglesia para proveer educación e instrucción, consejo y programas de enriquecimiento.
      (3) Diseñar, planear, e implementar, con la cooperación del pastor, programas especiales para las familias.
      (4) Fomentar un espíritu de compañerismo en la congregación, enfatizando en los diferentes departamentos y programas de la iglesia, que la familia es algo muy especial.
      (5) Cooperar con el director del Ministerio de Vida Familiar de la Asociación para fomentar el fortalecimiento de las familias de la Asociación.
   b. Comisión de Vida Familiar:
      Para planificar en forma más efectiva será oportuno elegir una comisión de Vida Familiar. En una iglesia pequeña la comisión estará formada por los co-directores y el pastor y su esposa. En iglesias más grandes se podrá agregar como miembros a quienes representan las diversas etapas de la vida familiar. Será oportuno recordar a aquellos miembros que han enfrentado experiencias familiares especiales y que como resultado, hayan crecido espiritualmente.
      Al crecer las ramas de servicio de este departamento será oportuno confiar a cada miembro de esta comisión como el responsable, coordinador y director de cada etapa del ministerio que el departamento ofrezca a la iglesia.

2. Determinar las necesidades de la iglesia:
   a. Por observación: descubrir las necesidades por lo que se oye y ve. Esto requerirá una observación activa (mirando la forma en que los miembros se relacionan entre sí, escuchando a aquellos que tienen problemas familiares, siendo sensible a las muchas necesidades familiares que surgen alrededor suyo).
   b. Por recolección de datos específicos a través de encuestas o entrevistas:
      (1) Entrevistas a un grupo especial: reunirse con un grupo especial y preguntarles sus necesidades (jubilados, recién casados, solos, etc. en la
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iglesia, en su casa, en la heladería). Límite: algunas de las necesidades más profundas pueden no surgir en esta clase de ambiente.

(2) Entrevistas a un grupo clave: Reunirse con un grupo de unos 40 miembros claves de la congregación (ó el 20% del promedio de la asistencia a las reuniones del sábado de mañana). Pedirles que hagan una lista de las cinco necesidades mayores de las familias de la iglesia. Al conversar se agruparán en áreas mayores de necesidades.

(3) Entrevistas individuales: pueden constar de hasta tan sólo dos preguntas: ¿cuáles ve usted que son las tres necesidades mayores de las familias de la iglesia?; y ¿cómo cree que podremos satisfacer esas necesidades? Esta manera de recolectar información es buena pues hay contacto personal; la persona puede compartir algo que no compartiría en un grupo; la limitación es que la persona se sienta renuente a expresar sus verdaderos sentimientos en una conversación cara a cara.

(4) Encuestas: una de las manera más efectivas de obtener información específica acerca de las necesidades de la familia es tomar a los adolescentes y adultos de la congregación y pedirles que completen una encuesta. El mejor lugar: pedir que la llenen mientras están en la iglesia (SJA, entre ES y sermón, clases de ES). Ver Cuidemos las Familias de Hoy, 47-51 o los ejemplos incluidos en este manual.

Evaluación de las encuestas:
(a) Separe los adultos de los jóvenes y computelos individualmente.
(b) Sume el total de puntos de cada una de las 51 preguntas, y agregue el total junto a la pregunta.
(c) Aquellas declaraciones con mayor puntuación son las áreas que la iglesia reconoce de mayor necesidad.
(d) Considere también con cuidado los diferentes grupos. Los números totales no siempre indican con precisión las necesidades de los grupos (puede que el grupo de divorciados sea pequeño, sin embargo la mayoría de ellos identificó un área como de mayor necesidad que el resto de los encuestados).
(e) Determine cuáles son las 5 declaraciones más numerosas y planée eventos para responder a tales necesidades.
(f) Compare las respuestas por grupos, edades o estado civil, para hallar similitudes o diferencias.

c. Por recolección de artículos de revistas, de periódicos, estadísticas nacionales y libros actuales. Estar alerta a lo que está sucediendo con las familias en la nación de manera que podamos ver el cuadro familiar grande.

(1) Bureau of the Census: "Actualmente, hay más de 14 millones de familias con un solo padre en Estados Unidos. Esto representa más de 1 de cada
7 familias en la nación, un aumento del 36% desde 1970".30

(2) George Barna: "Los hijos de los divorciados generalmente reciben menos cuidado y disciplina del progenitor que tienen consigo, se prestan menos para jugar con los compañeros de la escuela, sufren de peor salud, tienen elevado índice de problemas emocionales y sexuales como también conductas antisociales, tienen una visión más negativa del mundo, y sienten un profundo nivel de soledad y rechazo".31

(3) George Barna: "Nuestro estudio, realizado entre adolescentes, halló que en hogares donde la madre vive con el hijo, el adolescente dijo que ellas dedicaban un promedio de 50 minutos a la semana en una interacción significativa con él. En hogares donde el padre vive con él, el joven respondió que el padre dedicaba 15 minutos a la semana en contacto significativo con él. Se estima que un siglo atrás los padres dedicaban 54% de su tiempo despierto en actividades relacionadas con la crianza de los hijos. Hoy, el cálculo es de 18%".32

3. Formar y organizar programas o actividades.
   a. Clases: Las actividades preventivas del departamento podrán ser variados de acuerdo con los recursos humanos y monetarios que estén al alcance de la congregación: clases, seminarios, retiros, películas o videos (catálogo disponible en la Asociación de Michigan), grupos pequeños, o actividades designadas para fortalecer la familia.
   b. Asignación de responsabilidades: si la actividad necesita de alguien mejor preparado, se buscará a alguien de afuera. Quién buscará el lugar, arreglará el lugar, sacará las fotocopias, etc.

4. Evaluar los resultados: no concluimos el proceso de planificación con el desarrollo del programa, sino hasta evaluar sus resultados.
   La evaluación podrá ser hecha por los que participaron, los que observaron, o los que la dirigieron; puede ser inmediata o posterior; escrita u oral.


31 Barna, 86.

32 Ibid, 106.
IV. PASOS A SEGUIR EN NUESTRA ESTRATEGIA ORGANIZACIONAL

1. Fortalecer el núcleo fundamental del hogar que es el matrimonio. Aunque el departamento debe reconocer la existencia y necesidad de ministrar una amplia variedad de tipos de familias (divorciados, padres solos, solteros mayores, etc.), debemos resaltar el ideal divino: una familia tradicional compuesta por ambos padres y, si Dios así lo concede, de hijos naturales o adoptados. Una de las maneras de resaltar ese ideal es animando a las parejas a participar de reuniones de enriquecimiento matrimonial tales como el Encuentro Matrimonial. 6 y 7 de mayo

2. Fortalecer la unidad familiar usando como uno de los medios el Retiro de las Familias Hispanas en Camp Au Sable. 26 al 28 de mayo

3. Reunión con parejas participantes del Encuentro Matrimonial, directores de Vida Familiar y Coordinador del Ministerio Hispano para iniciar los grupos pequeños entre parejas. Esta reunión será tendrá de acuerdo al siguiente horario:

   (1) Lunes 22 de mayo Iglesias de Berrien Springs y Lawrence 7:00 pm
   (2) Martes 23 de mayo Iglesias de Holland, Maranatha, Grand Rapids y Wyoming 7:00 pm
   (3) Miércoles 24 de mayo Iglesias de Lansing y Detroit 7:00 pm

Arreglos para esa reunión: Se espera que los directores de vida familiar hagan los arreglos con las parejas para que asistan y traigan un liviano refrigerio (refresco, galletas).

Propósito: dar inicio a grupos pequeños de apoyo e instrucción preventiva en un ambiente informal.

Formato: social con una breve y práctica charla a cargo del director de vida familiar o con quien el pastor haya decidido.

4. Participación del Retiro de Familias en Camp Au Sable: 26 al 28 de mayo

5. Inicio de los grupos matrimoniales. Tales grupos no son cerrados. Por el contrario se anima a invitlar a toda pareja de la iglesia y de la comunidad. Primera mitad de junio

6. Determinar las necesidades de la iglesia: usando la encuesta, entrevistas, información general, o sugerencias del pastor. Segunda mitad de junio

7. Si la iglesia tiene jóvenes en edad de matrimonio o amistad del sexo opuesto, sería oportuno que se iniciara orientación pre-matrimonial EE.UU.ndo el formato de clases o seminarios en la iglesia. Si así se hiciese, sería oportuno incluir a un joven adulto soltero en la comisión de Vida Familiar, siguiendo los criterios mencionados en el inciso 10.

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8. Comenzar la promoción del campamento Papi y Yo: \textit{del 28 al 30 de julio}

9. Participar del segundo fin de semana de entrenamiento: \textit{8 y 9 de julio en Albion}
   a. Se presentará la condición actual acerca de la familia hispana en EE.UU.
   b. Se darán explicaciones de cómo continuar ampliando otras áreas de las relaciones familiares.
   c. Los directores de Vida Familiar podrán traer inquietudes para juntos trabajar las soluciones.
   d. Se informará sobre los grupos de matrimonios y las clases para jóvenes solteros (si se los hubiese iniciado ya).

10. Nombrar la Comisión de Vida Familiar y estudiar juntos los resultados de las encuestas: \textit{9 al 20 de julio}
    Será oportuno incluir en ella aquellos miembros que han pasado o están pasando exitosamente la etapa del ciclo familiar que la encuesta haya demostrado que hay mayor necesidad. A la vez se nombrará a esa persona como responsable, coordinador y director de ese ciclo bajo la dirección de los co-directores del departamento de VF.
    Recordar que es mejor comenzar con pocos ministerios, ya que se desarrollen sólidamente, a iniciar una mayor variedad de ellos y luego verlos interrumpidos por falta de atención. \textbf{Sugerencia: durante el resto de 1995, iniciar un grupo pequeño más adicional al de matrimonios, y dirigir 1 ó 2 seminarios o clases en las iglesias.}

11. Participar o animar a participar a otros al campamento Papi y Yo: \textit{28 al 30 de julio}

12. Dar inicio al siguiente grupo pequeño siguiendo patrones similares al primero: \textit{agosto-octubre}
INSTRUCCIÓN BÍBLICA SOBRE EL MATRIMONIO Y LA FAMILIA

Aunque la Biblia no es un libro de sociología o psicología contiene instrucciones importantes y prácticas sobre el matrimonio y la familia. Ambos Testamentos comienzan y terminan haciendo alusión a la familia: el AT comienza su registro con la boda en el Edén y concluye con un mensaje de restauración; el NT comienza con la descendencia de Jesús y termina con la boda del Cordero.

1. **Origen:** Génesis 1:27 y 28 y 2:18, 21-24 nos declaran que Dios es el Creador del matrimonio y la familia. EGW lo confirma: "El sábado y la familia fueron instituidos en el Edén".3

2. **Significado del término Familia:** Al usar la palabra "familia" en sus aproximadamente 250 veces, Las Escrituras lo hacen con diferentes significados: familia nuclear (Gen 2:21-24), familia extendida (Gen 29:14), una tribu, todos aquellos que están bajo el liderazgo de un jefe (2 Sam 5:1), o incluso toda la nación de Israel (2 Sam 19:12, 13).

3. **Características de la familia en el AT:** Aunque la norma de Dios fue que de que el matrimonio fuera permanente, monógamo y comprometido, no siempre fue así. Las formas alternativas que surgieron después de la caída no fueron aprobadas por Dios, aunque misericordiosamente Él supo trabajar con tales agentes humanos que moralmente distaban del ideal. También debemos recordar que con frecuencia las Escrituras registran aquello que Dios no aprueba. EGW dice: "después de la caída, los hombres prefirieron seguir sus deseos pecaminosos".34

   a. **Poligamia** fue practicada por primera vez por Lamec, hijo de Adán, y por héroes de la fe tales como Abraham, Jacob, Moisés y Salomón. Aunque era una práctica común entre las naciones del tiempo de Israel, y estaba asociada con el politeísmo y la mitología de esos pueblos, entre los israelitas era restringida solo para los reyes y los pudientes.35 EGW afirma: "Dios no ha aprobado la poligamia ni en una sola ocasión. Era contra su voluntad".36 Y "dondequiera se practica la poligamia, es en oposición..."

33Elena G. de White, La Educación (Buenos Aires: ACES, 1978), 250.

34Elena G. de White, Patriarcas y Profetas (Mountain View: PPPA, 1955), 80.


al sabio arreglo de nuestro Padre celestial". 

b. **Ley del levirato**: si el esposo moría sin dejar hijos, la viuda se unía a su cuñado o familiar más cercano para extender su descendencia (Deut 25:5.10). Hay solo dos ejemplos en la Biblia y ambos son difíciles de entender: Tamar y Ruth.

c. **Elección del cónyuge**: era realizada por los padres del muchacho. El casamiento era una decisión de las familias involucradas al punto que la propuesta de matrimonio era hecha a la familia de la novia y no a ella. EGW: "Antiguamente no se permitía casar a los hijos sin el consentimiento de sus padres. Los padres escogían por sus hijos. Era considerado un crimen cuando un hijo contraía matrimonio por su propia decisión. El asunto primero era traído primeramente a los padres, y ellos luego consideraban si la persona que se traería para una relación más cercana con ellos, era digna y si las partes podían proveer un hogar." 

d. **Recién casados**: al nuevo esposo se le daba un año libre del servicio militar (Deut 25:5).

e. **Restricciones para el matrimonio**: No permitía el casamiento con miembros cercanos de familia, o con personas de otras naciones (Esdras 9:1). El primero era prohibido por motivos genéticos, y el segundo por motivos religiosos (Deut 7:3,4).

f. **En el NT** la monogamia era una práctica común. El divorcio sólo se permitía por muerte del cónyuge (1 Cor 7:39), o infidelidad (Mat 19:7-9), y se reafirma la endogamia (2 Cor 6:14-18).

