

This book represents a major contribution to the study of the relationship between religion and society. It provides a much needed perspective on this interface. The chapters on family breakdown and the culture wars make it particularly valuable for use in courses on marriage and the family.

Dr. William Alex McIntosh
Professor of Sociology, Texas A&M University
at College Station

This book is exactly what the world needs today; a concise examination told in a compelling way that reminds us of our direction and purpose as the church.

Rev. Bob Allen
Senior Pastor of Coker United Methodist Church,
San Antonio, Texas

Wrestling with Angels is eye-opening and thought-provoking. It presents succinct research documentation that provides another tool in support of marriage and intact families. This book is both timely and needed. I plan to give it as a wedding gift. It is a book that every Christian family should read and discuss.

Evelyn Townley, Executive Director
Wise Choices for Youth, Inc.
San Antonio, Texas

It is a very well researched piece of work from which I learned a lot. The book is chock full of interesting and useful information.

Dr. Norval D. Glenn
Ashbel Smith Professor of Sociology and
Stiles Professor of American Studies,
University of Texas at Austin

Wrestling with Angels is an important and necessary work which provides a thorough and scholarly examination of the social and cultural impact of the sexual revolution in the United States, particularly as it impacts the church. It is a groundbreaking study that will be an essential source in this discussion for some time to come.

Dr. Clifford M. Black, Ph.D. C.C.S.
Professor of Sociology/Criminal Justice,
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Wrestling with Angels

The Sexual Revolution
Confronts the Church

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Confronts the Church

Marjorie L. Coppock, Ph.D.



ACW Press
Eugene, Oregon 97405

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Wrestling with Angels: The Sexual Revolution Confronts the Church

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Cover Design by Eric Walljasper

Interior design by Pine Hill Graphics

Packaged by ACW Press

85334 Lorane Hwy

Eugene, Oregon 97405

www.acwpress.com

The views expressed or implied in this work do not necessarily reflect those of ACW Press. Ultimate design, content, and editorial accuracy of this work are the responsibility of the author.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

(Provided by Quality Books, Inc.)

Coppock, Marjorie L.

Wrestling with angels : the sexual revolution
confronts the church / Marjorie L. Coppock.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 1-932124-01-2

1. Sex--Religious aspects. 2. Christian ethics.
3. Sexual ethics. 4. Sex customs--History. I. Title.

BT708.C66 2003

241'.66

QBI33-1091

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Printed in the United States of America.

This book is dedicated:

to my parents; in appreciation for the loving family experiences, guidance, and memories received from them

to my husband, our children and extended families; relationships through the good times and the difficult times give us a sense of caring and meaning

to the many servants of the church; who have guided our family into love and spiritual truths.

to all families past, present, and future; in hope that God's Love will grow in caring relationships.

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Acknowledgments

An early version of this book was a paper presented at the Southwestern Sociological Association Meetings in Fort Worth, Texas in March of 2001. Interest expressed by several people toward the concerns addressed, encouraged me to continue my research into the interactions between the sexual revolution and the church.

Over the two year period in which material was gathered and developed for this book, many people have been helpful by reading drafts of the document and offering suggestions and comments. This feedback has been useful, not only for information, but also for encouragement. Many thanks are extended to them for their assistance.

Dr. Carl Coppock, my kind and supportive husband proof-read many drafts for spelling errors and checked and rechecked references for accuracy. This has been a tremendous help to me.

The Rev. Bob Allen, senior pastor at Coker United Methodist Church in San Antonio, spent two sessions going through each chapter with me and commenting on issues. His encouragement, support and endorsement are greatly appreciated.

The Rev. Ron Coppock, my brother-in-law and senior minister at First Baptist Church in Fairfield, Illinois, read early versions of the manuscript and gave helpful suggestions and information on several occasions.

Dr. Gus Hahn, Mrs. Sue Osborn, Mr. Weston Hare, and Mr. Don Thralls read earlier drafts of the manuscript and offered helpful comments, criticisms, and encouragement.

Mr. Henry Carrigan of Trinity Press International and Mr. Mark Anthony, of Huntington House Publishing Inc., read earlier drafts of the book and gave supportive suggestions on the importance and the publishable outlook for the manuscript. Dr. Jim Thobaben and Dr. Donald M. Joy of Asbury Seminary also read the manuscript; appreciation is extended to them for their comments and encouragement.

Thanks are extended to Dr. William Alex McIntosh, Dr. Norval D. Glenn, and Dr. Clifford M. Black for their willingness to read later versions of the book and provide endorsements. These dedicated sociologists have been influential in contributing to my understanding of social relationships and in providing supportive academic encouragement.

Thanks are extended to Mrs. Evelyn Townley, the founder and executive director of the abstinence program in San Antonio, Texas, entitled Wise Choices For Youth. After reading the book she provided personal encouragement and a thoughtful endorsement.

Mr. Steve Laube and Mr. Chuck Dean, owner and sales manager, respectively, of ACW Press, have been most encouraging with their help and support. Mr. Laube offered valuable help as an informative speaker at the American Christian Writers' Conference which I attended in Dallas in March, 2002. Mr. Dean has been helpful in encouraging me to move ahead with publication of the book. He read the manuscript and provided useful suggestions.

Appreciation is extended to all of these people for their concern about the timely importance of the topic and for their willingness to take their time to read and to comment on the material.

Finally, appreciation is extended to Fred Renich of Pine Hill Graphics for attention to detail in printing the book and for his prompt and professional service.

Preface

And Jacob was left alone and a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and Jacob's thigh was put out of joint as he wrestled with him.

Then he said, "Let me go, for the day is breaking."

But Jacob said, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me."

And he said to him, "What is your name?"

And he said, "Jacob."

Then he said, "Your name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed."

Then Jacob asked him, "Tell me, I pray, your name?"

But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him.

So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved."

RSV—Genesis 32:24-30

W*restling With Angels* is an allusion to Genesis 32:24-30. The destiny and characterization of the nation of Israel were revealed when Jacob wrestled all night with a man who is characterized as a representative(angel) of God or even the very God.

Although Jacob was successful in striving with his adversary, God showed that he was able to overpower him. Jacob acknowledged his dependence upon God's mercy when he asked a blessing from him. God acknowledged the servanthood of Jacob by changing his name from Jacob to Israel.

This account describes the moment in which Jacob realized that the destiny of the new nation was to struggle with the will of God for all humankind.¹

The word “confronts” is used in the title because the sexual revolution is seen as more than merely a collision between different ideas, but a confrontation with the will of God as it was identified by the prophets and writers of the Judeo/Christian Scripture.

Introduction

During the volatile years of the 1960s, I was in my 20s. My husband and I were raising three young children. A bewildering array of social revolutions was occurring all at once. It was an exciting but a dangerous time. Shrill reports of confrontations, demonstrations, and assassinations filled the newscasts, newspapers, and magazines.¹

- The cold war was a hovering concern. Following Russia's launching of Sputnik I in 1957, the United States accelerated the exploration of space.
- The leaders of the civil rights movement, activated by the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955, led sit-ins and marches that led to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.
- Anti-Vietnam protestors confronted the military mindset in the late 1960s.
- Women were challenging the second-class status of women whose contributions to society were dismissed as trivial or nonessential.
- The assassinations of President John F. Kennedy in 1963 and Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968 accented the reality of social revolution.
- The sexual revolution confronted traditional values.

The sexual revolution that exploded and swept across the United States in the last half of the twentieth century brought

profound changes in sexual and family relationships. These changes challenged traditional values and religious practices. The changing sexual and family behaviors jeopardized the ability of the family to act as a reproductive support group for religious values and ideas. Social influences through the media, schools, and legislation influenced people, young people especially, to move away from commitment to traditional moral behaviors and family values toward more unrestrained behaviors.

Dynamic changes in family and sexual behaviors became the focus of major social movements from the years 1960 to 2000. Highly disciplined and vocal groups engaged in intense debates over these changes. The debates relating to sexuality, sex education, abortion, divorce, and homosexuality focused on the meaning of human life, the family, and sacred values. Consequently, the disputes became acrimonious, accompanied by ferocious denunciations and accusations.

In their support of traditional values, religious groups encountered political struggles both internally and within the larger society. The struggle over control for the definition of “normal” sexual behavior was evident within denominations and even within their own hierarchies. Liberal factions sought to change official church statements related to sexuality in order to bring them into line with secular practices. A dichotomy between churches became evident. “Mainline” denominations moved in the direction of accommodation to contemporary values while “fundamentalist” denominations sought to preserve traditional biblical values and family relationships.

Interest in this study has grown out of my life experiences within academia as a student and a professor of sociology; within churches of several denominations, including Baptist, Church of the Brethren, United Methodist, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian; and as a wife and mother raising three children who were born in the 1960s. As parents raising two sons and a daughter, my husband and I were confused and concerned about the changes that were taking place in society. Being

unaware at the time of the organized groups that were challenging traditional moral values, I naively assumed that other social institutions were continuing to support these values.

My family and I were actively involved in the churches in which we were members. These experiences sensitized me to the varied perspectives, both within denominations and between denominations, in regard to support for diverse sexual and family relationships. I observed and felt personally the intensity of feelings these topics generated within congregations.

At age fifty-three, I received my Ph.D. in sociology with a focus on marriage and family. I began full-time teaching of undergraduate and Master's level university classes during the 1990s. Most students held the long-term goal of forming a loving and stable family. Yet, many expressed concern and anxiety about their ability to achieve their goal. They had seen, and many had felt, the pain experienced when marriages and families broke up. Consequently many were afraid of forming marriage and family bonds; indeed, many were even concerned about serious dating relationships.

This book presents a summary and overview of the challenges directed predominantly toward Jewish and Christian organizations in their support of cherished sexual and family values and the accommodations made by these groups to the changing culture. The study identifies the perspectives, actors, and organizations involved in the debates over differing definitions of appropriate sexual and family patterns, particularly as they responded to changing legislation.

Denominational literature, newspaper and magazine reports, journal articles, and other literature are summarized and integrated to analyze the ongoing contests and debates within and between religious organizations as well as within the larger society. This summary study is intended to help concerned laypersons, students of social organization, church professionals, and other interested readers gain a clearer understanding of the social forces and dynamics behind the

rapid changes that occurred within society at the end of the millennium. In so doing they can more effectively address the continuing challenges being directed toward traditional sexual and family relationships.

The Family, Sexual Morality and Religious Values

“Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

(Deuteronomy 6:4-9)¹

The quotation above, the Jewish “Shema,” has been the fundamental confession of the Jewish faith for centuries. It is among the earliest scriptures taught to Jewish children.² Religious values have protected the integrity of family relationships, because religious behaviors are passed on to the next generation through intergenerational family interconnections. The traditional family has been the reproductive support group for religious organizations.

I remember with warmth and appreciation the childhood memories of religious celebrations. My father, a gentle and kindly

man, performed the family role of putting my two brothers, my sister, and me to bed each night. He would rock us, sing songs, and tell us stories, many of which he made up himself. After reading from the Bible and saying a prayer with each of us, he would tuck us into bed, giving us a kiss on the forehead. Each meal was begun with Dad's prayer. He said the same prayer every day, one he had composed himself. How poignant was the grief at a family reunion when, in his 80s and in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease, Dad started the family prayer but could not remember how to finish it. There were tears in our eyes as my brother finished the prayer for Dad.

My mother had been trained to be a Baptist missionary, but she married after graduating. Her family and our family churches became her mission field. Attending Sunday School, church, vacation Bible school, and church youth activities was the rhythm of life. Mom favored the love verses of the Bible. One of her favorites was "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God" (1 John 4:7).

In the Western world, legislation has traditionally supported the Judeo/Christian moral and family values. Protection of the reproductive family unit has been the focus of moral sexual behaviors. Fidelity in marriage has been the defining norm for sexual relationships, while sexual behaviors outside of marriage were considered promiscuous.

Hebrew Monotheism and Morality

The vision of God revealed to the Hebrew people through Abraham, Moses, and the prophets was often at odds with the polytheism of religious practices of the day. Prostitution, homosexuality, infanticide, and the worship of statues were often included in practices of early religions. The gods were seen as vague impersonal spirits, unconcerned with the lives of humans.

Hebrew belief included the insistence that there is only one God, personally and directly involved in human activities and the progress of history. God was seen as a moral Deity concerned with human affairs who would establish the rule of holiness and

righteousness upon earth, the Kingdom of God.³ The foundation of Mosaic moral religion and the Hebrew faith was outlined in the Commandments.

*I am the Lord your God...
You shall have no other gods before me.
You shall not make for yourself a graven image...
You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain...
Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy...
Honor your father and your mother...
You shall not kill.
You shall not commit adultery.
You shall not steal.
You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor's (Exodus 20:2-17)*

The moral commandments brought the Hebrew people into conflict with religions around them. In a society where people sought after many gods, the Jewish people protected family. Believers protected understandings of the faith that were revealed to them and sought to preserve and pass them on to future generations through their families.

Writings from the first three books of the Jewish Bible spoke to the appropriate and sacred relationships of family, the sanctity of life, and restrictions against homosexual behaviors. The prophet Jeremiah identified the sacredness of life even in the womb.