5. **Relaciones familiares:**

a. **Esposos**: en tiempos del AT la pareja era patriarcal: el hombre era el dirigente único (llamado maestro de su esposa en Gen 18:12); el rol de la esposa era pasivo excepto unas pocas ocasiones (Noemi, Ana, Esther). La referencia primaria se encuentra en Gen 1 y 2, de donde obtenemos las siguientes conclusiones:

(1) La imagen de Dios incluye interrelación: Dios, que existe en relación, creó la raza humana a su imagen (para que tenga relación) EGW: "El hombre había de llevar la imagen de Dios, tanto en la semejanza exterior, como en el carácter." Hablando sobre la semejanza exterior ella hace referencia al cuerpo perfecto recibido. Hablando sobre el carácter ella dice que "Su mente era capaz de comprender las cosas divinas". También agrega "El hombre no fue creado para que viviese en

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38 Elena G. de White, Testimonies for the Church, 1:218.
la soledad; había de tener una naturaleza sociable".39

(2) Superioridad del hombre: la secuencia de Génesis 2 no es de superior a inferior sino de incompleto a completo. La palabra hebrea para “ayuda” significa alguien que por lo menos es igual al hombre. Dicho en otras palabras: ella era su segundo yo.

(3) Dejar a los padres: no abandonarlos sino cortar la dependencia física y emocional de ellos, ya que el mandamiento pide a todo hijo que respete a sus padres.

(4) Unirse a su esposa: unirse en relación permanente, fuerte.40

Al introducirse el pecado la armonía existente requirió una nueva administración para sobrevivir en la nueva pugna de poderes. El hombre y mujer son iguales (Gal 3:28) pero tienen diferentes roles para sobrevivir en el mundo en que viven.

Referencia primaria después del pecado se encuentra en Ef 5:21-33.

(1) Mutua subordinación (v. 21) es el tema central de las demás relaciones presentadas en el pasaje

EGW: "Ni el esposo ni la esposa deben exigir el dominio".41

(2) El respeto o subordinación de la esposa: es sólo aquella que es voluntaria y entre iguales.

EGW: "No era designio de Dios que el marido ejerciese dominio como jefe de la casa cuando él mismo no se somete a Cristo"... "Cuando los maridos exigen de sus esposas una sumisión completa, declarando que las mujeres no tienen voz ni voluntad en la familia, sino que deben permanecer sujetas en absoluto, colocan a sus esposas en una condición contraria a la que les asigna la Escritura. Al interpretar ésta así, atropellan el propósito de la institución matrimonial. Recurren a esta interpretación simplemente para poder gobernar arbitrariamente."42

(3) La cabeza del esposo: significa uno que protege, sostiene, sirve, cuida

(4) El amor del esposo: como Cristo amó a la iglesia que se entregó por ella.

39White, Patriarcas y Profetas, 25, 26


41White, Testimonies, 7:47.

42White, El Hogar Adventista, 101-02.
b. Padres e hijos:
(1) Los hijos son un regalo divino; por ello los padres deben cuidar, instruir y disciplinar (Deut 6:4-10, 20-25).
(2) Los padres no deben provocarlos a ira (Ef 6:4); no deben tomar ventaja de su autoridad, sino por el contrario deben instruir a los hijos en la disciplina e instrucción del Señor.
(3) Los hijos deben honrar a sus padres (Ex 20:12); deben oírlos para ganar sabiduría (Prov 1:4,8; 6:20-29).

EGW: “No hay periodo de la vida en el cual los hijos están excUSados de honrar a su padres”.43

Incluso si el joven tuviese padres incrédulos no está libre para desobedecerles. La única excepción para quebrantar esa ley era cuando "obedecer a los padres... significara desobediencia a Él".44

6. Propósito de la familia:
a. Propagación de la familia (Gen 1:28): el esposo y la esposa pueden ser los "subcreadores de Dios".45 Razones:
(1) Llenar la tierra con hogares y escuelas que fuesen copia del Edén. "De ese modo, con el transcurso del tiempo, toda la tierra debía ser ocupada por hogares y escuelas donde se estudiaran la Palabra y las obras de Dios y donde los estudiantes se preparasen para reflejar cada vez más plenamente, a través de los siglos sin fin, la luz del conocimiento de su gloria".46

(2) Repoblar el cielo. "Era el propósito de Dios repoblar el cielo con la familia humana, si se manifestaban obedientes a cada palabra suya".47

* En el AT se da énfasis a familias numerosas seguramente por el deseo de que "de mi familia llegue el Mesías". Sin embargo el NT enfatiza la paternidad responsable por medio de las siguientes palabras de Pablo: "Si alguno no cuida de los suyos, mayormente de sus familiares, niega la fe y es peor que un incrédulo" (1 Tim 5:8).

* Hogar sin hijos no es castigo de Dios.

b. Ofrecer un lugar de aceptación, pertenencia y compañía mutuas, necesidad básica de todo ser humano, un lugar donde se pueda expresar el amor

43White, Testimonies, 2:80.
45Maston and Tillman, The Bible and Family Relations, 39.
46White, La Maravillosa Gracia de Dios, 343.
incondicional de Dios.

EGW: en referencia al sábado dice que Dios "en su día reserva a la familia la oportunidad de tener comunión con él, con la naturaleza y unos con otros".48

c. Dar lugar para la expresión sexual: el sexo es creado con el hombre y la mujer. No es impuro a no ser que se lo practique fuera del matrimonio (Ex 20:14; 1 Cor 6:16-19).

d. Transmitir la herencia religiosa a la siguiente generación.

   (1) Esta tarea quedaba en manos de los padres, no extraños

   (2) La enseñanza era ofrecida formal e informalmente, y por ejemplo e instrucción


e. Avanzar el reino de Dios: la familia no es un fin sino un medio para el discípulo de Cristo.

EGW: "La tarea de los padres cristianos... debe comenzar con sus propios hijos. Presente a la iglesia y al mundo una familia bien disciplinada, y habrá presentado uno de los argumentos más fuertes en favor del Cristianismo".49 Debe comenzar en casa y luego, por ejemplo y palabra, extenderse al mundo.

EGW: "Sus propios corazones deben estar embuidos con el Espíritu de Dios, y sus labores deben comenzar en casa; sus familias deben tener el beneficio de su influencia... Entonces el círculo debe ampliarse".50

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48 White, Conducción del Niño, 508.


50 White, Spirit of Prophecy, 1:24.
LA FAMILIA SALUDABLE DE ACUERDO CON EL ENFOQUE SISTÉMICO

El enfoque teórico sistémico enfoca menos a los miembros de la familia como a sus relaciones y dinámicas.

Definiciones o conceptos claves:
1. El **sistema** (la familia o el matrimonio) es más que la suma de sus miembros.
2. El **borde** (el círculo alrededor de la familia que limita lo que es la familia y lo que no es) es lo que rodea por fuera al sistema.
3. El **medio ambiente** (lo que está fuera de la familia) es todo aquello que está afuera del borde del sistema.
4. El borde puede ser **abierto o cerrado**. Si es cerrado la familia no recibe influencia del medio ambiente; si es abierto hay gran influencia.
5. **Subsistema** (partes interrelacionadas dentro de la familia) son partes del sistema que se relacionan entre sí.

Características de la familia saludable:
1. La **cohesión** de la familia saludable se manifiesta en individualidad y consideración los unos con los otros. En la familia débil están enmarañados (enredados) o desconectados.
2. La **adaptabilidad** de la familia saludable se describe entre flexible y estructurada. En la familia débil la adaptabilidad va del extremo de estar en caos o al extremo de la rigidez.
3. La **comunicación** de la familia saludable es clara en su transmisión y percepción. La familia débil transmite y percibe los mensajes en forma confusa.
4. Los **roles** de la familia saludable son designados claramente y tienen bien delineados los límites de una generación con la otra. La familia débil vive en disputas por los roles, y los límites de una generación con la otra son confusos (El padre se porta como niño, el hijo quiere mandar en la presencia de los padres).
LA FAMILIA SALUDABLE DE ACUERDO CON EL ENFOQUE DEL DESARROLLO

El método del desarrollo mira a la familia en un sentido lineal. Cada adulto pasa por períodos predecibles en su desarrollo. La familia saludable es aquella que ha cumplido con éxito las tareas requeridas en cada etapa o ciclo de la vida familiar adulta.

Conceptos básicos:
1. La familia o sistema tiene ciertas tareas que cumplir en diferentes etapas de su vida.
2. Si la familia lo lleva a cabo con éxito avanza mejor al siguiente período.
3. Hay tareas que son específicas a un ciclo, mientras que otras continúan desarrollándose en las etapas subsecuentes.

Ciclos de la vida familiar:
A. Los Años Iniciales
   1. Pre-matrimonial
   2. Neo-matrimonial
   3. Neo-paternal

B. Los Años Constructivos
   4. Hijos escolares
   5. Hijo adolescente

C. Los Años Maduros
   6. Nido vacío
   7. Jubilación

D. Los Años Solos
   8. Persona sola
   9. Padre solo

A. LOS AÑOS INICIALES
Las dos tareas principales de este grupo es el de diferenciación y nuevos roles

1. Pre-matrimonial
   a. Duración: comienza con el tiempo cuando el joven busca desarrollar amistades formales con el sexo opuesto, y concluye con el casamiento de la pareja.
   b. La tarea más importante es la de diferenciarse de su familia de origen.
      (1) Es relativamente fácil caer en los extremos de desasociarse o confundirse con los progenitores.
      (2) El hijo pródigo se desasoció, mientras que su hermano se confundía con sus padres.
   c. Otra tarea es la elección del futuro cónyuge. Los investigadores Kerckhoff y David crearon la teoría del filtro:
      (1) el primero y más ancho filtro es denominado endogamia: las personas establecen relaciones con personas con trasfondos comunes (raza, gustos, países, trabajan juntos, etc).
      (2) El segundo, más angosto y selectivo, es homogamia: salimos solo con aquellos que tienen intereses comunes (entretenimientos, lectura, iglesia,
número de hijos, etc).

(3) Y el tercero, el más angosto, es que las personas se buscan porque tienen necesidades complementarias (carácteres y temperamentos).

(4) El joven cristiano requiere otro filtro: conocer la voluntad de Dios. Tres principios guiadores para ayudar al joven a conocer la voluntad de Dios:
(1) Buscar a Dios por medio del estudio de la Biblia y la oración.
(2) Buscar consejo de los padres.
(3) Buscar consejo de familiares y amigos cristianos.

EGW: “En éste, el período más importante de sus vidas, necesitan un consejero que no se equivoque, una guía infalible. Ésto lo hallarán en la Palabra de Dios. A menos que sean estudiantes diligentes de esa palabra, cometerán graves errores lo que afectará su felicidad y la de otros...

Toma a Dios y a tu padres temerosos de Dios para pedir consejo. Oren sobre este asunto... El paso que están por dar es uno de los más importantes en sus vidas, y por ello no deben de tomarlo apresuradamente”.

La tercera función es aprender a desarrollar una comunicación abierta y franca con su futuro cónyuge sobre temas concernientes al futuro de la relación, tales como: roles, administración del dinero, hijos y cuántos, tiempo con los amigos, planes de carrera y educativos, familiares políticos y otros.

La iglesia podrá ministrarlos:
(1) Dando ejemplos dignos de ser imitados. Establecer relaciones entre los jóvenes adultos y otros de experiencia que muestran cualidades cristianas correctas.
(2) Dando seminarios sobre los temas mencionados anteriormente.

2. Neo-matrimonial
a. Duración: comienza con el establecimiento de la pareja y concluye con la llegada del primer hijo.

b. La tarea más importante es aprender el rol de esposo y esposa.

Que sea difícil se lo puede ver en el pasaje bíblico de Gen 2:24. "Dejar" tiene que ver con diferenciación. En etapa previa diferenciación era ser diferentes pero vivir con padrres. Ahora la diferenciación requiere salir del nido y ser plenamente otro junto a otro que está queriendo ser otro también.

c. Otra tarea es la de aceptar la responsabilidad de la nueva relación: negociar las diferencias, resolver las expectativas idealistas del cónyuge, hallar maneras de satisfacción mutua para alimentarse y apoyarse uno al otro.

d. La tercera tarea es recordar que cada uno tiene una tarea diferente:
(1) Ella está en la tarea de establecer intimidad en el matrimonio
(2) Él está en la tarea de establecer identidad en su trabajo para alcanzar

nivel social, y ofrecer seguridad a la familia.

e. Aunque es considerado un período "feliz" es el ciclo de mayor vulnerabilidad. Según Thornes y Collard el 50% de los divorcios se han efectuado para el noveno año del matrimonio. De un grupo de 520 parejas divorciadas, 73% de ellas creen que los problemas matrimoniales llegaron a ser severos para el tiempo del 5to aniversario.

f. **La iglesia tiene una gran oportunidad para ministrarlos.**
   (1) Ofreciendo ejemplos de otras familias que han superado con éxito esta etapa. Están más abiertos a oír de otros que en ningún otro período de la vida familiar. Esperan no ser orientados por "expertos en conocimiento", sino por personas reales que, por la gracia de Dios, hayan sobrevivido en su matrimonio, personas que se aman y se ve que sus matrimonios progresan.
   (2) Ofreciendo seminarios y retiros sobre temas tales como los mencionados en la etapa previa. La diferencia del contenido de tales seminarios estará en que hablará sobre cómo lo están haciendo y no de cómo será.
   (3) Organizando y dirigiendo grupos de apoyo y educación con otras parejas de la misma etapa. Allí se desarrollarán las relaciones primarias en un ambiente de confianza por excelencia.

3. **Neo-paternal**
   a. **Duración:** comienza con la llegada del primer hijo y concluye cuando el último hijo va a la escuela.
   b. **La tarea principal** es de manejar la tensión creada por la llegada de una nueva persona al sistema familiar. De un dúo a un trio. El esposo halla que no es el centro de atención de su esposa; la esposa encuentra que el marido no vela por ella como antes.
   c. **Otra tarea** es la de pasar a ser de receptores de atención y cuidado, a ser los guardianes que ofrecen cuidado.
   d. **Maternidad,** debido a la ruptura del sistema de la familia extendida, exige su casi total atención en el momento en que ella no lo puede ofrecer debido al poco tiempo que tiene y a su limitada experiencia.
   e. A medida que el niño crece los padres deben habilitarlos. Lo podrán lograr mediante:
      (1) Amor condicional unilateral
      (2) Aceptando la diferencias de cada hijo dentro del sistema familiar
      (3) Manteniendo consistencia entre los mensajes verbales y no verbales
      (4) Tomando tiempo para saber qué piensan y sienten los hijos sobre sí mismos
      (5) Ofreciendo y estando dispuestos de recibir perdón
      (6) Enseñando y mostrando que cada miembro de la familia sirve y apoya al otro
      (7) Creando una disciplina apropiada para sus edades tales como las
consecuencias naturales, lógicas y físicas.

f. **La familia cristiana** estará velando por la transmisión de la herencia religiosa a sus hijos.
   (1) El culto familiar es uno de los medios formales de instrucción más apropiados.
   (2) EGW: "No se puede exagerar la importancia de la educación precoz de los niños. Las lecciones que aprende el niño en los primeros siete años de vida tienen más que ver con la formación de su carácter que todo lo que aprende en los años futuros".52
   (3) El culto familiar debe ser diario, corto y gozoso, interesante, y el momento más dichoso del día.53

g. **Las oportunidades de la iglesia para ministrar** a los neo-paternales son muchas:
   (1) Crear estructuras de relaciones primarias (grupos pequeños) para llenar el sentir de vacío caEE.UU.do por ausencia geográfica de los padres o por la existencia de relaciones inadecuadas con ellos.
   (2) Seminarios, retiros, campamentos sobre temas pertinentes a sus necesidades.

B. **LOS AÑOS CONSTRUCTIVOS**

4. Hijos escolares:
   a. **Duración:** comienza cuando el último hijo entra a la escuela y concluye cuando el primer hijo llega a la adolescencia.
   b. **La tarea principal** es la de incrementar la habilitación (empower) a medida que llega a una edad mayor.
   c. **Las madres:** es una etapa de baja estima propia caEE.UU.do porque el hijo no la necesita, y si ha dejado de trabajar durante ese período además de haber perdido el empleo que poseía, ha perdido la práctica de su trabajo.
   d. **Los padres:** están luchando para alcanzar el punto más elevado de su trabajo.
   e. **Otra tarea** es la de abrir los bordes del sistema familiar a la escuela, de donde entrarán nuevos valores y patrones de comportamiento.
   f. Es la etapa del "tiempo apremiante" cuando el tiempo no alcanza para hacer todo: llevar a los hijos a un programa de la escuela, asistir a una reunión de padres, acompañarlos al campamento de jóvenes de la iglesia, compras, trabajo (muchas veces ambos y más de un trabajo), pasatiempos, etc.
   g. **La familia cristiana** aprovechará de la época de la memoria de oro, para continuar con la transmisión de la herencia religiosa.
      (1) Animar a los niños a memorizar versículos, a participar de clubes como

52White, Conducción del Niño, 177.

53White, Testimonies, 7:43.
conquistadores pues su aprendizaje y adaptabilidad son altos.

(2) Es el momento de traer a los hijos a una entrega a Cristo. Su edad les permite discernir lo que esas verdades abstractas significan, y además será difícil que tomen tal decisión en la siguiente etapa.

h. **Ministerio de la iglesia para la etapa del neo-paternal:**

(1) Si la iglesia tiene suficientes padres con hijos en esta etapa y si es suficientemente grande (más 150 miembros) puede ofrecer grupos pequeños para estos padres. Si no se pudiese organizar otro grupo, ellos se podrían unirse al anterior o posterior dependiendo de la etapa más cercana en la que se encuentran los hijos.

(2) Seminarios, charlas sobre los temas mencionados y otros apropiados para esta etapa beneficiarán grandemente a la familia. En este periodo y el siguiente los seminarios son más beneficiosos debido al limitado tiempo que tienen los padres y a que los errores de la paternidad son más notorios.

(3) La iglesia hará bien en dar clases bautismales a estos jovencitos.

5. **El primer adolescente:**

a. **Duración:** comienza con la entrada del primer hijo a la adolescencia, y concluye cuando el primer hijo sale de la casa.

b. **La tarea principal** es la de aumentar la flexibilidad y permeabilidad de los bordes (boundaries) del sistema familiar. Los padres no pueden mantener control total de sus hijos. Hay otras influencias que inevitablemente afectarán los valores de los hijos. De allí que la tarea debe comenzar más temprano.

c. **La adolescencia trae crisis a la familia.** Razones:

   (1) La adolescencia es una creación de la revolución industrial. Ser adulto antes era haber aprendido las destrezas requeridas para el trabajo del campo. Ahora no es claro que es ser adulto: incluye mayoría de edad, concluir carrera, casarse, poder conducir un carro, comprar bebidas alcohólicas, etc.

   (2) Brecha generacional. Es el tiempo cuando los hijos pasan por la adolescencia y los padres por la crisis de la edad media.

      (a) Hijos tienen crisis de identidad: quién soy, por qué estoy aquí, cuál es mi futuro.

      (b) Madre tiene crisis de intimidad en la relación matrimonial

      (c) Padre tiene crisis de identidad en su trabajo (los avances técnicos lo han puesto fuera de la competencia).

d. **Otra tarea** es la de establecer prioridades en la relación matrimonial. A medida que los adolescentes dedican más tiempo afuera del hogar, los esposos dedicarán más tiempo juntos y para los intereses del otro.

e. **La familia cristiana** que desea transmitir su herencia religiosa a la siguiente generación se halla en la etapa más difícil del ciclo.

   (1) Palabras como transición, tentaciones e independencia indican la razón.
Esta etapa será un reto para ver si los principios y valores morales fueron enraizados correctamente en la escala de valores de los hijos o no.

La oración y la amistad sincera sin sermonear podrán ser factores que favorezcan el mantener una mejor comunicación.

**f. El ministerio de la iglesia** hacia la familia que está en la etapa del primer adolescente abarcará:

1. Ofrecer redes de apoyo para que la tormenta se sienta menos severa. El mejor medio será nuevamente los grupos pequeños debido a que en ellos se pueden desarrollar las relaciones primarias.

2. Ofrecer seminarios para los padres sobre asuntos pertinentes a esta etapa conducidos por quienes hayan sobrevivido exitosamente esta etapa, y ofrezcan orientación documentada.

3. Ofrecer seminarios, retiros, campamentos para los adolescentes para que estén preparados para enfrentar sus cambios.

4. Los adolescentes están ambientados de héroes. La iglesia podrá crear esos modelos entre los jóvenes adultos que tengan cualidades admirables para los adolescentes y que también estén arraigados en su fe.

**C. LOS AÑOS MADUROS**

6. **Nido vacío:**

   a. **Duración:** comienza con la salida del primer hijo de la casa y termina con la jubilación de uno de los cónyuges.

   b. **La característica sobresaliente** que lleva a la tarea más importante, es la de tener la mayor salida y entrada de miembros en la familia

   1. Es el tiempo cuando los hijos se van de la casa.

   2. Es el tiempo cuando los padres se enferman y son traídos a casa o velan por ellos.

   3. Es el tiempo cuando los hijos se casan trayendo consigo una nueva familia con la cual asociarse.

   4. Es el tiempo cuando llegan a ser abuelos.

   c. **Otra tarea** es velar por una doble responsabilidad: la de cuidar ambas generaciones inmediatas.

   1. Responsabilidad de cuidar por sus padres envejecidos

   2. Responsabilidad de ayudar a sus hijos recientemente casados, tal vez con hijos, o regresando a casa para vivir con ellos mientras permanecen solos.54

   d. **La tercera tarea** es de llevar la relación con el cónyuge, a un grado más íntimo. Esto puede ser difícil por:

   54Barna halló un nuevo patrón en el comportamiento de los mayores no casado. Regresan al hogar de sus padre por motivos financieros y emocionales reconociendo que pierden así algo de su independencia. Barna, 122.

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Mientras los hijos estaban en casa el centro eran ellos, y se desarrolló poca relación entre ellos. Esto puede llevar a divorcio, el segundo más alto del ciclo familiar.

La ausencia de los hijos causa gozo por verlos madurar y dar oportunidades a tener mayor intimidad con el esposo, o genera un sentimiento de vacuidad, pérdida o depresión.

e. **Otra tarea** es la de abrir los bordes del sistema familiar para incluir a nuevos miembros.

f. **La pareja cristiana** tendrá oportunidad de:

   (1) Desarrollar una relación más íntima con Dios. Hay menos distracciones, menos tiempo dedicado a la paternidad.

   (2) Proveer apoyo a la generación joven por medio del ejemplo, del cuidado y de la atención de los nietos y de la casa.

g. **La iglesia puede ministerar a la nueva pareja mediante:**

   (1) La creación de un ambiente donde se pueda profundizar la amistad.

   (2) Charlas, tal vez en grupos pequeños, sobre las dinámicas por las cuales están pasado y cómo otros hicieron frente positivamente a esta nueva y larga etapa.

7. **Jubilación:**

   a. **Duración:** comienza con la jubilación de uno de los cónyuges y termina con la ausencia del compañero.

   b. **La tarea principal** es de ajustarse a la jubilación.

      (1) Hay cambios en la rutina diaria

      (2) Hay sentido de inservibilidad o inutilidad: tecnología avanzada, cuerpo tosco.

c. La pareja todavía **puede ayudar en la transmisión de valores** morales a los hijos por medio de su ejemplo, y a los nietos por ejemplo e instrucción.

d. **El ministerio de la iglesia** por ellos se centra en ofrecerles un lugar donde puedan ser útiles. Aquellos que mejor hacen frente a esta etapa final de la vida son aquellos que han desarrollado un sistema de ayuda mutua: dan y reciben ayuda.

D. **LOS AÑOS SOLOS**

Este grupo no forma parte de las etapas del desarrollo de una persona madura. Sin embargo deben ser incluidos no con el propósito de separarlos de los otros que están pasando por otras etapas, sino de reconocer algunas características y necesidades únicas.

Este grupo, aunque diferente a la corriente principal de nuestra cultura moderna, está llegando a ser un grupo creciente en la sociedad y la iglesia.

8. **Persona sola:**

   a. **Duración:** son las personas que están entre los 28 años o más, pueden ser
divorciados, viudos o adultos solteros.

b. **La tarea principal** es doble. La de trabajar con los sentimientos de estar desarraigados y fuera de lugar. Por ello buscan "pertenecer".

(1) "Sin raíces" o "desarraigados" se debe a la existencia de relaciones no resueltas del pasado. Como resultado tienen una elevada necesidad de pertenecer.

(2) "Fuera de lugar" en el sentido de que en las actividades en las que generalmente participan se habla de temas no aplicables directamente a ellos o están acompañados de cónyuges o hijos.

c. **La tarea principal específica de los divorciados** es reconocer su parte en la ruptura de la relación matrimonial y mantenerse en contacto con las familias extendidas de ambos cónyuges.

d. **La tarea principal específica para los que adultos solteros** es de determinar por qué no lo hicieron y formar una red social que incluya conexiones saludables con la familia de origen y la familia extendida.

e. Para ambos grupos el tema de **sexualidad** es otra área especial para desarrollar. Para el cristiano sólo hay expectativas que el mundo desconoce o ignora.

f. **El individuo cristiano** puede dedicar sus energías a la tarea de la salvación más extensamente que los que tienen familia (1 Cor 7:8).

g. **El ministerio de la iglesia**

(1) Reconocerá sus diferencias y les ofrecerá algunas oportunidades para estar juntos, y a la vez los incluirá en las actividades y reuniones generales de otras etapas de la vida familiar.