Jeremiah 1:5 *"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you."*

Genesis 1:27 *"in the image of God he created him: male and female he created them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply..."*

Leviticus 18:22 *"You shall not lie with a man as with a woman; it is an abomination."*

New Testament Scriptures Speak to the Family

The formation of the family unit through the love and sexual union of a man and woman was seen as the way in which the love of God was shown to individuals in the present and passed on to the future generations.⁴ *New Testament* Scriptures spoke to the place of family as the primary and continuing organizational structure for social nurture and authority. Men and women, while performing different roles within the family, were seen as equals under the Lordship of Christ and equals within the family structure. The family unit was seen as the primary authority structure in society.

Matthew 19:5-6 *"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one... What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder."*

Ephesians 5:21-25 *"Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord... Husbands love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her..."*

1 Peter 3:5-8 *"the holy women who hoped in God... were submissive to their husbands... Likewise you husbands, live considerately with your wives, bestowing honor on the woman... have unity of spirit, sympathy, love of the brethren, a tender heart and a humble mind."*

Ephesians 6:1-4 *"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother'... Fathers do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."*

Jesus expanded the Mosaic Commandment against adultery to include also the wandering of the eye and the mind. Writers of the letters of the *New Testament* continued the focus on concerns about passions of the flesh, calling for a focus on spiritual qualities. Divorce, allowed in Jewish society, was not ordained by Jesus.

Matthew 5:27-28 *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."*

Matthew 19:8-9 *"For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery."*

Romans 1:27 *"and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error."*

Galatians 5:16-17 *"But I say, walk by the Spirit and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh: for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would."*

1 Thessalonians 4:3 *"For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that you abstain from immorality, that each one of you know how to take a wife for himself in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the heathen who do not know God."*

The God of the Hebrew people was also the God of Jesus. However, Jesus expanded the meaning of the faith. Whereas

the Hebrew God remained bound to Jewish nationalism, Jesus revealed God as the Father of all people. Jesus lifted the conception of God to an absolute ethical perfection meant for all.⁵ Moral behavior was seen as divinely ordained and firm. Family kinships were protected and cherished, for it was within the caring family unit that the truth and the love of God were to be taught, encouraged, and lived.

The New Morality and the New Social Order

Today man's larger understanding of the universe, his scientific achievements, and deeper appreciation of brotherhood, have created a situation which requires a new statement of the means and purposes of religion.¹

—Humanist Manifesto I

In 1972, after our three children had entered primary school, I enrolled in graduate school to study organizational behavior in the Industrial and Labor Relations School of Cornell University. My husband was a professor in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Culture shock soon set in. In a class of research methods the professor discussed an experiment in which a starved male rat was placed in a cage with a female rat. The professor explained that the purpose was to see if the male rat would go first to food or to “love.” I realized then that a new morality was in place. “Love” had been distorted and reduced from a spiritual quality to a physical response.

Beginning in the 1700s, the Age of Enlightenment ushered in an era of progress through science with an emphasis on human reason, scientific discovery, and human autonomy. A rational religion was sought that was not dependent on a

supernatural god or revelation. Only that which could be observed and verified scientifically was considered meaningful. Supernaturalism was viewed as outdated by the intellectuals of the time.²

The 1700s also brought changes in political thought. Focus was shifted away from people's moral obligation to traditional authority and shifted to the social support of individual self-interest. Individual liberties and individual rights became the key phrases in the new political climate. The success of the American Revolution in 1776 and the French Revolution in 1789 gave birth to a new spirit of human freedom. Loyalty to family and religious authority gradually eroded to cries for political and personal freedom.³

The Modern Era

Technological advances produced a factory-based industrial economy. Cities grew rapidly as people moved from rural areas to obtain jobs in the factories. Families became separated as fathers and nuclear family units relocated to the cities. Traditional, religious, and family values that had guided social relationships for centuries became weakened. The search for material values gradually undermined the traditional spiritual focus. With increased control over natural processes and the growth in modern "miracles," people became less concerned with moral obligations to God and more focused on pursuing self-interest.⁴

The weakening of traditional social controls and the rapid movement of people to cities led to growing chaos in urban areas. Auguste Comte, a French social thinker, responded to the growing social problems in the early 1800s, contending that social relationships and society operate by laws that could be discovered through the application of scientific principles. He believed that "scientist priests" could discover the natural laws of social relationships. These discovered laws would be used to develop a planned socialist society for the benefit of mankind

that would replace the religious view of society based on the revelation of God's will. However, Comte, fearing that people would be overpowered by rapid change, sought to protect the family and traditional morality.⁵

The New Morality

The German social critic Karl Marx held a different perspective from Comte to the rapid changes in society. He criticized the developing industrial technology that concentrated wealth in the hands of a few, leaving the workers to face hardship and hunger. Although Marx himself was of Jewish origin, he was little concerned about the loss of religious and social tradition. Marx outlined a socialist system where the state would control industry and the social order for the well-being of all the people.⁶

Marx saw in traditional family arrangements the foundation of the social ills perpetrated by private property.

On what foundation is the present family, the bourgeois family, based? On capital, on private gain...Do you charge us with wanting to stop the exploitation of children by their parents? To this crime we plead guilty...The bourgeoisie sees in his wife a mere instrument of production...⁷

In 1884 Frederick Engels, co-author of the *Communist Manifesto* with Karl Marx, analyzed the family structure and outlined problems that he saw in the practice of sexual behaviors and lifelong monogamous marriages. Denying divine reality or authority, Engels contended that the submission of women to their husbands represented class oppression established by men for their benefit. He argued that in marriage, women became the private property of their husbands. As private property, women were unable to freely interact sexually and socially. Engels contended that this created two destructive problems: women became the slaves of their husbands; and single men were unable to find sexually responsive women outside

of prostitution. Engels noted that the exchange of “sex love” for money “degrades the character of the entire male world.”⁸

Seeking to liberate people from binding family relationships and the “oppression of monogamy,” Engels outlined a new morality and a new social order. He proposed drawing the “entire female sex into public industry”; making men and women equal “in rights and obligations”; passing “the means of production into common property”; abolishing the family as the “economic unit of society”; transforming private housekeeping “into a social industry”; and having “society take care of all children equally, irrespective of whether they are born in wedlock or not.”⁹

Engels contended that this new social organization would give rise to “more unrestrained sexual intercourse, and along with it, a more lenient public opinion regarding virginal honour and feminine shame.” The new moral standard for judging sexual intercourse would be “whether it arose from mutual love or not.”¹⁰

“If only those marriages based on love are moral, then also only those are moral in which love continues. The duration of the urge of individual sex love differs...and a definite cessation of affection, or its displacement by a new passionate love, makes separation a blessing for both parties as well as for society.”¹¹

Engels’ new morality attacked and sought to overturn the behavioral and authority patterns of most religious family practices, particularly those of Christian societies. Engels, with Karl Marx, outlined a social organization of society where private property is abolished and where social authority resides in the state rather than a supreme being.

The Humanist Manifesto and Secular Religious Humanism

The *Humanist Manifesto*, published in the *New Humanist* magazine in 1933, outlined the blueprint for global scientific socialism. This document contended that spiritual reality, worship, and prayer were false hopes. Science was outlined as

the means by which society must be analyzed and organized. The introduction to the document affirmed, "The time has come for widespread recognition of the radical changes in religious beliefs throughout the modern world... Religions the world over are under the necessity of coming to terms with new conditions created by a vastly increased knowledge and experience... In order that religious humanism may be better understood we, the undersigned desire... To establish such a religion is a major necessity of the present."¹²

In 1973 a second version of the *Humanist Manifesto* proposed the development of world law and world order based on a transnational federal government. Additional affirmations were listed, including: the denial of a divine purpose; the establishment of ethics as autonomous and situational; the right to die, euthanasia, suicide, birth control, abortion, and divorce; and the acceptance of all sexual behaviors between consenting adults.

The *Humanist Manifesto* of 1973 was signed by 118 people, each of whom listed an affiliation with an organized group. Included in this group were over 40 professors at major universities and 30 leaders of ethical, humanist, rational, and unitarian societies. Among those signing were Isaac Asimov, Andrei Sakkarov, and the behavioral psychologist, B.F. Skinner. Although democracy, brotherhood, peace, goodwill, human happiness, and human potential were held up as the ideals, the tone of the documents was one of command. The words "must" and "should" appeared repeatedly throughout the documents.¹³

The Post Modern Era

Marxism became "politically correct" in American and European universities in the 1960s. The universities became radicalized. Questioning both religious traditions and the modern truths of science and technology, Marxist intellectuals sought to dismantle both modernity and traditional moral authority structures. Seeking a life free of moral and political restraints, student demonstrators joined in social movements for change. Movements developed to advance the

rights of oppressed ethnic groups, women, homosexuals, and other oppressed minorities.¹⁴

Postmodern thought claimed that there are no absolutes for all times and places. Reality was defined only as a social construct that is relative to the culture of a local society. As people create their own world, all reality is viewed as virtual reality. Both religions and the science of modernism were dismissed because of their claim to demonstrate absolute truths. Post modern thinkers sought to destroy the foundations for absolute moral thought and behaviors that apply to all times and places.¹⁵

The Church of Satan Organizes

The concept of Satan as a seducer, the cause of moral wrongdoing, and a contender against the righteousness of God has been a part of Hebrew belief from early times. The *Old Testament* book of *Job* recounts the attempt of Satan to turn Job away from faith and trust in God. At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus is recorded as being tempted by the devil to serve Satan instead of God (Matthew 4:1-11).

However, in 1966, Anton Szandor LaVey took it upon himself to organize The Church of Satan in San Francisco, California. With this organization, LaVey proclaimed Year One—Anno Satanas to usher in the Satanic Era, beginning a “revolution designed to smash the hypocrisy and unreason which has reigned for the past 2000 years.”¹⁶ LaVey contended that “The Church of Satan will be the pivotal point for an acknowledged belief system of the 21st Century.”¹⁷ “Satan signifies our love of the worldly... The devil is a symbol of man’s carnal nature—his lust, greed, vengeance, but most of all, his ego.”¹⁸ “The Satanist...is the Master, Leader, the controller of societies, the image makers... We’ve just established a philosophy that advocates all of what most Americans practice, whether they call it Satanism or not.”¹⁹

After LaVey’s death in 1997, the organization of the Church of Satan was passed on to the High Priestess, Blanche Barton. In

her statement celebrating the year 35—Anno Satanas—Barton proclaimed, “God is dead: he was declared dead the year Anton LaVey started the church of Satan... Humans must be inspired by their own potential greatness... We are our own Gods.”²⁰

In the *Church of Satan Youth Communique*, youth are encouraged to explore the Dark Side and magic. Satan is described as the true individualist, a nonconforming outcast. Young Internet readers of www.ChurchofSatan.com are encouraged to practice a ritual in their home by lighting a candle and making a commitment in their mind to honor the Dark Lord in their lives.

Challenge to the Churches

Secular and postmodern proposals for social change undermined the social organization, sexual behaviors, and family patterns outlined by traditional religious doctrines, where chastity in singleness and fidelity in marriage were seen as the “divinely inspired” expected behaviors. The secular ideologies denied the reality of divine authority and emphasized sexual behaviors based on naturalness and probability, emphasizing individual freedom and choice.

Belief in divine authority over social, sexual, and family relationships undermined the authority of the secular state. Because the traditional family, as an autonomous decision-making unit, represented an obstacle to centralized control of social processes, secular experts sought to create social change by gaining control not only of the definition of general moral philosophy but also the age and manner of sex education.²¹

Moral discussion changed from a focus on virtues, which are firm, fixed, and certain, to a focus on values, which are relative, subjective, and reflective of beliefs and opinions. Moral vocabulary became demoralized and neutralized. Terms were renamed to eliminate emotional and value laden perspectives. “Sexually active” replaced “promiscuous” and “alternate life styles” replaced “single parent families” and “homosexual families.”²²

Three

The Sexual Revolution Explodes

Each year on August 15, the eve of the anniversary of his death, the gates of Graceland Mansion open shortly after 9:00 P.M. for anyone who wishes to walk up the driveway to Elvis' grave site and back, carrying a candle in quiet respect.¹

—Graceland: Official Guidebook

Elvis Presley's influence on the culture was ambiguous, which contributed to his popularity. He grew up singing gospel music in the first Assembly of God where his close-knit family attended church. As a teen, he enjoyed the black rhythm and blues and gospel music he heard on Beale Street at all-night gospel sings. His deep-voiced, sensitive renditions of popular gospel songs such as "How Great Thou Art," "In the Garden," and "Farther Along" brought tears to the eyes of religious people of many denominations.

As a son of a poor sharecropper growing up in Mississippi and Tennessee, however, Elvis Presley had developed a distrust and resentment toward authority. As a teen he defiantly forged his own style of singing and dress and lacquered his black hair in a pompadour. From the time he broke into national stardom

in 1956 until his death in August of 1977, the FBI kept a dossier on Elvis. John Edgar Hoover considered his suggestive dancing a threat to the “morals, values, and very soul of America’s youth.”² His overt sexuality and seductive singing created intense demonstrations of adoration from his fans, which upset the strict conservative aura of the 1950s. Elvis’s stunning and sudden rise to the top of the national music charts brought a backlash from the moral right. In April of 1956, a Memphis journalist reprinted a letter sent to him from a worried mother:

“I wonder what it is going to take before people wake up to what exactly he is doing. All the men and women in my civic clubs are up in arms about it.”³

Another letter was sent to the FBI requesting that Hoover help pass laws to prevent Elvis from performing.