(2) Presentará seminarios, retiros que abarquen las áreas especiales que confrontan.

9. **Padre solo**:

a. **Duración**: comienza cuando el padre o madre deciden permanecer solo/a y concluye con la decisión de casarse. El pertenecer a la etapa de "padre solo" puede deberse a una decisión personal, o a un error cometido en la vida matrimonial o sola.

b. **La tarea principal** es de poder hacer frente a la imposible tarea de ser padre y madre para sus hijos.

(1) La madre, que en la mayoría de los casos es así, debe ser la proveedora, la disciplinadora y además la protectora y consoladora.

c. **El padre solo cristiano** hará bien en recordar que no está solo en esta enorme tarea. Dios, el Protector, el Consolador, el Proveedor, y el Disciplinador estará con él mientras quiera ser guiado por Él.

d. **Ministerio de la iglesia**

(1) Llegar a ser familia para ellos, lo que puede ser logrado a través de grupos pequeños.
CONCLUSIÓN

1. Los ciclos de la vida familiar ofrecen un modelo preventivo apropiado para indicarnos el grado de normalidad de la familia.

2. El método sistémico ofrece un modelo preventivo y corrector apropiado para indicarnos el grado de salud de la familia que estará integrado al de las etapas familiares.

3. Siendo que no hay organización o institución a nivel federal, estatal o local que esté ayudando eficientemente a la familia, que las dinámicas que ofrecen las relaciones con la familia extendida han sido perdidas para muchos Norteamericanos, que las escuelas son impotentes y el gobierno está paralizado, la iglesia tiene una oportunidad única de ser el medio de asistencia y apoyo para las familias de la iglesia y de la comunidad.

4. Pero, ¿cómo podemos llenar ese vacío?
   (1) La iglesia que desea lanzar un ministerio para las familias no necesita comenzar organizando todo el espectro de la vida familiar. Lo que es importante es COMENZAR.
   (2) Dondequiera que se empiece, alguien tiene que apropiarse del programa. Alguien tiene que tomar la responsabilidad final del departamento y su programación.
   (3) Los grupos pequeños proveen las condiciones para que se desarrollen las relaciones primarias y la discusión sobre los temas relacionados con cada etapa.
   (4) Es mejor comentar el material en un ambiente informal –la sala, alrededor de la mesa, en una caminata o campamento, etc.
   (5) ¿Quién puede dirigir? ¿Quién puede comunicar mejor los asuntos y desarrollar las clases de relaciones dentro de las cuales los asuntos delicados de la vida puedan ser procesados? Debemos buscar una nueva clase de EXPERTOS.
      (a) Uno que ha sobrevivido las realidades de una etapa particular y está motivado a proveer ayuda y orientación a la siguiente generación.
      (b) No necesita ser perfecto y probablemente sea más efectivo si dirige desde una posición de vulnerabilidad en lugar de una posición de "tenerlo o saberlo todo".
      (c) No necesita ser educado en el sentido formal, pero sí necesita haber sido entrenado. Éste es el modelo bíblico del discipulado: la generación mayor guiando a la más joven.

Debemos buscar por esos hombres y mujeres que pueden discipular mejor en nuestras congregaciones. Ellos son los EXPERTOS.
ENCUESTA DE VIDA FAMILIAR

Apreciado hermano:

Queremos enriquecer la vida familiar de los miembros de nuestra iglesia y de la comunidad. Para lograrlo necesitamos identificar las necesidades de las familias. Al responder a las declaraciones de esta encuesta nos estará ayudando a determinar esas necesidades.

No queremos nombre en la encuesta. Los resultados de la misma nos dará una visión amplia de las necesidades familiares de nuestra iglesia.

En la encuesta encontrará 39 declaraciones sobre varios aspectos de la vida familiar. Lea cada declaración e indique el nivel de necesidad *que usted siente que hay en su familia* (ponga un círculo al números que mejor representa su opinión). Si considera que una declaración levemente representa un área de necesidad en su familia, haga un círculo alrededor del 1; si la declaración representa una necesidad muy importante en su familia, haga el círculo alrededor del 4.

**Instrucciones para jóvenes (12-18 años):** Lee las instrucciones previas. Responde tantas declaraciones como puedas. Algunas no se aplicarán directamente a ti. Cuando la declaración no se aplica a ti pregúntate cada vez: "¿tienen mis padres una necesidad en este área? o ¿necesitamos esto en nuestra familia? Por ejemplo, cuando respondas a declaraciones sobre la relación esposo-esposa piensa, ¿será que mis padres tienen esta necesidad en su matrimonio?

**Edad:** 12-18  19-25  26-32  33-40  41-50  51-62  63+

**Sexo:** Masculino  Femenino

**Estado civil:** soltero/a  casado/a  Divorciado/a  Viudo/a

**AREA I - Relaciones entre esposos**

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**AREA II - Relaciones familiares**

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<td>Cómo desarrollar mejores relaciones con los suegros</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Ayuda para los padres solos</td>
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**AREA III - Instrucción familiar**

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<th>Cómo enseñar valores cristianos a mis hijos por medio de mi ejemplo</th>
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<td>Cómo hacer para hablar sobre sexo con mis hijos</td>
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**AREA IV - La familia sirviendo**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Proyectos, ideas y motivaciones para ayudar nuestra familia a servir dentro de la iglesia</th>
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<td>37</td>
<td>Proyectos, ideas y motivaciones para ayudar nuestra familia a servir en el vecindario</td>
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<td>Orientación de cómo nuestra familia puede ser un ejemplo para otros</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>Cómo testificar como familia</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
¿QUÉ CLASE DE AYUDA NECESITAN HOY LAS FAMILIAS?

Tenga a bien responder a cada declaración siguiendo la siguiente escala y haciendo un círculo alrededor del número apropiado:

1  no me interesa
2  estoy interesado
3  es crucial

1. Comunicación en la familia 1  2  3
2. Enseñar a los hijos los valores cristianos 1  2  3
3. Disciplina de los hijos (cómo, cuánto) 1  2  3
4. Ideas para el culto familiar 1  2  3
5. Roles bíblicos del esposo y esposa 1  2  3
6. Formando la estima propia del niño 1  2  3
7. Cosas para hacer y lugares para visitar como familia 1  2  3
8. Finanzas en el hogar (administración del dinero) 1  2  3
9. Instrucción sexual para el matrimonio 1  2  3
10. Secretos de la vida matrimonial y familiar exitosa 1  2  3
11. Edad media/jubilación 1  2  3
12. Divorcio/padre solo 1  2  3
DEPARTAMENTO DE VIDA
FAMILIAR

CURSO DE ENTRENAMIENTO II

MANUAL DEL INSTRUCTOR

preparado por Jorge Mayer
Days Inn de Albion
8 y 9 de julio de 1995
LA FAMILIA HISPANA EN LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS DE NORTEAMÉRICA

Los hispanos son diferentes a otros grupos migratorios. Polacos, italianos, alemanes se han fusionado a lo que EE.UU. es, mientras que los hispanos conservan su idioma. Las razones por la cuales los hispanos no se han fusionado en el crisol de razas que constituye esta nación son:

1. Mayor número de inmigrantes
2. Van y vienen a su tierra
3. Avances de las comunicaciones: teléfono, estaciones de radio y televisión
4. Comercio activo con Latinamérica

Thomas Weyr al inicio de su libro Hispanic EE.UU.: Breaking the Melting Pot presenta en pocas palabras como se consideran los hispanos en EE.UU.:

Los hispanos no son como otros grupos de inmigrantes previos, tal vez porque no se consideren inmigrantes. Ellos han estado en EE.UU. por más de 450 años. Ellos pueden contar con 18 millones o 20 millones o 23 millones o aún 30 millones. Están estableciendo el español como la segunda lengua junto al inglés en este país. Los hispanos están formando una nueva cultura y una nueva conciencia. Están cambiando la nación. Están quebrando el crisol de razas.

Ellos quieren ser asimilados y mantenerse separados, ser parte de la corriente principal y retener su identidad. No una identidad nacional con una zona geográfica habitada por extranjeros, no otro Quebec, sino una identidad conferida por una amplia cultura que contiene historia, mitos, geografía, religión, educación e idioma.55

LOS HISPANOS EN LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS: ESTADÍSTICAS

Número de hispanos

De acuerdo con el censo de 1990, hay más de 20 millones de hispanos residiendo en EE.UU., la segunda minoría (9%) después de los afro-Norteamericanos (12%). Esta cifra puede no ser precisa porque:

a. Hay hispanos de origen pero que no hablan el español (1/8)
b. La mayoría de ilegales no se registran
c. Faltan los 3 millones de puertorriqueños que viven en la isla

El crecimiento se debe a la inmigración y al número de nacimientos. De acuerdo con Justo González, teólogo metodista, si EE.UU. cerrara las puertas a todo inmigrante, la población hispana continuaría creciendo al doble del resto de la generación “baby boomers”.

Si el crecimiento continúa como hasta ahora, para el 2000 se espera alcanzar la...

cifra de 30 millones.

**Dónde viven los hispanos**

Los lugares preferidos son las **ciudades** con alta densidad y diversidad de población. Los estados con mayor índice de hispanos son: **California** (34%), **Texas** (19%) y **New York** (10%).

**Economía de los hispanos**

Mientras que el promedio de los ingresos de una familia en EE.UU. en 1990 era de $43,735 el promedio de la familia hispana era de $29,311. A esto se debe agregar que la familia hispana es más **numerosa**.

**LA FAMILIA HISPANA EN LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS: CARACTERÍSTICAS**

Los estadísticos hablan de “la familia hispana.” Sin embargo, siendo que cada uno trae su estilo de vida, costumbres y subculturas, es difícil hablar de la familia hispana en EE.UU.. Los cubanos son, generalmente mayores en edad, han tenido mayor nivel de preparación educativa, y sus ingresos son más elevados.

Siendo que más del 50% de los hispanos son mexicanos o de origen mexicano, y que en el estado de Michigan el grupo mayoritario a quien la iglesia puede asistir son también de ese mismo grupo étnico, nuestro estudio se concentrará en las observaciones que estudiosos han hecho de ellos, aunque se reconoce que algunas características se dan también en otros grupos hispanos.

**Familismo**

De entre las características del pueblo hispano, no hay otra que lo identifique con más claridad que el compromiso con la familia. Como Madsen lo expresó: “la familia es como un santuario en un mundo hostil lleno de envidia y codicia.”

La familia es la fuente de apoyo emocional y material. Y así como protege, también demanda. Cada miembro de la familia es considerado como un “símbolo caminante de la familia.” Traer vergüenza a la familia de uno es un error de carácter mayor ya que caEE.UU. sufrimiento a sus miembros.

El familismo se ve a través de diferentes expresiones sociales:

1. Apoyo de los **familiares**: el lazo entre padres e hijos se extiende más allá de la familia inmediata yendo hasta la tercera generación: los abuelos, como los tíos, son respetados y obedecidos. Mientras que los caucásicos al casarse se alejan del grupo familiar los hispanos se acercan. Por esta razón los hispanos viven primordialmente en las grandes ciudades donde viven los familiares. Tal actitud no es meramente por ayudas que se puedan obtener, sino una práctica esperada de

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los familiares.

2. El compadre: el familismo se extiende más allá de los familiares por medio del compadre o padrino. Ellos son elegidos por los padres porque pueden ofrecer algunos beneficios tales como pagar la fiesta, ofrecer apoyo paternal o asistencia económica. Son escogidos para una importante ceremonia religiosa tal como el bautismo, la confirmación, el casamiento o la dedicación de una casa nueva.

El proceso de aculturización

El proceso de adaptación a la nueva cultura genera tres posibles reacciones:

a. La aceptación plena de la nueva cultura y su desasociación de la anterior
b. La aceptación parcial de la nueva cultura, sin perder contacto con la anterior
c. El rechazo de la nueva cultura y mantenimiento total de la anterior

¿Cómo se mide el grado de aculturización?

a. Por el uso del idioma que se habla en el hogar. Limitaciones: localidades donde se habla inglés, sin embargo por vivir cerca de la frontera, por generaciones se han conservado los valores familiares, culturales y religiosos de los hispanos.
b. Por cuanto más alejada está la familia de las ideas y valores del “viejo país”

Machismo

El macho “no es sólo el proveedor responsable y amante sino el que demanda respeto por virtud a su resolución y fuerza moral.” Machismo, para los de origen mexicano tiene un doble significado:

1. Deseo de probarse fuera del hogar como un “conquistador”.
2. Deseo de probarse dentro de la casa por medio de la actitud del matador.

El hombre, para probar su machismo, dirá a sus conocidos de sexo masculino que sus energías sexuales superan las posibilidades de su esposa y por ello o continúa sus búsquedas sexuales como antes de casarse, o va al bar con sus amigos por la noche, o mantiene una amante en una segunda casa.

Mujer: Aunque el hombre puede demostrar promiscuidad, si la mujer lo hace es considerado como un horrendo crimen. "Una indiscreción sexual traerá inevitablemente una vida de abandono sexual." Hay dos clases de mujeres: las malas, que son aquellas que proveen la oportunidad para las hazañas, y las buenas, que son parte del sistema familiar del "macho".

Divorcio

Como George Barna indica, “dada la alta prioridad que los hispanos ponen en el matrimonio y la familia, no es sorprendente ver que el índice de divorcio es menor que

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58 Madsen, 51.
el de la población Anglosajona."59 Sin embargo la realidad de hoy no es tan optimista. El índice de divorcio está aumentando. Si se toma el número de separaciones junto al de los divorcios las diferencias del índice de divorcios de la población en general, casi desaparecen.60

**Condición de la mujer**

La mujer, al ir a trabajar fuera de casa, obtiene mayor autonomía y oportunidades para superarse educacionalmente. *Al ver a otras damas, pretende tener una voz de igual a igual en las decisiones del hogar. Todo ello amenaza el "machismo" de su esposo. Aunque los problemas del hogar que llegan por caEE.UU. de las relaciones extramaritales son serios, son pequeños en comparación con los problemas que surgen como resultado del cambio de roles que trae la influencia Anglosajona.*

Para el esposo la nueva cultura afecta su estima propia ya que está centrada en su "machismo", mientras que para la mujer la eleva. Esto produce muchos conflictos hogareños, pues el hombre pretende seguir controlando en forma exclusiva las decisiones y personas bajo su responsabilidad.

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CICLOS DE LA FAMILIA HISPANA DE ACUERDO CON EL ENFOQUE DEL DESARROLLO

Aunque los investigadores y consejeros comienzan el ciclo familiar con la etapa pre-matrimonial, he escogido comenzar con el matrimonio debido a la dependencia de los hijos hacia sus padres. Hay poca diferenciación en la familia hispana tradicional en la pre-juventud.

Ciclo Neo-marital
1. Duración: comienza con el casamiento de la pareja y concluye con la llegada del primer hijo, sea este por nacimiento natural o adopción.
3. Oportunidades de la iglesia: Será importante que se presenten temas sobre el familismo, la aculturización, el machismo y el rol de la mujer. Para reducir el nivel de amenaza que sufre el hombre hispano, será bueno presentarlos esporádicamente (y alternar con) temas que puedan afirmar la estima propia. El mejor ambiente es el de grupos pequeños o reuniones públicas con personas con intereses o necesidades similares (Encuentro Matrimonial).

Ciclo Neo-paternal
1. Duración: comienza con la llegada del primer hijo y concluye cuando el mayor alcanza la pubertad.
2. Características principales: 
   a. Rol de los padres: la madre es responsable del bienestar de los hijos, siendo sus fuentes de información su madre, hermanas y otros parientes cercanos. El padre es quien mantiene en línea a los hijos, castiga sus trangresiones y hace de “policía” para mantener su imagen pública de protector.
   b. Relación padres-hijos: los padres son permisivos durante el etapa de la infancia. El niño es considerado como un “angelito”, lo que hace que reciba afecto y adoración de la madre y del padre.
   c. Menos roces maritales: siendo que el familismo pone un alto énfasis en los hijos, la nueva familia goza de menos roces maritales. El centro está puesto en los hijos. Ésto terminará abruptamente cuando los hijos lleguen a la adolescencia.
3. Oportunidades de la iglesia: Ayudar a la madre hispana a ser una mejor madre por medio de ejemplo y palabras. Para tal instrucción los grupos pequeños, asistidos de instrucción pública, serán los más apropiados. Recordemos que los grupos pequeños son el mejor ambiente para favorecer las relaciones primarias.
Ciclo Post-paternal
1. **Duración:** comienza cuando el primer hijo llega a la pubertad, y concluye cuando los preparativos para la boda llegan al hogar.
2. **Características principales:**
   a. **Aculturización:** mientras que los hijos aceptan los valores y el estilo de vida de la nueva cultura, los padres los rechazan. La brecha generacional, que ya es propia de esta etapa, se agudiza grandemente. El padre, acostumbrado a tener el respeto de los suyos, exige la misma consideración de los adolescentes. Los hijos se acercan emocionalmente a la madre, quien se transforma en mediadora.
   b. **Respeto entre hermanos.** En momentos de dificultad los hermanos deben mantenerse unidos, y en caso de que las hermanas estén en peligro, éstos forman un círculo protector alrededor de ellas. El hermano mayor protege a los menores, y los menores buscan consejo de los mayores.
   c. **Afianzamiento de los roles:** las hijas quedan en casa para ayudar a la madre con los quehaceres domésticos después de regresar de la escuela. Así desarrollan las habilidades necesarias para ser buenas esposas. Los hijos varones aprenden a ser “hombres”. Uno de los agentes para ser “hombres” son las “palomillas”, organización informal donde desarrollan habilidades interpersonales y aprenden lo que es la vida. Se reúnen en baldíos o lugares abandonados o, al pasar los años, en cantinas. El tema central son las mujeres.
   d. **Pureza** de las hijas: el mayor problema entre padres e hijas es cuando los progenitores quieren ofrecer la misma clase de protección que le darian en México. Las hijas, al estudiar y asociarse con la nueva cultura, quieren la libertad y relación con el sexo opuesto que otras tienen. Para un padre traer a su hija virgen ante el altar es un deber. Por ello permitir que ella salga sola por Chicago o Los Ángeles es pedirle que sea inmoral. Debido a la presión de vivir en dos culturas que se oponen en este aspecto, el índice de embarazo entre hispanas adolescentes es elevado, incluso mayor que el promedio de la nación.
3. **Oportunidades de la iglesia:** la iglesia puede ayudar anticipando a los padres al inicio de esta etapa o antes de arribar a ella, lo que les puede suceder. La iglesia también puede ayudar dando apoyo a los padres y ofreciendo actividades atractivas para los hijos. Será de gran ayuda permitir a esos adolescentes participar públicamente en actividades de la iglesia como también teniendo voz y voto en el proceso de decisiones de la iglesia.

Ciclo Pre-marital
1. **Duración:** comienza cuando el joven comienza a hacer planes de casamiento y concluye cuando se une en matrimonio.
2. **Características principales:**
   a. Elección de novios: Los hijos piden el consentimiento de sus padres sobre la joven o el joven con quien desean casarse. En caso de sospechar una respuesta negativa se escapan. Ésto es generalmente suficiente para obtener el consentimiento de los padres.
b. Noviazgo: comienza cuando el joven pide el permiso a los padres de ella para llamalarla. Si se le da permiso podrá visitarla en la casa pero siempre deberá haber alguien presente. Si teme una respuesta negativa pide la ayuda de un “portador” el cual habla en representación no sólo del joven sino de los padres de él.

c. Casamiento: Si, temiendo una respuesta negativa, se escapan y casan por civil, al volver a casa luego los padres de ambos tendrán una fiesta con bastantes alimentos y una ceremonia religiosa pues se considera impropio que se consuma el matrimonio sin una ceremonia religiosa.

3. Oportunidades de la iglesia: La iglesia podrá asistir a la futura pareja orientándola sobre lo que pueden esperar en el matrimonio como también en mostrarles cómo reducir la brecha generacional. Seminarios, retiros espirituales, campamentos y especialmente grupos pequeños son los más ambientes apropiados para tales instrucciones.

Ciclo del Matrimonio Maduro

1. Duración: comienza cuando el primer hijo se va del hogar y concluye con la muerte de uno de los cónyuges.

2. Características principales:
   a. Jubilación: no es tan traumática como en otras culturas. La mujer tradicionalmente no trabajaba fuera de la casa. El trabajo del hombre requería fuerzas físicas. Para el tiempo de la jubilación su fuerza ha disminuido en la mayoría de los casos, de manera que está contento que llegue esa etapa. Y, debido al espíritu familista, ambos esposos ahoraan poder visitar a sus hijos, nietos y demás descendientes inmediatos y secundarios. Son comunes los hogares donde tres generaciones viven bajo el mismo techo.
   b. Muerte del cónyuge: debido a los fuertes lazos familiares, es menos doloroso. La generación del medio considera su responsabilidad cuidar de sus padres al llegar éstos a ser físicamente dependientes.

3. Oportunidades de la iglesia: los temas en los que la iglesia puede ayudar son: el rol de los abuelos, cómo transmitir los principios morales a la generación joven, los principios para redescubrir el matrimonio, la preparación para la muerte del ser querido y el rol de la generación del medio (especialmente si viven juntos). Tales temas pueden ser dados en charlas públicas o grupos pequeños. Estos últimos son más provechosos ya que permiten desarrollar las relaciones primarias. En segundo lugar la iglesia podrá ministrar a quienes pasan por esta etapa ofreciéndoles oportunidades para ministrar (voluntarios). Quienes mejor salen adelante en esta etapa son aquellos que ofrecen apoyo y asistencia a otros.

CONCLUSIÓN

La familia hispana, aunque no existe como tal, tiene algunos elementos en común tales como el espíritu familista y el proceso de aculturización. Este último, unido a las diferencias subculturales que cada grupo trae, hace que sus diferencias sean más
marcadas que en ningún otro grupo cultural. Debido a las presiones económicas, las diferencias en el grado de aculturización y al rol cambiante de la mujer en Estados Unidos, la familia hispana está cambiando.

En la década siguiente, las actitudes y valores de los hispanos influenciarán grandemente el carácter de las familias norteamericanas. Durante la segunda mitad de los 1990 la población blanca estará produciendo un crecimiento de población cero, mientras que los hispanos crecerán a un nivel bastante por sobre el índice de reemplazo.

La iglesia podrá ser un centro importante para permitir el crecimiento y desarrollo saludable de la familia hispana en los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica.
QUE ES EL MINISTERIO DE VIDA FAMILIAR

Después de varios años en que se ha dado tanto énfasis al individualismo, la gente está descubriendo la familia y su importancia. Muchos libros sobre paternidad han llegado a ser “best sellers”. Programas de entrevistas en la TV que realzan el valor de la familia están en voga.

DESAFIOS QUE CONFRONTAN LA FAMILIA:

Las familias pasan por momentos difíciles: presiones económicas que llevan a la decisión de no tener hijos o de madres que trabajan tiempo completo fuera del hogar; cambio en los roles y valores sexuales que llevan a que jóvenes de temprana edad sean activos sexualmente y a que adultos sientan una presión creciente de buscar aventuras sexuales fuera del matrimonio; alto índice de divorcios que lleva a la reducción en la transmisión de valores a los hijos (falta uno de los progenitores) y a la creciente formación de nuevas familias en las cuales ambos padres han tenido hijos; resquebrajamiento de la comunidad que lleva a que sean medios masivos de comunicación los que enseñan valores a los niños en lugar de los familiares.

SIGNIFICADO DE LA PALABRA “FAMILIA”:

Cuando oímos la palabra “familia” probablemente viene a nuestra mente la idea de la familia típica (papá, mamá, dos hijos, un perro o gato y una casa en un suburbio de la ciudad). Sin embargo la realidad y la Biblia nos hablan que “familia” es mucho más que esto. Un padre o madre solo con hijo/s, una pareja jubilada, una familia compuesta de padres divorciados con hijos de sus matrimonios previos, una pareja sin hijos, adultos que comparten un departamento son una “familia” o una unidad familiar.

LA PALABRA DE DIOS NOS DICE:

La Biblia presenta un cuadro profundo y amplio del concepto de familia. Las palabras que ella EE.UU. se refieren al clan, la tribu, el grupo compuesto por los familiares cercanos y lejanos, e incluso aquellos que no están asociados por sangre como los hermanos en la fe (Marcos 3:31-35).

El propósito de la familia fue presentado por Dios al crear la raza humana: “fructificad y multiplicaos” (Gen 1:28). Según Su instrucción, la familia tiene cinco propósitos:
1. Multiplicación de la raza (Génesis 1:28)
2. Ofrecer aceptación, pertenencia y compañía (EGW, ST Nov 10, 1881)
3. Expresión sexual (Genesis 1:28)
4. Transmitir la herencia religiosa a los hijos (Deuteronomio 6:6-9)
5. Avanzar el reino de Dios (EGW, ST Nov 10, 1881)
LAS CIENCIAS MODERNAS NOS DICEN:

Recientemente las ciencias que estudian el comportamiento humano han cambiado la manera de estudiar la conducta del ser humano. Previamente estudiaban al individuo solo. Hoy, reconociendo que los que lo rodean influyen en su comportamiento, dicen que no se puede comprender la conducta del individuo sin mirar su contexto familiar. Ellos observan que, por ejemplo, puede ser que el mal comportamiento de un niño se deba a un conflicto que está centrado en la relación de sus padres. Por ello hay que ver a ese niño en el contexto de su familia.

Las ciencias del comportamiento reconocen que las familias pasan por diferentes etapas. Cada etapa está caracterizada por ciertas tareas y desafíos específicos. Las familias más saludables son aquellas que han resuelto tales desafíos y que han cumplido las tareas que se esperaban de ellas.