“The fine work that our Churches and some of our schools are attempting to do is offset by the freedom exercised in this country of licentiousness.”⁴

Before Elvis, American youth were much like their parents in music, language, and clothes. However, the “King” changed everything, setting the stage for the ’60s. Youth no longer listened to their parents.⁵

Affluence Brings Indulgence

The years following World War II saw an unprecedented population growth in the United States. The 1950s were dominated by family growth and family concerns as returning servicemen developed their homes and families. The “Baby Boom” generation dominated social attention. The postwar years brought material abundance to the United States as industry soared and jobs were plentiful. Increasing affluence brought indulgence and expectations of “The Good Life.”

What became known as the sexual revolution was given a jump start in 1948 when Alfred Kinsey and his colleagues published their first study on the sexuality of the human male. In

1953 a second book dealing with sexuality of the female was published. They became bestsellers because sexual behavior was reported to be less conventional than most people thought. Although research by Reisman and Eichel in 1990⁶ showed serious scientific and ethical flaws in the Kinsey reports, the studies opened up sex as a topic of conversation at a time when most people were uncomfortable talking about it at all.⁷

Popular magazines soon focused attention on sexual indulgence. Hugh Hefner's *Playboy* magazine published its first issue in 1953, with a picture of a smiling and waving Marilyn Monroe on the cover and the tantalizing message, "First time in any magazine... The Famous Marilyn Monroe Nude."⁸ Its playboy bunny centerfold became a prominent sexual icon. In the early 1960s, sexual permissiveness was further popularized by Helen Gurley Brown's *Cosmopolitan* magazine. Singles were being told that sex outside of marriage was not only possible but expected behavior. Sex as a powerful motivator was used to sell products and publications. *Mademoiselle*, *Glamour*, *Penthouse*, and *Esquire* presented thin and seductive women on the covers and in advertisements to sell products as diverse as liquor, cars, furniture, household appliances, and cosmetics. By the 1990s, \$20 billion was being spent on cosmetics and \$300 million on cosmetic surgery to help women feel "pretty."⁹

Even children were drawn into sexual fantasies as Barbie and Ken replaced baby dolls as toys of choice for young girls. Barbie was introduced in 1959 by the El Segundo, California based Mattel toy company as a blonde, glamorous beauty with the unrealistic dimensions of 38-18-34 in human terms.¹⁰ Barbie's interest was on beautiful clothes, with outfits the more lavish the better. Collecting Barbie dolls and Barbie outfits became the pastime of young girls. Children learn early the social expectations for the roles they should play throughout life. Little girls soon became aware that good looks would bring them attention and rewards. Dr. Kristine Gerwell, a clinical psychologist in San Antonio, Texas, who specialized in eating

disorders, noted that girls as young as four and five years old had problems with body image. “They’re worried about being pretty, and pretty means thin for girls.”¹¹

Traditionally young women had been raised with the awareness that sex was related to babies. Sexuality was to be protected and preserved for motherhood and family. The popularization of sex-related technologies made it possible to separate sexuality from reproduction. Sex for its own sake became possible with the arrival of contraceptives and “the pill,” which reduced the risk of pregnancy.

In the 1920s, Margaret Sanger had promoted sexual freedoms by encouraging the use of contraceptives. Concerned about eugenics and planned reproduction, she organized what was to become the Planned Parenthood Federation. The introduction of contraceptives such as the diaphragm and the condom contributed to early movements toward sexual freedom. The “roaring twenties” were years when many young people were leaving home in rural areas to move to the cities for work. However, the Great Depression and the World Wars of the 1930s and 1940s slowed down movements for social change. When the pill was introduced in 1960, times had changed. The pill made sex more available and spontaneous, and women could now engage in sex without special preparation. Reasons behind the double standard of sexuality were unraveling. The sexual revolution changed the behaviors of women more than men.¹²

The Challenge of Hollywood

Hollywood also created and shaped the American popular culture through forms of entertainment that appealed to a mass audience. Variations in religious perspectives played a role in the Hollywood influence. Celebrating America as a land of unlimited opportunity, many Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe realized that movies could tell stories about the American Way of Life that people would pay to see. Building a movie empire

became the avenue to wealth. Cecil B. DeMilles, Adolph Zukor, Louis B. Mayer, Jack Warner, and Henry Cohn produced romantic and realistic images of American life.¹³ These stories were representative of the Jewish pleasure principle, which included the obligation to maintain one's health, the experience of pleasure, the enjoyment of life, and sensual pleasure.¹⁴

The portrayals of sex on the TV and in the movies often were seen as excessive and offensive to large segments of the public, especially evangelical Christians. When *Peyton Place*, the first Prime-time soap opera, was aired by ABC TV in September of 1964, moral outcries were raised that it was an invasion of the "sacred" family hours. A month after *Peyton Place* premiered, ABC rose in the Nielsens from third to first place. Sex sells and people bought. From a feminist perspective, Hollywood patriarchs favored women "who are the most complacent in the role of women as sexual objects."¹⁵

A poll reported in *U.S. News and World Report* noted that U.S. adults were more than twice as likely to be morally concerned about passionate encounters, heavy kissing, verbal sexual references, images of nudity, premarital sex, and extramarital sex than were Hollywood leaders. However, the protection offered through the First Amendment of the Constitution ensured producers the right to freedom of speech. The bottom line was that the sexually oriented movies made a profit.¹⁶

Hollywood further assaulted Christian sexual morality in the 1980s with the production of the film *The Last Temptation of Christ*, which depicted Jesus, during the Crucifixion, as fantasizing over sex with Mary Magdalene. This film vandalized sacred beliefs. Evangelical Christians decried "the depictions, plot and purpose of the film as sacrilegious, blasphemous, and anti-Christian."¹⁷

Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Picture Association, attempted to deflect the discussion from a focus on sexual morality by declaring that the "only issue is whether...self-appointed groups can prevent a film from being exhibited to the public..." In his syndicated column, Pat Buchanan contended

Hollywood is assaulting the Christian community in a way it would never dare assault the black community, the Jewish community, or the gay community... The battle over *Last Temptation* is one more skirmish in the century's struggle over whose values, whose beliefs shall be exalted in American culture, and whose may be derided and disparaged.¹⁸

Academic and Popular Literature Continue the Challenge

Academic and popular literature became saturated with articles and books questioning traditional sexual and family arrangements. In 1966 the sociologist Bernard Farber edited a book entitled *Kinship and Family Organizations* in which he questioned the model of permanent family ties.

In a society in which families of orientation can easily be forgotten and avoided and in which marital ties can be broken readily, this model does not seem appropriate... With no permanent commitments, ties can be broken in any relationship. Thus competition is established among all groups in which the individual participates.¹⁹

Farber proposed the "permanent availability model" of marriage contending that "all adult persons are permanently available to contract a marriage, even if they happen to be married already."²⁰ He argued that in an industrialized bureaucratic world, relationships serve an instrumental purpose. "Being instrumental, they make inoperative such views as one true love, marriage until death, or the sacredness of the particular marital relationship."²¹

The postmodern mentality became further popularized when the monthly magazine *Psychology Today* (PT) began publishing in 1967. *Psychology Today*, which was sold on newsstands across the country, presented the writings and research of liberal scholars in a readable and interesting format. The colorful

pictures on the cover and throughout the magazine attracted a wide readership and drew many people into the postmodern debates about current social issues that were prominent within the universities.

Readers of *PT* were drawn into active participation by responding to questionnaires relating to current controversial topics. The detailed responses to the questionnaires were reported and discussed in following issues. The July 1970 issue of *PT* reported on more than 20,000 responses to a questionnaire about sexual attitudes and practices. Seventy percent of the respondents agreed that men and women should be free to decide for themselves about premarital and extramarital sexual intercourse.²²

Another questionnaire dealt with religious beliefs and practices. The November 1974 issue reported on the responses of more than 40,000 readers, noting that for many, religious belief was moving away from a Supreme Being toward personal and mystical experiences and Eastern religions.²³

Of the 52,000 readers who responded to a *Pursuit of Happiness* questionnaire that was reported in the August 1976 issue of *PT*, religion was listed as twelfth by most of the respondents in a list of sixteen pillars of happiness, behind friends and social life, job, being in love, recognition, sex life, personal growth, financial situation, house or apartment, body attractiveness, health, and city of residence.²⁴

Magazine responses cannot be considered unbiased, often having a more liberal response pattern than the general public. About a third of the *PT* respondents listed themselves as atheists. However, the reported responses were influential in opening topics of conversation and creating an aura of normality to behaviors previously considered out of bounds.

"Open marriage" became popularized when George and Nena O'Neill, a husband and wife anthropology team, published their book in 1972 entitled *Open Marriage: A New Life Style for Couples*.²⁵ In a similar vein, Robert H. Rimmer published

books on the Harrad experiments, group marriage, and structured adultery.

The O'Neills proposed that marriage be expanded, allowing each partner the opportunity to form interest relationships and loving and sexual relationships with other people. Contending that one person could not totally fulfill all the needs of another, they placed the importance of self-development, flexible roles, and forgiveness as primary qualities in marriage relationships. Mature love was defined as equality of personhood for both wife and husband. With equal rights to pursue goals and meet personal needs, women were encouraged to delay motherhood, seek out meaningful activities, expand their minds, and develop their talents. The O'Neills contended that homemaking programs a woman for "mediocrity and dulls the brain." They argued "Some wives may think of homemaking as a professional career. But nobody else will."²⁶

In his novels, Rimmer explored alternatives to the nuclear family. *The Rebellion of Yale Marroth* dealt with bigamy, *The Harrad Experiment* proposed structured campus cohabitation, *Proposition 31* promoted group marriage, and *Thursday My Love* proposed an open-ended marriage called synergamy.

The people were involved in this adulterous relationship married by a Catholic priest in Montreal in a synergamous marriage, which is a confirmation of committed adultery by the church. Presumably, a woman in a monogamous marriage could fall in love with another man and have a second, supplemental, marriage. The second man would be involved with her family. Her husband could likewise enter a synergamous marriage with another woman.²⁷

Rimmer believed that it was necessary for the church to support and sanction alternative lifestyles because it is important for people to have support and structure in their lives. When publishers turned down his books, he published them himself. His books were printed in six languages, English,

French, German, Italian, Dutch, and Japanese. More than seven million copies of his books were sold.²⁸

The psychologist, Abraham Maslow, identified Robert H. Rimmer as “the most important person in the country—simply as accumulator and respository of all the spontaneous experiments that are going on throughout the country.”²⁹

Woodstock—Three Days of Peace and Love

The excesses of youthful hedonism came to a head for three days on August 15, 16, and 17 of 1969 when nearly 500,000 people gathered in a pasture in Sullivan County, near Bethel, New York, for “the largest rock concert ever conceived.”³⁰ The Woodstock Music and Art Fair was sponsored by four very different young men, the oldest of whom was twenty-six. John Roberts, heir to a drugstore and toothpaste manufacturing fortune supplied the money. Joel Rosenman, a graduate from Yale Law School was a guitar player for a motel lounge band. Artie Kornfield was a vice president of Capitol Records, and Michael Lang, who had produced the two-day Miami Pop Festival in 1968, managed a rock group.³¹

The musical event became a symbol of unity for the dreams of the counterculture. The turnout was unexpected and overwhelming. Traffic heading toward the site backed up for twenty miles. The festival had different meanings for thousands, attracting people from many persuasions, including anti-war protestors and Vietnam vets, black militants and rednecks, gays, lesbians and anti-gays. Dozens of musicians were lined up to perform, including Jerry Garcia and the Grateful Dead; Janis Joplin; Blood, Sweat and Tears; Sly and the Family Stones; Canned Heat; Santana; Joan Baez; and Arlo Guthrie. Three days of music were accompanied by heavy rains, sleeping under the stars, sparse sanitation, drugs, alcohol, and “free love.”

Bert Feldman, Bethel town historian, worked as a security marshall and guide at the Woodstock festival. Fifteen years after the event, Feldman returned to the site and erected a monument. He believed that Woodstock was “a singular event in

American social history," one that "crystallized a generation." In his mind the site was "Holy Ground" that should be hallowed as an historic event equivalent to the Battlefield of Gettysburg.³²

The flower children of the 60s discovered in their own way a sense of "sharing, helping, consideration, and respect."³³ Although two murders occurred, little unruly behavior was evident. As the years passed, the flower children of the 60s became the teachers, lawyers, business persons, and parents of the 70s and 80s.

Government Involvement in Sexual Affairs

Concerns about population control and births by unwed teens brought government involvement in decisions about sexuality, reproduction, and family planning. In 1967 the Office of Economic Opportunity gave family planning grants to Community Action agencies. Federal funding through the Public Health Services Act provided funds for contraceptives, including contraceptives for sexually active unmarried minors. In 1972 President Nixon's Commission of Population Growth and the American Future recommended birth control services and comprehensive sex education for teens to reduce the population by eliminating births to unmarried teens. Voluntary sterilization and abortions on request at public expense were advocated. When *Roe v. Wade* was enacted into law in response to a decision by the Supreme Court in 1973, abortion on demand became possible.³⁴

The first no-fault divorce law in the Western world was enacted in California in 1970. Within ten years most states had developed some form of no-fault divorce procedure. The number of divorces in the United States rose rapidly, creating large numbers of single parent homes and emotional, financial, and structural problems for adults and children. In 1960, 16 percent of first marriages were ending in divorce. By 1996, 40 percent of couples in their first marriages were predicted to divorce.³⁵ U.S. census data showed among adults eighteen years and older, 8 percent of men and 10 percent of women were divorced.³⁶

Growing Concerns about Family Breakdown

Don't Trust Anyone Over Thirty!