CARACTERÍSTICAS VITALES DEL MINISTERIO DE VIDA FAMILIAR:
1. Será primariamente preventivo: educativo y enriquecedor
2. Seguirá las instrucciones divinas: características, relaciones y propósitos
3. Mirará el contexto familiar de los individuos
4. Velará por las necesidades de la familia de acuerdo con la etapa en que se encuentra
5. Enseñará a ser más competente en una variedad de habilidades interpersonales tales como finanzas, comunicación, sexualidad, resolución de conflictos
6. Será un ministerio de salvación y gracia: los individuos son incluidos en el círculo de compañerismo de la iglesia de Dios
7. Ofrecerá programas especiales como también estará integrado en los diferentes aspectos de la vida de la iglesia
CÓMO ORGANIZAR EL DEPARTAMENTO DE VIDA FAMILIAR EN MI IGLESIA

1. **Coordinador o director**: el elemento principal

2. **Comisión directiva** del Departamento de Vida Familiar

3. **Encuesta de intereses**: ¿De qué clase de familias está constituida nuestra iglesia? ¿Cuáles son las necesidades principales de nuestras familias? Usted puede tener una idea general de ello, sin embargo es bueno respaldar la impresión distribuyendo esta encuesta entre los miembros
   a. En consulta con su pastor, distribuyla el sábado de mañana entre la hora de la Escuela Sabática y el culto divino. Pida que la llenen en ese momento. Recójala inmediatamente.

4. **Planifique la actividad**: una vez que ha identificado los temas de mayor interés debe comenzar la planificación. Ésta incluye:
   a. Creación de objetivos: “familiarizar a los padres con los pasos de desarrollo del niño preescolar. Esto se logrará a través de tres presentaciones que se darán una vez por semana en el mes de abril”
   c. Materiales disponibles: puede ser que ya existan materiales sobre el tema escogido (tal vez necesiten ser traducidos). Si así no lo fuera piense en videos que haya en la biblioteca pública, ABC o librerías cristianas.
   d. Lugar y equipo necesario: salón atractivo con silla cómodas. ¿Necesitará equipo audiovisual el presentador? Si la reunión es en la iglesia podrá traer personas de la comunidad al templo. Si fuese en un lugar neutral alcanzará a personas que no vendrían inicialmente al templo por prejuicios.
   e. Tiempo: hay ocasiones en el año y días de la semana en que son inapropiados: feriados, diciembre. (Por ejemplo querer tener una reunión con madres solas cuando hay un banquete para las madres.
y sus hijas).

5. **Propaganda**: no importa cuánto haya investigado sobre las necesidades de la iglesia o la comunidad y cuánto haya planeado su evento, no será de beneficio si nadie asiste. Y la gente no vendrá si no sabe del evento. Por ello saturelos con información por lo menos dos a tres semanas antes de la actividad.
   a. Invitaciones personales: el método más efectivo
   b. Correspondencia masiva
   c. Volantes, afiches, carteles
   d. Noticias en los medios de comunicación
   e. Anuncios pagados en los medios de comunicación

6. **Evento especial**: recuerde que necesitará personas que le ayuden. Pida voluntarios y especifiqueles su tarea.

7. **Evalúe la actividad**:
   a. Pedir a los participantes, por medio de una encuesta, su parecer sobre el contenido y formato del programa, efectividad del instructor, efectividad de los materiales audiovisuales
   b. Reunirse con los colaboradores y evaluar los puntos previamente mencionados

8. **Agradezca** a quienes le ayudaron para que la actividad se hiciese: presentadores, participantes y colaboradores.
CUALIDADES Y TAREAS DEL
COORDINADOR/DIRECTOR DE VIDA FAMILIAR

CUALIDADES

1. Ser un buen comunicador
2. Tener un interés sincero en las relaciones humanas
3. Poseer habilidades organizativas

TAREAS

1. Realizar una encuesta: en colaboración con el pastor descubrirá las necesidades de la iglesia
2. Desarrollar programas especiales: éstos requieren planificación, promoción, reclutamiento y entrenamiento de voluntarios, presentación de los programas y evaluación
3. Presidir la comisión de Vida Familiar: se recomienda que aun en pequeñas iglesias se forme una comisión en lugar de asignar a una sola persona. El ministerio familiar existe para ayudar a las personas para que sus relaciones interpersonales sean más semejantes a las de Cristo. Por ello la comisión deberá modelarlo
4. Ser un defensor de la familia: como miembro de la junta representa las necesidades y preocupaciones de las familias
5. Ser una fuente de información: la congregación dependerá de usted como la fuente principal para ministrar en favor de las familias. Elabore una lista de consejeros a quien usted se sienta cómodo de referir
COMISIÓN DIRECTIVA DE VIDA FAMILIAR

COMPOSICIÓN: hay diferentes criterios
1. Hermanos interesados en el bienestar de la familia
2. Miembros de iglesia que representan diferentes etapas de la vida familiar
3. Hermanos que, por su cargo, puedan enriquecer este ministerio (director de ES, educación cristiana, actividades misioneras y otros)

TAREAS:
1. Uniéndose al coordinador/director ayudarán a definir las necesidades (encuesta), planear los programas, promoverlos, y evaluarlos.
2. Servirán como los “ojos de vida familiar” en la iglesia ideando nuevas maneras para crear un sentir de familismo dentro de la iglesia

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ENCUESTA DE INTERESES SOBRE ACTIVIDADES DE VIDA FAMILIAR

A continuación presentamos una lista de actividades que pueden ser de beneficio para las familias de la iglesia. Para ayudar a la comisión de Vida Familiar a planificarlas, indique qué actividades le gustaría que ofreciéramos durante los próximos doce meses. Escoja los cinco temas más necesarios o útiles (ponga un 1 al tema de mayor importancia, un 2 al de segunda importancia, y así sucesivamente)

- Preparación para el matrimonio
- Finanzas familiares
- Disciplina en el hogar
- Viviendo con adolescentes
- Enriqueciendo su matrimonio
- Desarrollo y cuidados prenatales
- Como mejorar la estima propia en la familia
- Televisión en la familia
- Comprendiendo los temperamentos en la familia
- Cómo hacer el culto familiar
- Comunicándonos con los niños
- Relaciones entre padres e hijos
- Instrucción sexual en el matrimonio
- Cómo recuperarse después del divorcio
- Cómo desarrollar la vida espiritual en la familia
- Seminario para madres/padres solos
- Preparación para la jubilación
- El niño y sus etapas de desarrollo
- Otro (¿Cuál?)
¿Qué día y qué hora le son más convenientes para asistir a estas charlas? Indique los períodos de tiempo que están disponibles para usted:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dom</th>
<th>Lun</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Mie</th>
<th>Jue</th>
<th>Vie</th>
<th>Sáb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mañana</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarde</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noche</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Estado civil: ___ Soltero/a ___ Casado/a ___ Divorciado/a ___ Viudo/a

Sexo: ___ Masculino ___ Femenino
APPENDIX C
TRANSPARENCY MASTERS
¡Bienvenidos madrugadores!

PRIMER ENCUENTRO DE DIRECTORES DE VIDA FAMILIAR
¡Buenos días madrugadores!

DIRECTORES DE VIDA FAMILIAR
CONDICIÓN ACTUAL DE LAS FAMILIAS

1. Actitudes hacia el CASAMIENTO

2. CONFLICTOS en los roles

3. Presiones financieras

4. Revolución SEXUAL

5. Complejidad de la tarea paternal

6. Hogares con UN SOLO PROGENITOR
7. **VIOLENCIA familiar**

8. **Aumento en los índices del DIVORCIO**

9. **Matrimonio en segundas nupcias**

10. **Cadena DISFUNCIONAL de la familia**

11. **INFLUENCIA SECULAR de los medios de comunicación**

*Sin embargo, a pesar de las dificultades que atraviesa la familia, no perecerá.*
EL DIVORCIO EN ESTADOS UNIDOS

The Divorce Curve


The Divorce Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number of divorces per 100 married people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 20</td>
<td>5.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>4.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>3.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>2.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>2.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>1.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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### Como Definen Los Americanos a la Familia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage holding traditional view</th>
<th>Percentage holding nouveau view</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Married</strong></td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Single</strong></td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Divorced</strong></td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Widowed</strong></td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-27</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-46</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47-64</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 and older</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All</strong></td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: "Family in America" survey conducted in February 1992 by the Barna Research Group, Ltd. These data reflect the answers of 1,009 people interviewed in the study. Percentages exceed 100 percent because some respondents gave answers that fit both "traditional" and "nouveau" categories.
### Family Type and Annual Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Type</th>
<th>Annual Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All families</td>
<td>$35,353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married-couple families</td>
<td>$39,895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-parent families with female head</td>
<td>$29,046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-parent families with black female head</td>
<td>$12,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-parent families with Hispanic female head</td>
<td>$11,914</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.*
COMO USAN LOS ADULTOS EL TIEMPO CON LA FAMILIA

Family activity

Percentage who engaged in this activity during the past week

- Watched television together as a family: 86%
- Spent more than 30 minutes at a time talking with your child about things that are important to the child: 80%
- Spent time doing homework or other educational activities together: 73%
- Went out to a restaurant for a fun meal together: 69%
- Took a trip to a special place chosen because the children would enjoy it: 59%
- Played some type of sport together: 49%
- Attended or experienced some type of cultural activity as a family, such as going to a museum, a play, or a concert: 23%
- Went to a theater to see a movie together: 13%

Source: "Family in America" survey conducted in February 1992 by the Barna Research Group, Ltd. These data reflect the views of the 375 parents in the study who have children under 18 living in the home.
Como usan el tiempo los padres con sus hijos

**Activity**

- **Watch television together**
  - Married: 94%
  - Divorced: 57%

- **Do homework or other educational activities**
  - Married: 84%
  - Divorced: 38%

- **Spend more than 30 minutes at a time talking about life together**
  - Married: 81%
  - Divorced: 79%

- **Go out for a fun meal together**
  - Married: 74%
  - Divorced: 51%

- **Drive or travel to a special place that would be of interest to the kids**
  - Married: 64%
  - Divorced: 41%

- **Play a sport together**
  - Married: 55%
  - Divorced: 26%

- **Experience a cultural activity together, such as a museum, zoo, or play**
  - Married: 25%
  - Divorced: 14%

- **Go to a movie theater together**
  - Married: 15%
  - Divorced: 8%

**Source:** "Family in America" survey conducted in February 1992 by the Barna Research Group, Ltd.

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FUNDAMENTOS DEL MINISTERIO DE VF

1. El ministerio familiar debe ser primariamente PREVENTIVO

2. El ministerio familiar debe operar sobre las INSTRUCCIONES DIVINAS del matrimonio y la familia

3. El ministerio familiar debe tomar en cuenta las DINÁMICAS que suceden en la familia y no solamente los INDIVIDUOS que viven en él

4. El ministerio familiar debe orientar y guiar sobre los PERÍODOS de DESARROLLO de la vida familiar
5. El ministerio familiar debe ofrecer tanto PROGRAMAS ESPECIALES para las familias como también estar integrado en cada aspecto de la vida de la IGLESIA

6. El ministerio familiar debe expandirse para incluir a la COMUNIDAD
PASOS PARA ORGANIZAR EL DEPARTAMENTO
DE VIDA FAMILIAR

1. Seleccionar a los dirigentes
   a. Co-directores
   b. Comisión de Vida Familiar

2. Determinar las necesidades de la iglesia
   a. Por observación:
   b. Por recolección de información específica
   c. Por recolección de información general

3. Formar y organizar programas o actividades

4. Evaluar los resultados
PASOS ORGANIZACIONALES PARA EL DEPARTAMENTO DE VIDA FAMILIAR

1. DESPERTAR INTERÉS
2. ORGANIZAR LIDERAZGO
3. DESCUBRIR Y PRIORIZAR LAS NECESIDADES
4. CREAR O REVISAR LOS PLANES
5. EVALUAR LOS RESULTADOS
6. ASIGNAR RESPONSABILIDAD
7. REALIZAR EL PROGRAMA
INSTRUCCIÓN BÍBLICA SOBRE EL MATRIMONIO Y LA FAMILIA

1. Origen

2. Significado del término Familia

3. Características de la FAMILIA EN EL ANTIGUO TESTAMENTO
   a. POLIGAMIA
   b. Ley del levirato
   c. ELECCIÓN del cónyuge
   d. Recién casados
   e. RESTRICCIONES en el matrimonio
   f. En el NT
Relaciones familiares

a. Esposos - antes del pecado: Gén 1 y 2 
(1) Imagen de Dios incluye RELACIÓN

(2) SUPERIORIDAD del hombre

(3) Dejar a los padres

(4) UNIRSE a su esposa

Esposos - después del pecado Ef 5:21-33
(1) Mutua SUBORDINACIÓN

(2) Respeto o SUBORDINACIÓN de la esposa

(3) Cabeza del esposo

(4) Amor del esposo
b. **Padres e HIJOS**

(1) Hijos son REGALO divino

(2) Padres no deben PROVOCAR A IRA; no deben tomar ventaja de su AUTORIDAD

(3) Hijos deben HONRAR a sus padres; deben oírlos para ganar sabiduría (Prov 1:4,8; 6:20-29)

EGW: "No hay período de la vida en el cual los hijos están EXCUSADOS de honrar a su padres".
Propósito de la familia

a. PROPAGACIÓN de la familia
   (1) Llenar la tierra con hogares y escuelas que fuesen COPIA del Edén.
   (2) REPOBLAR el cielo.
   * el AT da énfasis a familias NUMEROSAS. Sin embargo el NT enfatiza la PATERNIDAD responsable

b. Ofrecer un lugar de ACEPTACIÓN, PERTENENCIA y compañía mutuas

c. Lugar para la expresión SEXUAL

d. Transmitir la HERENCIA religiosa
   a la siguiente generación

e. AVANZAR el reino de Dios
Definiciones o conceptos claves:
1. **SISTEMA** (la familia) es más que la suma de sus miembros.

2. **BORDE** (el círculo alrededor de la familia que limita lo que es la familia y lo que no es) es lo que rodea por fuera al sistema.

3. **MEDIO AMBIENTE** (lo que está fuera de la familia) es todo aquello que está afuera del borde del sistema.

4. El borde puede ser **ABIERTO** o **CERRADO**. Si es cerrado la familia no recibe influencia del medio ambiente; si es abierto hay gran influencia.

5. **SUBSISTEMA** (partes interrelacionadas dentro de la familia) son partes del sistema que se relacionan entre sí.
TEORÍA SISTÉMICO-FAMILIAR
NIVELES DE SISTEMAS

Macrolevel

Environment

World Social System
Society System
Community System
Congregation System
Family System
Parent System
Sibling System
Individual System

System

Microlevel

Unit
DESCONECTADO, DIFERENCIADO Y ENMARAÑADO

A. Desconectado

B. Diferenciado

C. Enmarañado
¿Cómo podré desarrollar una infraestructura diferenciada en una familia tan enmarañada como esta?
¿QUE TE HACE PENSAR QUE TE ESTOY IMPIDIENDO CRECER?
¡MI AMIGO! QUE CONTENTA ESTOY QUE LA NUESTRA ES UNA FAMILIA QUE PERDONA LOS ERRORES EN CADA OCASIÓN
Características de la familia saludable:

1. **COHESIÓN.** En la familia saludable hay individualidad y se consideran parte de la familia
   
   En la familia débil están enredados o desconectados

2. **ADAPATABILIDAD.** La familia saludable es entre flexible y estructurado
   
   En la familia débil la adaptabilidad va del extremo de estar en caos al de rigidez

3. **COMUNICACIÓN.** La familia saludable es clara en su transmisión y percepción.
   
   La familia débil transmite y percibe los mensajes en forma confusa.

4. **ROLES.** En la familia saludable son designados claramente y tienen claros los límites de una generación con la otra.
   
   La familia débil vive en disputas por los roles, y los límites de una generación y otra son confusos.
MODELO CIRCUMPLEJO DEL SISTEMA FAMILIAR

LA FAMILIA SALUDABLE - DESARROLLO

Conceptos básicos:

1. La familia o sistema tiene CIERTAS TAREAS que cumplir en diferentes etapas de su vida

2. Si la familia lo lleva a cabo con ÉXITO avanza mejor a la siguiente etapa

3. Hay tareas que son ESPECÍFICAS a un ciclo, otras continúan desarrollándose en etapas subsecuentes
CICLOS DE LA VIDA FAMILIAR

A. Los años iniciales

1. Pre-matrimonial
2. Neo-matrimonial
3. Neo-paternal

B. Los años constructivos

4. Hijos escolares
5. Hijo adolescente

C. Los años maduros

6. Nido vacío
7. Jubilación

D. Los años solos

8. Persona sola
9. Padre solo
TEORÍA DEL FILTRO PARA LA ELECCIÓN DE FUTURO CÓNYUGE

El campo completo de los posibles conyuges

Filtro

endógamo

Filtro

homógamo

Filtro de las necesidades complementarias

La persona con quien se casa
LOS AÑOS INICIALES

Tareas principales de este grupo - DIFERENCIACIÓN y NUEVOS ROLES

Pre-matrimonial

1. **Duración**: comienza con AMISTADES FORMALES con el sexo opuesto, y concluye con el CASAMIENTO

2. **La tarea más importante** - diferenciarse con la familia de origen.

3. **Otra tarea** es la ELECCIÓN del futuro cónyuge (Filtros)
   
   (a) Endogamia - TRASFONDOS COMUNES

   (b) Homogamia - intereses comunes

   (c) Necesidades complementarias

   (d) Conocer la VOLUNTAD de DIOS
4. **Tercera función** es aprender a desarrollar una comunicación ABIERTA y FRANCA

5. **La iglesia podrá ministrarlos:**
   
   (a) Dando ejemplos dignos de ser copiados.
   
   (b) Dando seminarios sobre temas mencionados anteriormente.
Neo-matrimonial

1. **Duración**: comienza con el **CASAMIENTO** de la pareja y concluye con la llegada del **PRIMER HIJO**

2. **Tarea más importante** - **APRENDER** el rol de **ESPOSO** y **ESPOSA**

3. **Otra tarea** - **ACEPTAR** la responsabilidad de la nueva relación

4. **Tercera tarea** - **CADA UNO** tiene una tarea diferente
   (a) **Ella** en establecer **INTIMIDAD** en el matrimonio
   (b) **Él** en establecer **IDENTIDAD** en su trabajo
5. Período VULNERABLE
aunque "feliz"

6. La iglesia tiene una gran oportunidad de ministrarlos.
   
   (a) Dando ejemplos de otras familias que han superado con ÉXITO esta etapa
   
   (b) Ofreciendo seminarios y RETIROS
   
   (c) Organizando y dirigiendo GRUPOS de apoyo y educación
Neo-paternal

1. **Duración:** comienza con el primer hijo y concluye cuando el último hijo va a la ESCUELA

2. **La tarea principal** es manejar la tensión creada por la LLEGADA de una nueva persona

3. **Otra tarea** es pasar de receptores de atención y cuidado, a ser los DADORES

4. **Maternidad** exige su casi total ATENCIÓN

5. **Tercer tarea** es HABILITAR los hijos
Neo-paternal

6. La familia cristiana estará velando por la TRANSMISIÓN
de la herencia religiosa de sus hijos.

7. Oportunidades de la iglesia para ministrar

   (1) Crear estructuras de relaciones primarias

       (GRUPOS PEQUEÑOS)

   (2) Seminarios, retiros, CAMPAMENTOS
**LOS AÑOS CONSTRUCTIVOS**

Hijos escolares:

1. **Duración:** comienza cuando el ÚLTIMO hijo entra a la escuela y concluye cuando el primer hijo llega a la ADOLESCENCIA

2. **La tarea principal** es la de INCREMENTAR la habilitación

3. **Madres:** etapa de BAJA ESTIMA propia

4. **Padres:** luchan por alcanzar el punto más ELEVADO en su trabajo
5. **Otra tarea** es abrir los BORDES del sistema familiar a la ESCUELA

6. Es la etapa del "**tiempo APREMIANTE**" - el tiempo no alcanza

7. **La familia cristiana** aprovechará de la memoria de ORO

8. **Ministerio de la iglesia**
   
   (1) Grupos pequeños
   
   (2) Seminarios, charlas
   
   (3) Clases BAUTISMALES

   a estos jovencitos
El primer adolescente:

1. **Duración**: comienza con la llegada a la adolescencia del hijo y concluye cuando el primer hijo SALE de la casa.

2. **La tarea principal** es la de aumentar la FLEXIBILIDAD y PERMEABILIDAD de los bordes del sistema familiar

3. **La adolescencia trae crisis a la familia**
   (1) Es creación de la revolución industrial
   (2) Brecha GENERACIONAL
      (a) Hijos crisis de IDENTIDAD
      (b) Madre crisis de INTIMIDAD en el matrimonio
      (c) Padre crisis de IDENTIDAD EN SU TRABAJO

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4. **Otra tarea** es la de PRIORITIZAR la relación matrimonial

5. **La familia cristiana** que desea pasar su herencia a la siguiente generación se halla en la etapa MÁS DIFÍCIL

6. **El ministerio de la iglesia**

   (1) **Ofrecer REDES DE APOYO**

   (2) **Seminarios para los padres**

   (3) **Seminarios, campamentos para los adolescentes**

   (4) **Adolescentes están hambrientos de HÉROES**


**LOS AÑOS MADUROS**

Nido vacío:

1. **Duración**: comienza con la salida del PRIMER hijo y termina con la JUBILACIÓN de uno de los cónyuges

2. **La Tarea principal** - tener la mayor cantidad de ENTRADAS y SALIDAS en la familia

3. **Otra tarea** - velar por la doble responsabilidad de CUIDAR de ambas generaciones inmediatas

4. **Tercera tarea** - aumentar la relación con el cónyuge a un grado MÁS ÍNTIMO
5. **Otra tarea** es seguir abriendo los bordes del sistema familiar para incluir a nuevos MIEMBROS

6. **La pareja cristiana** tendrá oportunidad de

   (1) Desarrollar una relación más íntima con Dios

   (2) Proveer apoyo a la generación joven por medio del EJEMPLO, del CUIDADO y de la ATENCIÓN de los nietos y de la CASA

7. **La iglesia puede ministrar**

   (1) creando un ambiente donde la amistad pueda profundizar

   (2) Charlas en pequeños grupos
Jubilación:

1. **Duración:** comienza con la jubilación de uno de los cónyuges y termina con la **AUSENCIA** del compañero

2. **La tarea principal** es de **AJUSTARSE** a la jubilación

3. **La pareja cristiana** todavía puede ayudar en la transmisión de valores morales a los hijos por medio de su ejemplo, y a los nietos por ejemplo e instrucción

4. **Ministerio de la iglesia** a ellos se centra en ofrecerles un lugar donde puedan ser **ÚTILES**
**LOS AÑOS SOLO**

Persona sola:

1. **Duración**: son las personas que tienen 28 AÑOS o más

2. **La tarea principal** es doble y crean un elevado necesidad de "PERTENECER"
   
   (1) "DESARRAIGADO" - relaciones no resueltas
   
   (2) "FUERA DE LUGAR" - temas que se hablan no son aplicables

3. **La tarea principal de los divorciados** es RECONOCER su parte en la ruptura matrimonial y MANTENERSE en contacto con las familias extendidas de ambos cónyuges
4. La tarea principal de los que nunca se casaron es determinar por qué no lo hicieron y formar una red social que incluya la familia de origen y extendida.

5. Otra tarea es el tema de la sexualidad.

6. El individuo cristiano puede dedicarse de la salvación.

7. La iglesia puede ministrarlos si
   (1) Reconoce sus diferencias
   (2) Les ofrece oportunidades para estar juntos, y a la vez los incluye en actividades generales.
   (2) Organiza seminarios, retiros.
Padre solo:

1. **Duración:** comienza cuando el padre/madre decide permanecer solo/a y concluye con su casamiento

2. **La tarea principal** es poder hacer frente a la IMPOSIBLE tarea de ser padre y madre

3. **El padre solo cristiano** hará bien en recordar que Dios estará con él/ella mientras quiera ser GUIADO por Él

4. **Ministerio de la iglesia**
   
   (1) Llegar a ser FAMILIA

   para ellos
CONCLUSIÓN

1. Los ciclos de la vida familiar ofrecen un modelo preventivo y apropiado para indicarnos el grado de NORMALIDAD de la familia.

2. El método sistémico ofrece un modelo preventivo y corrector apropiado para indicarnos el grado de SALUDABILIDAD de la familia.

3. Siendo que no hay organización o institución a nivel federal, estatal o local que esté ayudando eficientemente a la familia, que las dinámicas que ofrecen las relaciones con la familia extendida han sido perdidas para muchos americanos, que las escuelas son impotentes y el gobierno está paralizado, la iglesia tiene una oportunidad única de
ser el medio de asistencia y apoyo para las familias de la iglesia y de la comunidad.

4. Pero, ¿cómo podemos llenar ese VACÍO?

(1) La iglesia que desea lanzar un ministerio para las familias no necesita comenzar organizando todo el espectro de la vida familiar. Lo que es importante es EMPEZAR.

(2) Dondequiera que se empiece, alguien tiene que APROPIARSE del programa. Alguien tiene que tomar la responsabilidad final del departamento.

(3) Los GRUPOS PEQUEÑOS proveen las condiciones para que se desarrollen las relaciones primarias para la discusión sobre los tópicos relacionados con cada
etapa

(4) El material a conversar es mejor discutido en un ambiente INFORMAL --un living room, alrededor de la mesa, en una caminata o campamento, etc.

(5) ¿Quién puede DIRIGIR? ¿Quién puede comunicar mejor los asuntos y desarrollar las clases de relaciones dentro de las cuales los asuntos delicados de la vida puedan ser procesados? Debemos buscar una nueva clase de EXPERTOS

(a) Uno que ha SOBREVIVIDO las realidades de una etapa particular y está MOTIVADO a proveer ayuda y orientación a la siguiente generación.