For the success of the endeavor, it was necessary for the proponents of the sexual revolution to popularize the saying "Don't trust anyone over thirty!" because as people progressed through the revolution, the initial fantasies of free love gave way to the disillusionments caused by the reality of consequences.

Five years after Nena O'Neill wrote *Open Marriage* with her husband, George, she wrote another book, *The Marriage Premise*. In this book she reappraised and modified many of the statements made in the previous book. She began by recounting, on the one hand, the fiftieth wedding anniversary of her parents, and on the other hand, the divorce of her son and his wife after six years of marriage. She commented on her parents' marriage.

I thanked them now for what I had once fought against, rebelled against, their way of life... enduring solidarity. Those two words 'enduring' and 'solidarity' made me see the many faces of love and commitment they implied...

I never wondered why they had endured, buttressed by convention, duty, and their religious faith. They just had.¹

As her family relationships progressed, O'Neill reevaluated the concept of open marriage. She describes the feelings that grow out of the reality of emotional and sexual sharing outside of the marriage relationship.

Choices are limiting. If we choose one person or lifestyle we rule out others...The breaking of the pledge of sexual fidelity seems like an abandonment and arouses feelings of jealousy and insecurity, resentment, a feeling of rejection, anger, and insecurity follow...It is the loss of emotional security and the feeling of primariness that is most threatening.²

Perspectives about homemaking also were reversed in *The Marriage Premise*. Housework and childcare were described more positively.

The diatribes against the drudgery of housework... I just couldn't see it as that much drudgery. Housework was a fact of life to be done as cheerfully and briskly as possible. Besides going to work each day is also drudgery.

It's fun having a kid, isn't it? ... the real reason people don't go back to work is not because they are trapped at home, but because it's really fun. It beats working.³

Academic Concerns about Family Breakdown

In the late 1980s many family scholars were becoming alarmed about changes in family structure. Norval Glenn, the editor of the *Journal of Family Issues*, asked eighteen family research sociologists to put in writing how they felt about the changing patterns in marriage and family. Glenn was surprised

to find that half of the researchers expressed deep concerns about the changes in family relationships. The main focus of concern was for the children.⁴

The 1990s saw continuing expressions of concern by family researchers. David Popenoe, noting the large increases between 1960 and 1990 in divorce, single-parent families, children born out of wedlock, and working mothers with children under six years of age, saw a decline in the institution of the family.⁵ Barbara Dafoe Whitehead saw the country moving toward a post-marriage society. She contended that self-orientation had become more important than concern for children. Parents were disinvesting in the lives of their children, with fathers living apart and mothers in the workplace. She was alarmed by the rise in unwed childbirth, from 5 percent of children born out of wedlock in 1960, to 30 percent in 1990.⁶

David Blankenhorn noted that 40 percent of children were living without fathers in the home. He contended that this was a harmful demographic trend for both the fathers and the children. He noted that fatherhood is the most important role for men because it helps them become prosocial. Fatherhood also privileges children by providing physical protection, material resources, paternal cultural transmission, and day-to-day nurturing.⁷

The Divorce Revolution Evaluated

The Council on Families in America, co-chaired by David Popenoe, Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Rutgers University and Jean Bethke Elshtain, Professor at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, filed a report in 1996 claiming that America's divorce revolution had failed.⁸

The report, entitled *Marriage in America: A Report to the Nation*, noted that the divorce revolution had the worthy goals of fostering greater equality, improving family lives, and expanding individual happiness and choice. However, the unanticipated and unintended destructive consequences created terrible

hardships for children and insupportable social costs. Many mothers and children were plunged into poverty. Evidence was listed for claims of the declining quality of life for many of America's children.⁹

- ♦ Juvenile violent crime has increased six-fold, from 16,000 arrests in 1960 to 96,000 in 1992, a period in which the total number of juveniles in the population remained relatively stable.
- ♦ Reports of child neglect and abuse have quintupled since 1976, when data were first collected...
- ♦ The psychological pathology of children and youth has taken a drastic turn for the worse. Eating disorders...
...Teen suicide has tripled. Alcohol and drug abuse among teenagers...continues at a very high rate.
- ♦ SAT scores have declined nearly eighty points, and most of the decline cannot be accounted for by the increasing academic diversity...
- ♦ Poverty has shifted from the elderly to the young. Since 1970, the percentage of children who are poor has increased from 15 percent to 22 percent. Today, 38 percent of the nation's poor are children.

Members of the Council included prominent social researchers and proponents of religious and social policy, including: William A. Galston, professor of Public Affairs at the University of Maryland; Norval D. Glenn, Professor of Sociology at the University of Texas at Austin; Judith Martin, novelist and author of *Miss Manners*; Martin E. Marty, Distinguished Service Professor at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago; William Raspberry, nationally syndicated columnist for the *Washington Post*; Gloria G. Rodriguez, founder of AVANCE in San Antonio; and Judith Wallerstein, founder and director of the Center for the Family in Transition.

Problems in Marriage and Family Textbooks

After a careful review of twenty undergraduate marriage and family textbooks, Norval Glenn concluded that textbooks were probably having, on balance, a negative effect on the family.¹⁰ He noted that they conveyed a pessimistic view of marriage through the use of anti-marriage rhetoric; downplayed the values and social functions of marriage; exaggerated the costs of marriage to adults, especially women; shortchanged the problems of child well-being, giving little evidence that divorce or unwed motherhood harms children or adults; and they presented errors, distortions of research, and omission of important information. Glenn noted that the story the textbooks tell about marriage is that “marriage is just one of many equally acceptable and equally productive adult relationships. These various relationships include cohabiting couples, divorced non-couples, step-families, and gay and lesbian families.”¹¹ Glenn concluded that the textbooks were more likely to mislead than to inform because they downplayed the real problems involved in alternative family arrangements.

The research on textbooks was sponsored and published by The Institute for American Values. Most of the people associated with the Institute for American Values were communiterians, and most were Jewish or secular rather than conservative Christians. Most members would likely object to being placed in the same category as conservative Christian family organizations such as Focus on the Family and The Family Research Council. Glenn noted that “communiterians and other centrists had become increasingly prominent in the ‘family wars.’”¹²

Legislating Morality

*The battle for the culture refers to the struggle over the principles, sentiments, ideas, and political attitudes that define the permissible and the impermissible, the acceptable and the unacceptable, the preferred and the disdained, in speech, expression, attitude, conduct, and politics.*¹

—William J. Bennett

Differences in perspectives regarding sexual and family conduct soon escalated into what became known as “the culture wars.” William J. Bennett, author of the above quote, defined these contests as “conflicts that can best be understood as a fight for the culture, the social and moral environment in which we raise our children, and the government’s responsibility and limitations in this effort.”²

Bennett was a major actor in the culture wars. As a graduate, along with conservative columnist Patrick J. Buchanan, of a Catholic high school known for its academic excellence, Gonzaga College High School in Washington D.C., Bennett held firm to a strong moral sense of family values as he interacted in public affairs. With a doctorate in political philosophy from the University of Texas, and a law degree from Harvard,

Bennett served under President Reagan as Secretary of Education and under President Bush as a director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy.³

In spite of the oft repeated phrase “You can’t legislate morality,” it is impossible to avoid legislating morality. Morality refers to ideas about what “ought to be.” How should we live our lives? How should we relate to each other socially? Morality refers to evaluations about appropriate behaviors. Expected behaviors regarding appropriate social interactions are often written into law to “promote well-being, resolve conflicts of interest, and enhance social harmony.”⁴ Groups that hold strong values seek to impose their morality through the political process. “All laws, by their very nature, declare one behavior to be right and another to be wrong. Laws maintain a safe and functioning society. The only question is “Whose morality do we legislate.”⁵

Legislation and education in the United States historically protected the Judeo/Christian religious values of sexual behaviors and family patterns. However, in the 1960s, the proposals of Engels became popularized in academic circles in the U.S. In 1966 the *Journal of Social Issues* “rationalized the view that the family was just one of a number of alternative lifestyles and an arbitrary ‘social preference.’”⁶ Laws and customs that legitimized procreation only within marriage were seen as the social problem.

Influences that Affect Voting Patterns

Research into how religious beliefs affect personal congressional voting patterns has been largely ignored.⁷ However, religious beliefs and affiliations do affect political decisions, particularly as they relate to issues of sexual behavior and family support. For example, pro-life positions are generally taken by evangelicals, Catholics, and Mormons, while pro-choice positions are more often supported by mainline Protestants, Black Protestants, and Jews.

Religious affiliation may effect a crossover in party voting. Religious leaders and religious literature can influence members

in regard to voting patterns related to behaviors promoted by the group. Whether a Republican is evangelical or mainline will affect his or her vote on abortion and other issues. Religious conservative elites can lead religious liberals to support policies they may not accept ideologically, while secular conservatives may reject policies promoted by the Religious Right, even though they may be compatible. Catholics, who were significantly more liberal in the 1960s, now generally vote conservative on moral issues.⁸ People use religious source cues to figure out where they stand on political issues.⁹

Urbanism, region of the country, and income are also correlated to the acceptance of divergent lifestyles and the development of legislation favorable to divergent lifestyles. Urban areas develop increased toleration for differences and secularization. Regional differences are documented in regard to tolerance for diverse lifestyle patterns. Eastern and Western regions are generally more tolerant to freedom and individuality, while the Midwest and the South are slower to change and are more intolerant.¹⁰

The percentage representation of a religious denomination in a state has also been documented to influence legislation. Research by Waters, Heath, and Watson (1995) noted that the higher the religious denominational representation in a state, the more likely it is that the institutions of the state will promote the policies of that religious group. Income correlates with variations in both religious affiliation and religious perspectives. Liberal attitudes generally increase as income increases. The percentage of a population that was Jewish was also found to influence positively both per capita income and liberal attitudes.¹¹

The Moral Majority and the New Religious Right

As the sexual revolution progressed, the Christian Right became alarmed at the increases in behaviors undermining traditional sexual and family values. Reverend Jerry Falwell, a Baptist

minister from Lynchburg, Virginia, organized The Moral Majority, a coalition of concerned fundamentalists, to influence social legislation in favor of traditional moral behaviors. The Moral Majority was active in the 1970s and 1980s. However, the group was unable to sustain its effectiveness and folded operations in 1988. The support base of the Moral Majority was limited to religious fundamentalists, primarily Baptists. The leaders were unable or unwilling to develop broad-based support or become active in GOP coalitions.¹²

The Religious Right gained new momentum in the 1990s. Several politically active groups were successful in building effective interfaith coalitions and broad-based grassroots support. TV evangelist Pat Robertson developed the Christian Coalition; the psychologist Dr. James Dobson expanded his successful organization, the Focus on the Family; and Beverly LaHaye continued her political efforts through her organization, Concerned Women for America. These groups were effective in building broad-based interfaith coalitions by reaching beyond religious leadership for support, mobilizing grassroots constituencies, and including businessmen and housewives. More specifically political, they reached across party lines and religious perspectives to individuals concerned about the changing sexual and family relationships. In the late 1990s, the two million member Christian Coalition included 50 percent Baptists, 25 percent Mainline Protestants, 15 percent Pentecostal, and 10 percent other, especially Catholic.¹³

The Communitarian Movement

The communitarian position was outlined by Amitai Etzioni, a sociologist at The George Washington University, who was concerned about the growing preoccupation with individualism in American society. In the early 1990s he established a communitarian quarterly entitled *The Responsive Community: Rights and Responsibilities*. The movement sought to establish a centrist philosophy that would include "ethicists, social scientists, and

community leaders; conservatives and liberals; Democrats, Republicans, and Independents.” Communitarians sought to “restore social responsibilities and a commitment to community, without puritanism or authoritarianism.”¹⁴

A communitarian position paper on the family opened its arguments with the following preamble:

The 1992 election has focused long overdue attention on the subject of families and family values. Yet there can be little doubt that the use of pro-family arguments as attack weapons by some has done a profound disservice to the cause of American families.

We, the undersigned, are determined to do what we can to redirect the public dialogue along a more constructive course.¹⁵

And so the political debates continued.

Organizations and the Culture Wars

*A social movement is a formally organized group that acts consciously and with some continuity to promote or resist change through collective action... A movement's organizational base, internal structure, leadership, and ideology enable it to act with intent and "continuity."*¹

—Robert A. Goldberg

Powerful and articulate organizations developed to support both traditional and liberal definitions of sexual morality and family. These organizations were developed to promote and facilitate the social inclusion of their perspectives through education, counseling, and legislation. The differing groups found little room to compromise their viewpoints, so the discussions and attacks often became heated and emotionally charged.

For the purposes of this study, views and organizations have been divided into two camps: those organizations holding liberal perspectives and those holding religious and/or traditional perspectives. However, the reality is more complex than a dichotomy. Not all the people and organizations represented by either the liberal views or the religious/traditional views agreed with each other. For example, the religious/traditional

category included members of various religious and secular/traditional perspectives.

It is also true that not everyone who identified with perspectives of an organization on one side of the dichotomy necessarily disagreed with all the stands supported by groups on the other side. Many deeply religious people call themselves “Liberal conservatives” or “Conservative liberals,” finding themselves supporting different sides on different issues. For example, those who oppose abortion, the death penalty, and war as first choice solution to international problems find themselves in a conservative-liberal quandary.

Good people can honestly disagree, and they should be able to disagree and still be considered “good people.” Sadly, however, this reality was too often lost as organized groups vilified each other for political advantage.

Brief summaries of the history, perspectives, and activities of some of these groups are included here. This listing is not meant to be exhaustive of either liberal or conservative organizations concerned about changing patterns of behaviors. The organizations listed here are representative of different perspectives and are those that will be discussed within the following chapters. Many individuals came forward, and organizations developed to influence society in regard to sexual and family values.

Liberal Organizations Challenge Religious Values

♦ American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

Founded in 1920, the ACLU protects the specific constitutional freedoms in the Bill of Rights. The focus is on promoting a liberal agenda and attacking the Religious Right.²

♦ Americans United for Separation of Church and State (AU)

AU includes a mix of Protestants and other groups such as the American Humanist Association and the American Ethical Union. The group fights government endorsement of religion within society.³

♦ **Gay Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)**

Since 1994 GLSEN has worked to end anti-gay bias in America's public, private and parochial schools. GLSEN now has over eighty chapters across the country. GLSEN envisions a future in which every child learns to respect and accept all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.⁴

♦ **National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL)**

NARAL advocates broad abortion and other pro-choice preferences. NARAL's goals include better access to more effective contraceptive options and better access to other kinds of reproductive health care and information.⁵

♦ **National Organization for Women (NOW)**

NOW was formed in 1966 under the leadership of Betty Friedan. NOW was primarily interested in opening to women the world of work outside the home. NOW challenges all forms of gender discrimination in the workplace and promotes the creation of local NOW groups.⁶

♦ **North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA)**

Identifying itself as a sexual freedom organization, NAMBLA was founded in the mid 1980s. NAMBLA seeks to abolish all age-of-consent laws and other laws that violate the freedom of young people to control their own lives, and calls for the replacement of age-of-consent laws with laws EMPOWERING children.⁷

♦ **Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA)**

Founded in 1916, PPFA believes that individuals have the right to decide when or whether to have a child. Sexuality education, contraception, abortion, and family

planning are provided regardless of the individual's income, marital status, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, national origin, or residence.⁸

♦ **People for the American Way (PAW)**

People for the American Way is a constitutional liberties group founded by Norman Lear. The group leads efforts to defend pluralism, individuality, freedom of thought, expression, and religion. The group takes stands against the agenda of the Religious Right political machine.⁹

♦ **Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS)**

Founded in 1964 by Dr. Mary S. Calderone, SIECUS has been in the forefront of promoting sexuality education for people of all ages. SIECUS advocates the right of all individuals, including adolescents, to affirm that sexuality is a natural and healthy part of their lives.¹⁰

♦ **Soulforce, Inc.**

Soulforce, Inc. was created in 1998 to mobilize an inter-faith network of volunteers committed to nonviolent action in the liberation of sexual minorities. Under the leadership of The Rev. Mel White, the group struggles for justice for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered Americans.¹¹

♦ **Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC)**

The SPLC was formed in 1971 as a small civil rights law firm by Morris Dees and Joe Levin. The major focus dealt with confronting the discriminatory practices and hate crimes of white supremacists and paramilitary groups. In 1991 an education program called *Teaching Tolerance* was formed to help teachers foster respect among students and fight discrimination.¹²

Organizations for Religious/Traditional Values

♦ Alliance Defense Fund (ADF)

Founded in 1993, ADF provides legal support for cases of religious discrimination. ADF coordinates the legal efforts of attorneys and allied groups that are working on religious liberty, family values, and sanctity of life cases...provides high-level training to Christian attorneys...provides funding for potentially precedent-setting cases...¹³

♦ American Family Association (AFA)

Founded in 1988 by Donald E. Wildmon, AFA was a reorganization of Wildmon's National Federation for Decency. AFA organizes educational campaigns and boycotts to combat pornography, explicit sexuality, and the homosexual agenda in TV, movies, and bookstores.¹⁴

♦ Christian Coalition (CCA)

CCA was founded in 1989 by TV evangelist Pat Robertson to give Christians a voice in government. The mission of CCA is to recruit and train pro-life, pro-family activists, draw people to the polls, and educate voters about the issues that impact families. Christian Coalition chapters have been formed in countries all over the world.¹⁵

♦ Concerned Women for America (CWA)

In 1979, with the vision of protecting the family through prayer and action, Beverly LaHaye founded Concerned Women for America... The mission of CWA is to protect and promote biblical values among all citizens...thereby reversing the decline in moral values in our nation...and restoring the family to its traditional purpose.¹⁶

♦ Eagle Forum

Eagle Forum has been a leading pro-family movement since 1975. It is a conservative activist organization

founded by Phyllis Schlafly. The focus is on education and global issues.¹⁷

♦ **Focus on the Family**

Founded in 1977 by Dr. James Dobson, radio programs are heard daily on over 4,200 radio stations. Newsletters and ten magazines are produced monthly to encourage political support for their perspectives. Focus on the Family believes that:..."the institution of marriage was intended by God to be a permanent, lifelong relationship between a man and woman...that children are a heritage from God... all human life is of inestimable worth."¹⁸

♦ **Institute for American Values**

Founded in 1987, the group is devoted to research, publication, and public education on major issues of family well-being and civil society...the Institute seeks to bridge the gap between scholarship and policymaking...The president is David Blankenhorn...its academic and professional advisory committees bring together many of the nation's most distinguished scholars..."¹⁹

♦ **National Association for the Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH)**

NARTH provides psychological understanding of the conditions associated with homosexuality. NARTH comprises a variety of men and women who defend the right to pursue change of sexual orientation. This right-to-change has been under threat by the leading mental-health professional organizations. A wide range of religious and life philosophies are represented among the members. NARTH aims to clarify that homosexuality is not "inborn."²⁰

♦ **National Institute of Family and Life Advocates (NIFLA)**

NIFLA provides life-affirming Pregnancy Help Centers (PHCs), the best legal education, consultation, and training

possible. NIFLA's mission is to empower women to choose life by equipping PHCs with legal counsel and support and enabling PHCs to convert to medical clinic status. NIFLA has more than 700 PHC's in 47 states.²¹

♦ **National Right to Life Association (NRLC)**

The NRLC has affiliates in 50 states and 3,000 local chapters nationwide. Through education, legislation, political action, and communications, NRLC works against abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia. NRLC spokespeople are available for interviews and debates on all life-related issues.²²

♦ **Promise Keepers**

Promise Keepers, organized in 1990 by Bill McCartney, is a fellowship group for men that encourages prayer, spiritual renewal, sexual purity, and marriage and family support. Rallies are held across the country.²³

♦ **Traditional Values Coalition**

Founded in 1980 by Rev. Louis P. Sheldon, the Traditional Values Coalition defends biblical principles in regard to abortion, homosexuality, and other religious moral issues.²⁴

Radical Feminism Confronts the Church

Dean Kahn polled the Arts College faculty concerning their interest in a female studies program. He received seven favorable replies from a faculty of several hundred. Dean Kahn was quoted as saying: "Many professors are asking how, in a year during which we've been forced to cut our budgets, we can justify putting money into a "venture of questionable educational value."¹

—Ithaca Journal, September 29, 1971

In September of 1971, the Liberal Arts College of Cornell University was debating the pros and cons of establishing a female studies program. The above quotation captures the response from the faculty.

I responded by writing a lengthy, rather vitriolic letter contending that studies investigating the contributions of women to society and the roles they were asked to play were long overdue. I took the letter to the editor of the local newspaper, *The Ithaca Journal*. The letter was printed the next day. The Female Studies program, one of the first in the nation, was developed in Cornell's Liberal Arts College.

When Kate Millet published her book *Sexual Politics* in 1970, I read with understanding the problems she was raising

about women as second-class citizens. I enrolled in a Cornell graduate program in the Spring of 1972 to study organizational behavior, wanting to better understand social organization. I was surprised to discover that not only men, but also many professional women were unappreciative of the contributions of women to society in regard to family and child rearing. Women were being encouraged to remain single or accept divorce as a viable alternative. They were being encouraged to leave their families, leave their children in day care centers, to develop careers and enter paying jobs.

One woman professor screamed, "We should not just stay at home and have children who only cry and vomit." Another woman in a lecture advised the men in the audience to "kick your wives out of the house. Make them become economically independent so they will not be a burden to you."

The Female Studies program had an agenda. Respect for the valuable and significant roles of homemaking and motherhood was given low priority, if not outright disrespect.

Civil Rights for Women

The 1960s were volatile years. The Civil Rights Act, enacted into law in 1964, ruled against discrimination based on race, religion, or national origin in places of public accommodation. However, "it was as late as 1971 before classification based on sex was declared unconstitutional."² Many women had been actively involved in activities and demonstrations supporting rights for racial minorities. It was only natural that discrimination based on sex would also be brought into question.

Shirley Chisholm, a black woman elected in 1968 as United States Representative from the twelfth Congressional District in Brooklyn, N.Y., was a strong influence in urging, even daring, women to brave the social sanctions that would be placed upon those who stepped outside traditional roles for women. Chisholm contended that America was both racist and

anti-feminist. Building on the religious tradition of the civil rights program directed by the Baptist minister, Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., she stated,

It is not feminine egoism to say that the future of mankind may very well be ours to determine... The softness, warmth, and gentleness that are often used to stereotype us are positive human values... The strength that marked Christ, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King was a strength born not of violence but of gentleness, understanding, and genuine human compassion.³

Chisholm's article, "Women Must Rebel," from which the above quotation was taken, was printed in a book entitled *Voices of the New Feminism*. This anthology, edited by Mary Lou Thompson, was the second book printed by the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation that dealt with the condition of women. While acknowledging that not all the authors who contributed to the anthology agreed in their theories about the new feminism, a primary motive for printing the book was stated in the Foreword.

One of many factors to be considered is that population pressures and the resulting pollution of the environment cannot be dealt with unless society provides other roles than motherhood for women.⁴

Challenge to the Family

While in the traditional family pattern of the premodern era the family worked together, the modern era brought radical changes to the family. Productive work became separated from family work as men took jobs in industry and the "moral" mothers stayed home to care for the house and children. At the end of the 1950s, the nation entered the postmodern period. As the nation shifted from industry to clerical and service sectors,

employers recognized that women could be hired more cheaply than men. Women were encouraged to enter the workplace.⁵

Feminists hastened the demise of the traditional family. Feminist literature, including Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*⁶ (1963) and *Sexual Politics*⁷ by Kate Millet (1970), encouraged women to have a life larger than "just" mother and housewife. Women were urged to struggle against patriarchy. Housewives were put on the defensive. Wives and mothers were demeaned in cartoons, in newspapers columns, and in counseling.⁸

In the late 1960s women were encouraged to return to school to increase their skills and self-esteem. While studying the changing roles of women in the Silicon Valley, Judith Stacey was intrigued by the life changes in women who returned for more education. Stacey noted that of twenty-five women who entered a reentry program for women at the local community college as happily married housewives active in the community, only two or three of those marriages survived.

Feminism, particularly the strand popular in the early 1970s that criticized female dependence and encouraged career ambition, had proven to be incompatible with millions of marriages forged on 1950s premises,⁹

As women saw new options for themselves and developed female bonds, many left their marriages or were left by their husbands. The demands of feminism brought forth negative responses from many men. Unable to understand or adjust to the new expectations made upon them, many men dissolved their marriages.

No-Fault Divorce Laws and Feminist Concerns

The first no-fault divorce laws in the Western world were established in California in 1970, setting the stage for a massive increase in divorce in the following years. A nationwide trend toward more permissive divorce was launched, and by 1980 all

but two states had legislated some form of no-fault divorce laws.¹⁰ The new laws normalized a retreat from marriage. These laws created a power shift in regard to marriage, removing power from the person wanting to maintain the marriage and giving it to the person wanting to leave. Women who wanted to leave their marriage found support in the new laws. However the no-fault divorce laws also made it easier for husbands to leave their wives and children.

No-fault divorce resulted in misfortune for many divorced women and their children. Divorce based on fault had provided the dependent spouse a bargaining chip for economic protection. No-fault divorce laws removed the bargaining chip from the partner who desired to continue the marriage. An imbalance developed in the post-divorce conditions of men and women. After divorce, the husband was able to walk away with his developed career assets, while the wife was often required to take menial work, if she was able to find work at all. In her study of the economic situations of post-divorced men and women in California, Lenore Weitzman noted,

The greatest gap between men and women's post divorce incomes among those married 11-17 years occurs in the higher income groups. In families with pre-divorce incomes of \$40,000 or more, the wife's post divorce, per capita income is 64 percent of the family's former standard of living, while that of the husband is 222 percent.¹¹

Women found it difficult to find good-paying jobs, and few were able to recover the economic status previously experienced with a working husband. Many experienced downward mobility.