(b) No necesita ser PERFECTO y probablemente sea
Conclusión - 4

más efectivo si dirige desde una posición de vulnerabilidad en lugar de una posición de "tenerlo o saberlo todo".

(c) No necesita ser EDUCADO en el sentido formal, pero sí necesita es ser ENTRENADO. Éste es el modelo bíblico del discipulado: la generación mayor guiando a la más joven.

Ellos son los EXPERTOS
¿Por qué no se han fusionado los hispanos?

1. Mayor número de IMIGRANTES

2. Van y VIENEN a su tierra

3. Avances de las COMUNICACIONES: teléfono, estaciones de radio y televisión

4. Comercio ACTIVO con Latinamérica
I. ESTADÍSTICAS

Número de hispanos

De acuerdo al censo de 1990, hay más de 22.4 millones de hispanos residiendo en USA, la SEGUNDA minoría (9%) después de los áfrico-americanos (12%).

El crecimiento se debe a la MIGRACIÓN y al número de NACIMIENTOS.
Dónde viven los hispanos

En CIUDADES

Los estados con mayor índice de hispanos son:

**CALIFORNIA** (34%)

**TEXAS** (19%)

**NEW YORK** (10%).

Economía de los hispanos

Mientras que el promedio de los ingresos de una familia en USA en 1990 era de $43,735 el promedio de la familia hispana era de $29,311. A esto se debe agregar que la familia hispana es más NUMEROSA.
II. CARACTERÍSTICAS

Familismo

Familismo se ve a través de dos expresiones sociales

1. Apoyo de los FAMILIARES

2. El compadre
Aculturización

Posibles reacciones:

a. La aceptación PLENA
b. La aceptación PARCIAL
c. El RECHAZO

¿Cómo se mide el grado de aculturización?

a. Por el uso del idioma que se habla en el HOGAR

b. Por cuanto más alejado está la familia de las IDEAS Y VALORES del “viejo país”.  

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Machismo

1. Deseo de probarse AFUERA del hogar como un CONQUISTADOR.

2. Deseo de probarse DENTRO de la casa por medio de la actitud del MATADOR.

Si la mujer es promiscua, se considerado un horrendo CRIMEN.
Condición de la mujer

La mujer, al ir a trabajar fuera de casa obtiene mayor AUTONOMÍA como también oportunidades para SUPERARSE educacionalmente.

Para el esposo la nueva cultura afecta su ESTIMA PROPIA, mientras que para la mujer la ELEVA. Ésto produce muchos CONFLICTOS hogareños.
III. CICLOS DE LA FAMILIA HISPANA

Ciclo Neo-marital

1. Duración: CASAMIENTO - LLEGADA DEL PRIMER HIJO

2. Características principales: IDENTIFICACIÓN de roles.

3. Oportunidades de la iglesia:
Ciclo Neo-paternal

1. Duración: NACIMIENTO DEL HIJO - PUBERTAD

2. Características principales:
   a. Rol de los PADRES
   b. Relación padres-hijos:
   c. MENOS roces maritales.

3. Oportunidades de la iglesia:
Ciclo Post-paternal

1. Duración: PUBERTAD - BODA

2. Características principales:
   a. ACULTURIZACIÓN
   b. Respeto entre HERMANOS
   c. Afianzamiento de los ROLES
   d. PUREZA de la hijas:

3. Oportunidades de la iglesia:
Ciclo Pre-marital

1. Duración: PLANES DE CASAMIENTO - BODA

2. Características principales:
   a. Elección de NOVIOS
   b. Noviazgo
   c. CASAMIENTO

3. Oportunidades de la iglesia:
Ciclo del Matrimonio Maduro

1. **Duración:** HIJO SE VA DE LA CASA - MUERTE DEL CÓNYUGE

2. **Características principales:**
   a. Jubilación
   b. **MUERTE** del cónyuge:

3. **Oportunidades de la iglesia:**
ENCUESTA PARA LOS DIRECTORES DE VIDA FAMILIAR
*Tenga a bien poner un círculo en la información apropiada. Muchas gracias

DATOS GENERALES

Edad: 26-32 33-40 41-50 51-62

Sexo: Masculino Femenino

Estado civil: soltero/a casado/a Divorciado/a Viudo/a

Fecha de cumpleaños: ____________________________

1. La institución de la familia está en peligro de extinción
2. Las familias están siendo atacadas desde adentro y afuera
3. El rol de la familia tradicional está mejor definido que el de la familia moderna
4. Quienes son activos sexualmente antes del matrimonio tienen mejores posibilidades de tener un hogar duradero
5. El índice de divorcio entre los evangélicos es menor al de la población general
6. Quienes vuelven a casarse tienen mayores posibilidades de tener un hogar duradero que aquellos que se han casado una sola vez
7. Educación o prevención son las tareas primordiales del Departamento de Vida Familiar (VF)
8. Sería bueno que la Escuela Sabática permitiera que se presentaran temas sobre la familia en el tiempo de las clases.
9. El departamento de VF vela sólo por el bienestar de las familias de la iglesia
10. Las organizaciones federales y estatales están ayudando eficientemente a las familias
11. Quienes dirigen el departamento de VF en las iglesias deberían ser personas conocedoras de las ciencias que estudian el comportamiento humano
12. El ministerio del Departamento de VF comienza con el casamiento de la pareja y concluye cuando los hijos entran a la escuela
13. El matrimonio fue instituido en el Edén
14. La palabra "familia" en la Biblia se EE.UU. para referirse al núcleo básico de la familia (padres e hijos)
15. En el Antiguo Testamento los padres escogían quienes serían las esposas de sus hijos

No Poco Más Mucho
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16. La prohibición de no casarse con personas de otras naciones era por motivos políticos más que religiosos
   1 2 3 4
17. La esposa ocupaba un rol pasivo en el Antiguo Testamento
   1 2 3 4
18. Porque el hombre fue hecho primero denota que Dios lo hizo superior a la mujer
   1 2 3 4
19. Los hijos ganarán sabiduría si oyen a sus padres
   1 2 3 4
20. Una familia flexible es sinónimo de una familia saludable
   1 2 3 4
21. Una familia saludable es aquella que permite desarrollar la individualidad de sus miembros
   1 2 3 4
22. Los jóvenes deberían buscar consejo de sus padres sobre la elección del cónyuge
   1 2 3 4
23. La Biblia es la guía más confiable para la elección del compañero de la vida
   1 2 3 4
24. La mayoría de los divorcios ocurren luego que los hijos dejan el hogar
   1 2 3 4
25. El Departamento de VF puede servir a las familias formando grupos pequeños
   1 2 3 4
26. En este momento no me siento suficientemente preparado como para dirigir el Departamento de VF
   1 2 3 4
27. El culto familiar debe abarcar el estudio de la lección de la Escuela Sabática cada uno de los miembros de la familia
   1 2 3 4
28. El Departamento de VF no tiene la responsabilidad de ministrar a las personas solas
   1 2 3 4
29. Veo que el Departamento de VF es de suma importancia para el bienestar general de la iglesia
   1 2 3 4
30. Creo que no puedo dirigir este departamento porque he tenido tenido malos entendidos últimamente con mi cónyuge
   1 2 3 4
31. El Departamento de VF debería ser dirigido por expertos, por personas preparadas como terapeutas y consejeros familiares
   1 2 3 4
32. El mejor lugar para hablar sobre temas de enriquecimiento familiar es la iglesia
   1 2 3 4
33. Sí, quiero iniciar el Departamento de VF en mi iglesia
   1 2 3 4
34. Tengo dudas acerca de cuál es mi rol como director de VF
   1 2 3 4
35. He sido desafiado a ofrecer un mejor servicio a las familias de mi iglesia
   1 2 3 4
36. Salgo de aquí con la determinación de hacer algo en favor de los hogares de la iglesia
   1 2 3 4
37. He aprendido que el Departamento de VF no vela solo por el bienestar de las familias de la iglesia sino también por las de la comunidad.
   1 2 3 4
38. Ahora tengo una visión más clara de cómo dirigir este departamento
   1 2 3 4
ENCUESTA PARA LOS DIRECTORES DE VIDA FAMILIAR
*Tenga a bien poner un círculo en la información apropiada. Muchas gracias

DATOS GENERALES

Edad: 26-32 33-40 41-50 51-62

Sexo: Masculino Femenino

Estado civil: soltero/a casado/a Divorciado/a Viudo/a

Fecha de cumpleaños: ____________________________________________

1. Los hispanos son diferentes a otros grupos inmigrantes que llegaron a Estados Unidos
   No Poco Más Mucho
   1 2 3 4

2. De acuerdo al censo del 1990 hay más de 20 millones de hispanos en los Estados Unidos
   1 2 3 4

3. El crecimiento numérico de los hispanos está relacionado al número de nacimientos
   1 2 3 4

4. De todos los estados, California es el que tiene el mayor número de hispanos
   1 2 3 4

5. El ingreso monetario de los hispanos es menor que la mitad del ingreso de la población anglosajona promedio
   1 2 3 4

6. Los hispanos de México o de origen mexicano son más del 70 % de todos los hispanos que viven en los EE.UU.
   1 2 3 4

7. Familismo significa que el énfasis por la familia es enfermizo, es decir que crea excesiva dependencia emocional
   1 2 3 4

8. Los vínculos familiares de los hispanos son más estrechos que el de los anglosajones
   1 2 3 4

9. La responsabilidad del Departamento de Vida Familiar (VF) es de cuidar solamente de las familias que están dentro de la iglesia
   1 2 3 4

10. Aculturización significa el grado de aceptación o rechazo que una persona siente hacia una nueva cultura
    1 2 3 4

11. El índice de divorcio de los Hispanos es menor que el de la población general de los EE.UU.
    1 2 3 4

12. El ministerio del Departamento de VF abarca desde que los hijos nacen hasta que se van de la casa
    1 2 3 4

13. En este momento no me siento suficientemente preparado como para dirigir el Departamento de VF
    1 2 3 4

14. Loss hombres hispanos que viven en EE.UU. tienden a tener más baja estima propia que las mujeres hispanas
    1 2 3 4

15. El ciclo "neo-paternal" abarca el tiempo desde que la pareja se casa hasta que llega el primer hijo
    1 2 3 4

16. Por lo general los padres hispanos (padre y madre) son permisivos con sus hijos pequeños
    1 2 3 4

17. El proceso de aculturización genera mayores tensiones cuando los hijos llegan a la adolescencia
    1 2 3 4

18. "Palomillas" es el nombre que se le da a los hermanos menores
    1 2 3 4

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19. Sí, quiero iniciar el ministerio de VF en mi iglesia
20. El índice de embarazo entre jóvenes hispanas solteras es más elevado que el de la población general
21. La etapa de la jubilación representa el ciclo de la vida más traumático tanto para los hispanos como para la población general
22. Veo que el Departamento de VF es de suma importancia para el bienestar general de la iglesia
23. Creo que no puedo conducir este departamento porque he tenido malos entendidos últimamente con mi cónyuge
24. En las próximas décadas la familia hispana será absorbida por la cultura dominante del país
25. La iglesia es un centro que podría ayudar a la familia hispana
26. Los jóvenes deberían buscar consejo de sus padres sobre la elección del cónyuge
27. En general, la mayoría de los divorcios ocurren luego que los hijos abandonan el hogar
28. El Departamento de VF animará a otros departamentos a que creen actividades para el fortalecimiento de la familia
29. Tengo dudas acerca de cuál es mi rol como director de VF
30. En el culto familiar se debe estudiar la lección de la Escuela Sabática de cada uno de los miembros de la familia
31. El Departamento de VF no es responsable de ministrar a las personas solas de la iglesia
32. El Departamento de VF debería ser dirigido sólo por expertos, personas preparadas como terapeutas o consejeros familiares
33. Uno de los mejores lugares para hablar sobre temas de enriquecimiento familiar es la iglesia
34. He sido desafiado a ofrecer un mejor servicio a las familias de la iglesia
35. La guía más confiable para la elección del compañero de la vida está en la Biblia
36. Salgo de aquí con la determinación de hacer algo en favor de los hogares de la iglesia
37. He aprendido que el Departamento de VF no solo vela por el bienestar de las familias de la iglesia sino también por las de la comunidad
38. Ahora tengo una visión más clara de cómo dirigir este departamento
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VITA

Personal

Name: Jorge Raúl Mayer
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Educational

Undergraduate and Graduate Schools Attended:

Colegio (Universidad) Adventista del Plata, Entre Ríos, Argentina
Andrews University, SDA Theological Seminary, Berrien Springs, Michigan
McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois
Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California

Degrees Awarded:

1978 Licenciado en Teología y Filosofía (B.A. in Theology and Philosophy)
1978 Profesor de Historia Sagrada (B.A. in Sacred History)
1986 Master of Divinity
1998 Doctor of Ministry

Professional

Professional Experience:

1978-1979 Associate Boy’s Dean, River Plate College (University)
1979-1980 Associate Pastor, Central Argentinian Conference of SDA
1980-1981  Literature Evangelist, Central California Conference of SDA
1991-1998  Pastor and Hispanic Coordinator, Michigan Conference of SDA
1998–      Vice-president for Spanish Language Ministries, Florida Conference of SDA