Phyllis Schlafly and the STOP ERA Campaign

Changes in family relationships created a backlash among women who did not share the feminist goals. In the 1960s feminist groups were promoting the passage of the Equal Rights

Amendment (ERA) to the constitution. In 1972 the ERA had passed both houses of Congress and was being brought to the states for ratification. Phyllis Schlafly, a traditional Catholic woman and a political conservative, found ERA disgusting and appalling. Schlafly, who had received a Master's degree in political science from Radcliffe, was an outspoken advocate of conservative politics. Married, and with six children, Schlafly contended that the ERA would decree strict equality of rights under the law, requiring vast changes in laws related to marriage, divorce, child custody, and adoption. Women and men would be equally responsible for economic support, and women would be required to work outside the home. She foresaw ERA as giving both marriage and adoption rights to homosexuals. Schlafly was a strong and forceful debater. Her public debate with Betty Friedan in 1973 ended when Friedan shrieked, "I'd like to burn you at the stake!"¹²

In 1967 Schlafly launched a monthly newsletter, *The Phyllis Schlafly Report*, with the purpose of influencing conservative politics and the direction of the Republican Party. She developed a devoted group of followers, and in 1972 she launched the STOP ERA movement, using the newsletter as a major source of support and communication. Schlafly forged an improbable alliance of Catholics, Fundamentalists, and Orthodox Jews to work together against the passage of ERA. In 1975 Schlafly incorporated her organization as the Eagle Forum. In the goals for the Eagle Forum, Schlafly wrote,

We support the Holy Scriptures as providing the best code of moral conduct yet devised... We support the family as the basic unit of society, with certain rights and responsibilities...¹³

Beverly LaHaye Organizes Concerned Women for America

After watching a television interview of Betty Friedan in 1979, Beverly LaHaye realized feminist "anti-God," "anti-family"

rhetoric did not represent her views or those of many other women. LaHaye formed an organization called Concerned Women for America. Promotional material in 2001 described the history of the group.

With the vision of protecting the family, Beverly LaHaye founded Concerned Women for America (CWA)... Today, with members in 50 states it is the largest public policy women's organization in the nation. Although CWA is primarily a women's organization, its issues deal with the family, so men are also encouraged to join. Its membership includes women and men of all ages, various church affiliations, and multiple political parties.¹⁴

Feminist Variations

In the 1990s feminists were under attack by many analysts, both male and female. Critics used varied modifiers, such as radical feminists, socialist feminists, gender feminists, or lesbian feminists¹⁵ to describe the feminist agendas. However, the main concern focused on the challenge to family integrity. Christina Hoff Sommers contended that "gender feminists" betray women by creating a gender war, seeking separation from men. She claimed that gender feminists were so eager to put men in a bad light that research on rape and domestic abuse had been distorted, exaggerated, and oversimplified. "The message is that women must be 'gynocentric,' that they must join with and be loyal only to women."¹⁶ Sommers made a distinction between "gender" feminists and "mainstream" or "equity" feminists, who want for women only fair treatment without discrimination.

Robert Bork¹⁷ contended that radical feminism proposed the complete restructuring of society, morality, and human nature. While feminists recognized two sexes, they claimed five genders: man, woman, lesbian, gay, and bisexual. Bork contended that radical feminists attacked the institution of family

and traditional religions, did not recognize the accomplishments of traditional conservative women, cooperated in the development of the no-fault divorce laws, and proselytized for lesbianism through women's studies programs.

Feminism as Heterophobia

Daphne Patai contended that radical feminists had transformed a liberating movement into a sexual harassment industry. She contended that radical feminists, because of their heterophobia (defined as the revulsion felt by a subject for the opposite sex), intimidate and degrade men. Carolyn Graglia agreed that heterophobia was a key to understanding contemporary feminism. Graglia contended that feminists were destroying a society where women can be both career women and mothers. She argued that feminists had taken away choice by ridiculing and downgrading women who choose to raise a family and pursue a traditional life. Feminist attacks on the patriarchal family supported the expanding social engineering state, because as the family weakens, all become subordinate to the state.¹⁸

Jane Simoni, Nancy Henley, and Cheryl Cristie reported on their research on feminism in 1999.¹⁹ They developed a lesbian feminist subscale to be used with the *Feminist Perspective Scale*, to differentiate between various types of feminist attitudes. They contended that lesbian feminists viewed heterosexuality as the root of women's oppression. Heterosexual marriage was seen as binding women to their oppressor, reinforcing male status, and maintaining male power. Because lesbianism enabled women to be less dependent on men, many feminists advocated physical separation from men. Behavioral items on the lesbian feminist subscale related to "not attending religious services," "rallying for lesbian causes," and "speaking against the oppression of prostitution." Simoni, Henley, and Christie noted that there were high correlations between lesbian feminists, radical feminists, and socialist feminists.

Feminist Theologians and the Re-imaging Concerns

Feminist theologians in mainline denominations were split between feminist perspectives in much the same way as secular feminists. While equity feminists focused on issues of equality and civil rights, gender feminists focused on the meaning of “femaleness,” contending that God, the community, and the church needed to be “re-imaged.” Concerns came to a head within mainline religious denominations in November of 1993, when feminist theologians organized an ecumenical conference entitled “Re-Imagining ...God, Community and the Church.” The symposium drew 2,200 participants, with 32 denominations and 27 countries represented. The event was almost exclusively directed from the gender feminist theological perspective. A major criticism of the conference was the elevation of “Sophia,” an Old Testament Goddess of wisdom, as a focus for feminist spirituality. “The conference was convened in her name. She was invoked at places usually reserved for Yahweh, Father, Jesus, or Holy Spirit. She was addressed as ‘Our maker Sophia,’ ‘Our mother Sophia,’ ‘Our guide Sophia’...”²⁰

In a Holy Communion look-alike entitled “Blessing over Milk and Honey,” the worship leader invoked “Our maker Sophia,” and engaged the audience in a libidinal antiphony: “With the hot blood of our wombs we give form to new life.... With the milk of our breasts we suckle the children.... With nectar between our thighs we invite a lover, we birth a child; With our warm body fluids we remind the world of its pleasures and sensations.” There was no mention of Jesus or his atoning sacrifice.²¹

Furor developed in the denominations when these theological changes were reported to the local congregations. Of the conference participants, 400 were Presbyterians, including 20 national staff members. The Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. (PCUSA) had contributed \$66,000 in support of the conference.

At the annual meeting, the General Assembly of the denomination issued a statement contending that the event went “beyond the boundaries of Reformed theology.”²² Mary Ann Lundy, a supporter of the conference and a top PCUSA staff member, was forced to resign her position.

Methodist laity were also enraged. The Board of Directors of *Good News*, a conservative magazine for United Methodists, sent an open letter to the members of the Council of Bishops condemning church participation in the planning of and funding of attendance at the “Re-Imaging” Conference. They contended that much of the theology expressed went far beyond the boundaries of United Methodist doctrine. They stated,

In light of the “Re-Imaging Conference’s public celebration affirming the lesbian lifestyle, accompanied by a sustained applause by participants, will you remind the church, lovingly yet firmly, that for United Methodists, the practice of homosexuality remains “incompatible with Christian teaching.”²³

Jewish Feminists

Jewish women, including the founder of NOW, Betty Friedan, dominated the women’s movement.

Carolyn Graglia contended that Jewish feminism represented a backlash against traditional rabbinical society, which subordinated women. She noted, however, that there were cultural problems when Jewish feminists sought to describe and mediate the roles of women who were not burdened and hostile.²⁴ Jews as a group had higher levels of education and income and were “far to the left” of other ethnic groups. These factors exerted a liberalizing effect on attitudes toward women’s roles, abortion, pornography, and homosexuality.

Two Jewish women who had an extraordinary influence on American social behavior were Eppie Lederer, who wrote the advice column called *Ann Landers*, and her twin sister Pauline,

the author of *Dear Abby*. Beginning their columns in 1955, they soon developed a wide and faithful following of readers. Through their advice columns, problems that were generally not talked about in public were brought into the open for discussion. By 1990 the Landers' column, first published in the *Chicago Sun Times* and later by the *Chicago Tribune*, was printed in more than 1,200 newspapers and had a readership of 90 million readers. *Psychology Today* magazine credited Ann Landers with "having more to do with the way people work out their problems than any other person of her time."²⁵

Landers responded to questions relating to sexuality, marriage, children, in-laws, and countless other concerns. Her advice, however, had no consistent anchor. Over the years she changed her mind on premarital chastity and homosexual relationships, becoming tolerant of variations in behavior. She divorced in 1975, making her less certain perhaps of absolute answers.²⁶ Her advice for women in an unhappy marriage was the formula "Would you be better off with him, or better off without him,"²⁷ offering social support to readers to do what they wanted to do. While often recommending professional counseling, on more than one occasion her advice to a wife with a wandering or alcoholic husband was to throw the bum out.

Jewish liberalism can be understood through its political/cultural heritage. Many Jews are descended from immigrants from Eastern and Central Europe. Socialism in these countries is crucial in understanding Jewish liberalism. However, Jewish teachings can support both conservative and liberal values. Orthodox Jews are much less liberal than the reform branch of Judaism.²⁸

Dr. Ruth Speaks Sexually²⁹

Dr. Ruth Westheimer began her radio program entitled *Speaking Sexually* in May of 1980 with a fifteen minute segment between midnight and twelve fifteen. The show developed quickly into a popular hour long talk show on Sunday evening

at ten. Her frank discussions of sexual problems were delivered in a warm and often humorous manner.

Her advice was influenced by the intensity of her life. In 1929, Dr. Ruth was born Karola Ruth Siegel in Frankfurt, Germany to Orthodox Jewish parents. Religious practices were strictly observed in the home. However, the horrible effects of Nazism changed Karola's life. In early January of 1939, two months after the Kristallnacht, Karola's mother put her on a train to attend a boarding school in Switzerland for her safety. Karola never saw her parents again.

Filled with Zionist zeal, Karola traveled to Palestine following the war to join a kibbutz. The kibbutzim throughout Palestine were not Orthodox. Religion was not emphasized. Dances were held on Friday night and people traveled and worked on Saturday, in violation of Orthodox practice. Biblical stories were downplayed, and holidays were celebrated secularly.

The Kibbutzim operated under a socialistic, communal arrangement. A month after birth, children were taken to the children's house to be brought up by nurses and teachers. Men and women did not sleep in separate quarters. Pre-marital sex was acceptable and even encouraged. A couple who were seen together for a few weeks were given a separate room together, rather than having to sleep in the communal tents or bunks.

When she moved to the United States in the late 1950s, Karola dropped her German first name and used her Biblical middle name, Ruth. She entered her third marriage in 1961 to Dr. Fred Westheimer. Fanatical about contraception, Ruth Westheimer found a job as a trainer and supervisor with Planned Parenthood. She told her husband, "These people are crazy! They talk about sex all the day long!" She soon decided that her goal was to become a sex therapist.

In the 1970s Ruth studied under Dr. Helen Singer Kaplan who ran an advanced program for sex therapists at Cornell Medical School in New York City. Kaplan, who wrote *The New Sex Therapy*, had worked with the sex researchers Masters and

Johnson. Another influence on Ruth's life was Charles Silverstein, "a clinical psychologist who was the head of the Institute for Human Identity, a counseling center frequented mainly by gays and bisexuals."

Dr. Ruth became a popular lecturer, traveling throughout the country. In 1987 she delivered a lecture to students and faculty at Texas A&M University. Dr. Robert Hurley, a professor of a human sexuality class at A&M, commented, "Dr. Ruth is popular because a lot of people have questions and don't know who to ask, and by calling in to her radio program, they can get an answer without giving a name." He noted that Dr. Ruth served a purpose by stressing communication between the sexes.³⁰

After she began her radio talk show in 1980, the popularity of her discussions made "Dr. Ruth" a household name. Of primary importance to her was the right of consenting adults to engage in whatever behaviors they wanted in the privacy of their homes. Talking boldly about sexual concerns became socially avant garde.

Women Clergy and Inclusive Language

Clergy have traditionally been males. Women of the church have been encouraged to be supportive through volunteer involvement, including teaching, visiting the sick, and organizing groups for missionary efforts and worship enhancement. Women whose primary occupation was homemaker were comfortable with the opportunities provided for the involvement and personal expression of their faith. Women were generally the backbone of the church.

Women raised in the 1960s, however, sought more involvement in career opportunities and recognized leadership roles. By the late 1980s liberal theological centers had student bodies that were nearly half female. Following a divorce, some women sought a career path in the church to continue serving the church as they had previously done as a volunteer. Older

women, whose children had left home, sought to continue their nurturing roles as a minister within the church.³¹

A growing number of husband and wife "clergy couples" were ordained, seeking team ministry positions with dual salaries. The minister's wife had traditionally been expected to serve as hostess and work in women's and children's activities within the church as a volunteer. These changes forced adjustments in religious organizations and in the perceptions of parishioners.³²

Overt conflict often arose over the appropriate roles of women within the church. While most mainline denominations moved toward acceptance of women as clergy, many evangelical sectarian groups found biblical bases for continuing male leadership. The Roman Catholic Church held firm in not allowing women to be ordained as priests, contending that priests were representative of Christ who was a male.³³

With an increasing number of women in leadership roles, it became inevitable that challenges to the male-dominated religious language would occur. Divorced women and women who had suffered abuse at the hands of their fathers or husbands were often uncomfortable with adoration of "father" and "son" and the continual reference to God as male.

In 1973 Mary Daly, associate professor of theology at Boston College, wrote a challenge to "God the Father." She titled her book *Beyond God the Father, Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation*. Her purpose in writing the book was to "study the potential of the women's revolution to transform human consciousness, and...to generate human becoming." She argued that women were oppressed through the language "since God is male, the male is god."³⁴

Liberal denominations responded by gradually expunging "sexist" language from hymns and prayers. Language which included reference to all people was substituted for generic masculine language. "Mankind" became "humankind." The popular hymn "God of our Fathers" became "God of All Nations.

New versions of the Bible changed some or all of the references to inclusive language. When the *New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV) of the Bible was released in 1989, people responded in different ways. Mainline denominations were more accepting. Some evangelicals embraced the new language, while others either ignored it or attacked it angrily.³⁵

When an altered inclusive version of the *New International Version* (NIV), a modern translation widely used by evangelicals, was released in Great Britain in 1996, sounds of alarm arose. Some evangelicals, remembering the recent fiasco of the Re-imaging Conference, were concerned that it represented a feminist wedge that would lead to goddess worship.³⁶

Two conservative evangelical Bible scholars wrote books that responded with moderate perspectives on the issue. Bethel Seminary's Mark Strauss, who wrote *Distorting Scripture? The Challenge of Bible Translation and Gender Accuracy*, and Trinity International University's Donald Carson, who wrote *The Inclusive Language Debate: A Plea for Realism*, cautioned that "some of us are making way too big a deal about relatively small changes." They noted that "all translations have infelicities, and even outright errors." John Stackhouse, Professor of Theology at Regent College, Vancouver, argued, "It is simply not the case today that we are presented with translations that portray God as goddess."³⁷ He continued,

Since the Bible's original languages themselves contain obviously feminine language about God, an extreme position on this matter ("let's stay in this ditch so we don't slide over into the other one") is indefensible.

Sex Education Confronts the Church

*Passing out condoms to teenagers is like issuing squirt guns for a four-alarm blaze. Condoms just don't hack it. We should stop kidding ourselves.*¹

—Dr. Robert C. Noble

The above comment was quoted in a lengthy pastoral letter issued by the Most Rev. Rene H. Gracida, bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Corpus Christi, Texas to his parishioners. The letter was printed in the *Laredo Morning Times* and took three quarters of a newspaper page. Bishop Gracida was deeply concerned and angry about the proposal to young people in sex education classes that the use of condoms would constitute “safe sex” and thereby provide protection from the AIDS virus. He called this proposal

a cruel and deadly hoax on countless young Americans who will discover too late that using a condom in sexual intercourse is much like playing Russian roulette with a loaded pistol.²

Noting that the condom failure rate for pregnancy was reported by various groups to be between 10 to 14 percent,

Bishop Gracida contended that the failure rate for protection from disease would be four times that rate, since a normal woman is only fertile seven days out of twenty-eight. He said, "The result of the current 'safe sex' propaganda is that attention is shifted away from what is responsible, what is right and what is good, and attention is shifted to haphazard lectures, talks, commercials, and value-deficient sex education courses." Bishop Gracida ended his letter with a call for action. "I call on all men and women of goodwill to speak out in love against the propaganda of the 'safe sex' advocates."³

SIECUS Promotes Sex Education

A handful of professionals under the direction of Dr. Mary Calderone, a former medical director of Planned Parenthood, formed the nonprofit organization called Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) in 1964. A pioneer in taking stands on sexuality issues in the public arena, SIECUS was a leader in developing sex education programs for schools.

In the fall of 1966, articles by Dr. Calderone were printed in the *Education Digest* (Dec. 1966) and *American Education* (Nov., 1966), a magazine published by the office of education of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Calderone appealed for the establishment of a system of sex education in the public schools that would develop a "full understanding and acceptance of the sexuality of all age levels, beginning with infancy and continuing throughout life."⁴ She included homosexual behavior, heterosexual behavior, and masturbation as aspects of sexual and mating behaviors. However, Calderone argued that sex was more than genital or coitus, but rather consisted of a multitude of impressions and attitudes. The primary product and goal of sex education would be adults who used their sexuality in mature and responsible ways. Calling for the "understanding of sexuality of man, by man,"⁵ Calderone denied the need for theological considerations, contending that morality is a question of how people deal responsibly with each other.

The first president of SIECUS, Wallace C. Fulton, explained that “SIECUS is committed to the positive goal of finding ways to incorporate sex meaningfully and with full acceptance into human living...(through) a “positive, open, scientific approach to human sexual behavior.”⁶

SIECUS executive director, Debra Haffner, edited a publication entitled *Sex Education 2000* in which thirteen goals for the organization were outlined. It was contended that by the year 2000 sexuality education was to be implemented community wide through the parents, schools, religious institutions, national youth serving agencies, media, and federal policies and programs. All states were to mandate sexuality education, and training was to be provided for all teachers and group leaders.⁷

In their policy statement SIECUS discussed their attitudes toward various sexual behaviors. The following sexual rights were affirmed:⁸

- comprehensive school-based sexuality education that respects the diversity of sexual values and beliefs and complements the sex education received from parents;
- full religious participation and legal acceptance of all sexual orientations, be they bisexual, heterosexual, gay, or lesbian;
- access by adults to sexually explicit materials;
- access for all to age-appropriate information and education about sexuality, gender roles, contraception, and sexually transmitted diseases;
- acceptance of masturbation as natural and nonharmful;
- acceptance of consensual and non-exploitative relationships as a basis for intimacy for adults and responsible adolescents;
- contraceptive information, education, and services for adolescents, including confidentiality and privacy in services;
- and the right to obtain an abortion under safe, legal, confidential, and dignified conditions.

Government Support for Sex Education

In 1964 Planned Parenthood in Texas received a grant from the federal Office of Economic Opportunity, under the War on Poverty Program, to develop a sex education program. The National Education Association called for sex education in the schools, contending that it was necessary to teach “healthy attitudes” as promoted by the experts. Sex education was seen as too complex to leave to parents. By 1968, 50 percent of schools had sex education classes. However, as sex education spread, pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases increased. The programs had changed student attitudes about sex and new norms developed.⁹

Teenage pregnancy became a major social problem. In 1970 Congress passed the *Family Planning Services and Population Research Act*, which included the funding of contraceptives for sexually active unmarried minors. President Richard Nixon established the Commission on Population Growth and the American Future, which recommended comprehensive sex education for teens. In 1977 Planned Parenthood and other groups designed a program to reduce teen pregnancies, calling for “a national network for early pregnancy detection, school-based education programs, community information and outreach programs, and programs to encourage hospitals to provide abortions.”¹⁰

Planned Parenthood developed a five-year plan “to serve as the nation’s foremost agent of social change in the area of reproductive health and well-being.” The group sought to “remove legal, regulatory, and cultural restrictions to “universal reproductive freedom,” labeling any obstructions as “arbitrary and outmoded restrictions.”¹¹ They demanded and received \$800 million from Congress to support the program. In 1978 Congress passed the *Adolescent Pregnancy Act*. Between 1971-1981 federal expenditures on family planning exceeded \$2 billion. Ironically, during this period, teen pregnancies increased by 48 percent and teen abortions increased by 133 percent.¹²

Sex education has also been accompanied by an increase in emotional problems for adolescents. Dr. Melvin Anchell, author of books on human sexuality, explains this:¹³

Typical sex education courses are almost perfect recipes for producing personality problems and even perversions later in life... Sex education programs from kindergarten through high school continuously down grade the affectionate monogamous nature of human sexuality. Sex education, whether purposeful or not, desensitizes students to the spiritual qualities of human sexuality.

Response to the Consequences of Sexuality Education

Religious denominations responded in different ways to calls for increased sexual education for children. Mainline denominations, which moved in the direction of greater inclusion of diverse sexual behaviors, were challenged by conservative clergy and members of the denominations. In 1994 Methodist parents and clergy expressed outrage about a workshop for junior and senior high youth at a Christian camp near Sacramento, CA. About thirty youth attended the workshop, called *Education for Sexuality Enterprise*, which was led by volunteer members of the church conference's Education for Sexuality Task Force. Some youth complained to their parents that "they were shown nude photos, including couples engaged in sex; were required to shout obscenities; and were encouraged to taste flavored condoms."¹⁴ Parents filed a protest with the church's California-Nevada Conference. After investigations, Bishop Melvin G. Talbert said it was clear that mistakes had been made... "We must not have a repeat of what happened on that weekend."¹⁵

The debacle by the Sexuality Task Force was not the only problem experienced by the United Methodist California-Nevada Conference. Bishop Talbert, a leader of the liberal agenda in California, openly supported "full participation in the

church of gays, lesbians, and transgendered people,” including same-sex unions and the ordination and assignment of practicing homosexuals to local churches. The leadership of the church’s Western Jurisdiction also supported this position, in opposition to the United Methodist’s prohibition against these practices.¹⁶ Because of liberal leadership, the Western Jurisdiction of the UMC lost a large proportion of its membership as conservative members voted with their feet.¹⁷

In 1994 Dr. James Dobson, founder and president of Focus on the Family, noted that “The United States had the highest percentage of children born out of wedlock of any nation in the world, 30.5 percent! More than 68 percent of black and 22 percent of white babies come into the world without an intact family to love and care for them! What a disgrace and a tragedy!”¹⁸ In December, 1994, a Newsweek reporter referred to these statistics as “bone chilling.” He wrote:

Every threat to the fabric of this country—from poverty to crime to homelessness—is connected to out-of-wedlock teen pregnancy. This scourge was not caused by economics; Calcutta’s families are wretched but largely intact. It was caused by American cultural changes in the last two decades—aided by an irresponsible entertainment industry—that has lifted the stigma off both black and white communities. When the moral judgment of society is restored—in law and in everyday life—the numbers can be reduced over time.”¹⁹

Abstinence—True Love Waits

In response to the growing concern about changing sexual behaviors and moral values, Southern Baptists initiated the “True Love Waits” program. “The case for promiscuity has been made forcefully,” said Richard Ross, a youth minister of Tulip Grove Baptist Church near Nashville. “The case for abstinence sometimes hasn’t been made at all.”²⁰ In response to the

initiative “more than 200,000 teens signed pledge cards promising to remain abstinent until marriage. Those cards were placed in plastic holders and stuck into the ground on the Capitol Mall in Washington, D.C.”²¹ Although President Clinton, Dr. Joceyln Elders, and Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala were invited to meet with the youth, they declined. Southern Baptist Communications Director, Tom Strode, said,

It’s clear that the administration is not comfortable with abstinence as an appropriate response to teen sexual activity. What these kids are doing and pledging violates one of the cardinal tenets of the liberal faith: It’s OK for unmarried kids—for unmarried adults, as well—to be sexually active. They just need to be educated about how to do it. That’s the ‘safe sex’ myth. And people die from it.²²

In February of 1994, the newspaper magazine insert, *USA Today*, sponsored a scientific national poll of 1,004 adults and 252 teenagers to assess agreement with the abstinence message of the True Love Waits campaign. An overwhelming majority, 78 percent of adults and 72 percent of teens, agreed that the abstinence message was good. By March of 1994, 19 organizations and denominations signed on to the campaign, including the National Federation for Catholic Youth, Assemblies of God, Campus Crusade for Christ, and Christian Camping International-USA.

True Love Waits participants sign a pledge “to be sexually pure until the day I enter a covenant marriage relationship.” (Those who already have had sex may participate if they vow to refrain from further premarital sex.) Some churches augment the pledge with a ring that parents place on their child’s finger. The ring is worn until the wedding night, when it is presented to the new spouse.²³

During the 1990s, about 2.5 million U.S. teens were estimated to have made abstinence pledges.²⁴

Government Sponsorship of Abstinence and SIECUS Concerns

When Congress allocated \$50 million in the *Welfare Reform Act* for abstinence education in 1996, Planned Parenthood and SIECUS had to share the federal monies allocated to sex education for the first time. Block grants were given to states for five years, beginning in 1997. Proponents of comprehensive sex education responded with alarm. SIECUS representative Debra Haffner said, "There is no norm of chastity in America, so teaching that is a lie."²⁵ In April of 1999, SIECUS released the results of a fifteen-month study of the federal abstinence education program. All but two states had used federal funding for abstinence-only education in 1998, and 698 abstinence-only grants had been awarded nationwide. The following facts were compiled from responses from forty-five states and the District of Columbia.²⁶

- ✦ All but two states used federal funding for a new abstinence-only effort in 1998.
- ✦ State Health Departments retained authority over the program in a majority of states, despite strong efforts by the proponents of abstinence-only to have state governors take primary control.
- ✦ Twenty-seven states used the funds for abstinence media programs; twenty states began new abstinence media programs.
- ✦ Five states have now passed state laws requiring that sexuality education programs teach abstinence-only-until-marriage as the standard for school-age children.

Haffner noted, "This new report demonstrates the federal abstinence-only program is beginning to change the landscape of sexuality education. Too many American young people are now being denied lifesaving public health information."²⁷

In spite of inroads into sexuality education made by abstinence educators, proponents of comprehensive sexuality education continued their efforts to control the content of sex education. Debra Haffner declared, "We cannot allow the far right to define family values."²⁸ In 1996 she enrolled at Yale University's Divinity School, following up with studies at Union Theological Seminary. In 1997 SIECUS published her article entitled "The Really Good News: What the Bible Says About Sex." Using verses from Genesis, Proverbs, and Deuteronomy, the report declares "Premarital sex is OK... Prostitution is actually encouraged as an outlet... Adultery itself isn't so bad... and Homosexuality is not condemned per se."²⁹ In February of 2000, seeking to promote the sexuality goals of SIECUS as a religious leader, Haffner stepped down from leadership in SIECUS to attend seminary full-time.³⁰

The 1997 SIECUS report on biblical sexuality was challenged by a group of theologians headed by Denver Seminary Professor, Craig Blomberg. They criticized Haffner's interpretations as "a curious mix of legitimate observation, dubious liberal theology, and full-fledged misinformation."³¹

Concerned Christians continued to publicly challenge the efforts of SIECUS and Planned Parenthood in their drive for comprehensive sexuality education in the schools. San Antonio, Texas resident, Anne Newman, policy advisor for the Texas Justice Foundation's Parental Rights Council, says, "It's both a right and a responsibility for parents to protect their children from sex pushers whose goal is to assure that every child has the right to have sex, condoms, pills, and abortions."³²

Home Schooling Increases

The teaching of sex education in the public schools often ignored the sexual moral standards supported by many parents and religious groups. Generally sex education and health textbooks taught that any kind of sex is all right if the person was comfortable with it, including premarital sex, adultery, masturbation, homosexuality, and lesbianism. Research by Dr. Donald

Oppenwal, Professor of Education at Calvin College, confirmed these generalizations. Oppenwal reported a typical example, which declared: "Although homosexual acts have been traditionally characterized as deviant or unnatural, there is no evidence that they are any more or less so than heterosexual acts."³³ The books used statistics of frequency of behaviors and comments by "experts" and "authorities" to support homosexuality, masturbation, premarital intercourse, and sometimes even incest, sadism, and masochism

In response to these concerns and to increases in school violence and consistent declines in academic performance, many parents chose to remove their children from school settings and teach them at home. Home schooling is not a new phenomenon, dating back to the very foundation of our country. It was common practice before compulsory school attendance laws were passed in the early 1900s. In the 1970s home schooling saw a revival in popularity, and the trend grew rapidly. In 1994 the Census Bureau estimated that 360,000 children were being schooled at home. In 1999 the Education Department released a government report of 57,278 telephone surveys that estimated that 850,000, 1.7 percent of American children, were home schooled. The top reasons given were to provide a better education, promote religious instruction, to protect their children from a poor school environment, and to develop character and morality.³⁴

Home schoolers were found in all spectrums of the social setting. While 36 percent of homes in the government study of 1999 had an annual income of \$50,000 or higher, 31 percent had an income under \$25,000. All racial and ethnic groups were represented in the 1999 government report. Blacks represented 10 percent, Hispanics 9 percent, and other minorities almost 6 percent. Over half of home schooling parents had not graduated from college.³⁵ Many support systems developed to assist parents who chose to school their children at home. The development of home school curriculum became an industry.

Statewide conventions were organized to exhibit the educational materials. Local community networks and religious organizations assisted and encouraged the efforts.³⁶

In 1994, responding to concerns for the quality of education received through home schooling, Dr. Brian Ray examined standardized test results for 16,000 home schoolers in grades K-12. He found that reading scores averaged in the 79th percentile and math scores averaged in the 73rd percentile. Nearly 80 percent exceeded the national average on the tests, and 54.7 percent of the 16,000 scores were in the top quarter of the population, double that of conventional school students.³⁷

Childhood Sexuality Confronts the Church

*...we now live in a sexually tolerant society whose members are willing to live and let live. But one idea remains sacrosanct. In all public discourse, agreement exists that children are to be kept innocent of the sexual interests of adults, because they will be inevitably and irreparably damaged if exposed to them.*¹

—Julia A. Ericksen

Sexual behaviors between children or between children and adults have been forbidden territory. Social norms have protected children from sexual behaviors. Emotionally laden terms such as incest, pedophilia, and child sexual abuse have declared these behaviors as social taboos.

Liberal Influences on Childhood Sexuality

Liberal elements in society have attempted to undo taboos against childhood sexuality. The sex researcher, Alfred Kinsey, argued that child-adult sexual contact was not as harmful as the shame induced.² Sarah McCartney, in her analysis of pornography, rape, and the cult of macho, noted that *Playboy* and *Hustler* magazines have included kiddie porn within their materials.

Hustler used to run a regular kiddie corner called “Chester the Molestor.”³ The co-founder of SIECUS, Mary Calderone, maintained that “the major effects of (child) molestation are not caused by the event itself, but by the outraged, angry, fearful, and shocked reactions of the adults who learn of it...”⁴

In 1985 Barry Lynn, then a legislative council to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), “testified (before the U.S. Attorney General’s Commission on Pornography) that his organization opposed any restriction on the marketing, sale, and distribution of child pornography.”⁵ In 1988 “Lynn told the Senate Judiciary Committee that even requiring porn producers to maintain records of their performers’ ages was impermissible.”⁶ Barry Lynn held the position of executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State. Lynn also held the title of “Reverend” as a “minister in the United Church of Christ, the most liberal major denomination in the U.S., billing itself as the nation’s ‘most welcoming’ mainline denomination for practicing homosexuals.”⁷

The North American Man-Boy Love Association (NAMBLA) was at the forefront of the campaign to abolish the age-of-consent laws that protect underage youth from sexual relationships with adults. In 1993, at its 7th General Membership Conference, NAMBLA reaffirmed its position of abolition of all age-of-consent laws...and called for laws empowering children. The following affirmations were included in its proposals.⁸

- ♦ It is impossible to say at what age a person is capable of consenting to sex...
- ♦ To set an age would weaken NAMBLA’S identity as a sexual freedom organization...
- ♦ The state has no business intervening in any mutually consensual relationship...
- ♦ NAMBLA reaffirms its position of abolition of all age-of-consent laws... and calls for laws EMPOWERING children.

In 2000 the ACLU defended NAMBLA against a lawsuit brought by the family of a murdered ten-year-old boy. The family claimed that the NAMBLA website incited the molestation and murder of their son by encouraging the convicted murderer, who had viewed the website shortly before the murder. ACLU accepted the case to defend freedom of speech for NAMBLA.⁹

Attorney General Janet Reno was accused by an official in the Reagan and Bush administrations of neglecting the prosecution of obscenity cases.¹⁰ Reno “took the position that obscene material depicting children could not be prosecuted unless the boys and girls were shown behaving in a ‘lascivious’ manner.”¹¹ James Dobson, director of Focus on the Family, argued strongly against Reno’s position, stating that this position would open the door to “millions of dollars of child pornography sold legally in the marketplace, and to thousands of abused and exploited children.”¹²

Priestly Pedophilia

Accusations of priestly pedophilia exploded in the Catholic Church in the 1980s. In 1984 a cardinal was accused of abusing a teenager. Over the next ten years, more than 400 Catholic priests in North America were accused of molesting children. A church sponsored panel said that “2 percent to 4 percent of Catholic priests over the past 30 years may have been guilty of abuse.”¹³ In some cases, abuse victims stepped forward to bring charges of sexual molestation that occurred more than a decade previous. In November of 1993, the National Council of Catholic Bishops extended the church’s five-year statute of limitations on dismissals in cases involving abuse of minors. They did so out of concern for young victims, having recognized that victims who were abused as youngsters may not have been able to make allegations until years later. The Catholic Bishops asked the Vatican to raise the age of “minors” from fifteen to seventeen.¹⁴

In his 1993 visit to the United States, Pope John Paul II expressed concern about “widespread false morality.” He raised

the issue of sexual abuse by priests in a talk to 18,000 Denver Catholics. He said he “shared the concern of the U.S. bishops for the ‘pain and suffering’ caused by the sins of some priests. His reference to the victims drew loud applause from the audience... He stopped short of endorsing specific punishment for offenders, however.”¹⁵

Tom Economus, who was himself sexually abused in his youth by a trusted priest, was the executive director of Linkup, a national organization that he founded in 1991 for victims of clergy sexual abuse. Economus said that there were about 49,000 to 50,000 Roman Catholic priests in the United States. He estimated that pedophile priests range from 3,000 to 8,000; that “1,400 insurance claims are on the books; and that the Church has paid out over \$1 billion in liability with an estimated \$500 million pending.”¹⁶

When the Pope spoke at the World Youth Day in Denver, Colorado, in 1993, Economus was in attendance. He had collected 2,500 letters from victims and survivors, hoping to present them to the pope. When Economus attempted to present the letters to the security people, the letters were thrown to the ground. Although he sent the letters to the Vatican, an answer was never received. Economus was shocked when he heard in a news report that the pope had attributed clergy sexual abuse to “a result of the lack of morals and family values by the American people.” Economus said,

I think the pope remains silent on this issue because it’s very much a part of the Roman Catholic Church to not deal with sexuality. No one really wants to talk about sexual abuse, and people really don’t want to talk about the sexual abuse of children by priests.¹⁷

In Brockton, Massachusetts, a Roman Catholic priest was sentenced to four life terms for raping and sodomizing an altar boy over ten years before. The victim commented, “You had to

be stopped at all cost. The sentence you receive will be minuscule compared to mine.”¹⁸ Catholic dioceses across the nation have paid millions of dollars in settlement of sexual abuse cases and have established strict policies in handling sexual abuse allegations. In the Camden, New Jersey diocese, where fifteen allegations of abuse were filed, Bishop McHugh said that “policy included a thorough investigation of the allegations, pastoral support to those making the allegations, and professional evaluation and therapy for the accused priest.”¹⁹ Although bishops are able to remove priests from parish ministries, it is “very, very rare” that this occurs because of the complicated process.²⁰

Evil Among Us

A graphic article entitled “Evil Among Us” appeared in the September, 1993 issue of the *Presbyterian Survey* magazine. This article documented both sexual molestation of children and Satanic rituals that took place inside the church and in wooded areas nearby. Exposure of these activities began when a three-year-old girl told her mother that a boy in the congregation had “licked her bottom.” An investigation resulted in the arrest of two teenage boys who babysat the children while their parents attended church activities. The victimized children, who ranged in age from infancy to ten, numbered close to one hundred. Fifteen other adults, some members of the church, were also identified as perpetrators.

The children described ceremonies in which large groups of people wore robes and chanted in a strange language...claimed they were forced to eat feces and drink blood or urine in a mockery of Christian Communion...say cult members molested them sexually...were photographed for child pornography...were forced to watch and participate in the disemboweling of animals and human babies.²¹

Although two teenagers were convicted of sexual molestation and are now in jail, a grand jury declined to issue any more indictments because of lack of physical evidence.

Dennis Marikis was a psychologist who treated about sixty of the children. He said that the children had been terrorized. They had been told that their houses would be burned and that their parents, siblings, and friends would be killed....

Cults in general...entice adolescents with drugs, alcohol, sex, and promises of freedom... They get kids to do something criminal, and then they're hooked.²²

The congregation split in its reaction to the allegations. Some supported the parents who insisted that their children should be believed, while others contended the children were imagining and embellishing the events. The church developed new safety measures to guard against further episodes of child abuse, requiring that each class have at least two teachers and that all teachers be required to be members of the congregation. The article concluded with questions that churches should ask about their youth programs.²³

Churches, because of their open and trusting attitudes, often allow people to care for children without background checks or supervision, creating an opportunity for pedophiles to find easy victims. In early 2001 KENS TV news in San Antonio, Texas aired a documentary about the importance of church awareness concerning possibilities of sexual child abuse within the organization. The documentary reported on the seven-page guideline that had recently been developed by the Parkhills Baptist Church,²⁴ a community of faith with several hundred families and many children. The guideline outlined procedures for background checks, recruiting, training, and supervising people who work with children. Training for church workers about sexual abuse issues were adopted by many churches as a precautionary measure.

Academic Focus on Child-Adult Sex

In 1998 the *Psychological Bulletin* published research by Rind, Tromovitch, and Bauserman,²⁵ which questioned the assumptions that all sexual experience of children represented abuse that carries long-lived emotional and psychological consequences.²⁶ The researchers' agenda was shown in their recommendations. They argued that the subject be redefined by substituting the term "child-adult sex" for the term "child sexual abuse." They argued that the term "abuse" should only be applied to contacts where the child did not freely participate or experienced the participation negatively. They further argued that adolescents should no longer be termed "children."²⁷ The North American Man-Boy Love Association (NAMBLA) saw this research as support for their view of man-boy sexual relationships and noted it on their website.

Conservatives feared that the research would encourage homosexual pedophiles. The National Association for the Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH) attacked the paper by Rind, et al., on its website. Conservative and right-wing magazines, organizations, and talk show hosts railed against the research. It was brought to the attention of the nation when Matt Salmon "introduced a resolution to condemn the article in Congress...the House voted, almost unanimously...to condemn the article on the grounds that it gave a green light to pedophiles."²⁸

David Spiegel challenged the conclusions of Rind, Tromovitch, and Bauserman, stating,

"As a clinician I see and treat individuals who suffer the effects of an abusive childhood: their depression, inappropriate guilt about the abuse, their erosion of self-esteem, mistrust in relationships, and difficulty in enjoying their sexuality"...Spiegel noted that the researchers "stacked the deck, slanting their methods in the direction of their conclusions."²⁹

Psychologists, Janice Haaken and Sharon Lamb, noted that concerns about the damaging effects of sexual abuse had been prominent in the women's and children's rights movements in the last two decades, and that challenges to these gains threatened the healing process of the victims. They contended that "children can never be equal participants in relation to adults and sex, and by imagining they could we leave open the way to exploitation."³⁰

Save Our Children Campaign

In January of 2001 Beverly LaHaye, director of Concerned Women for American (CWA), launched the "Save Our Children Campaign." She said,

I am outraged by the way our children are being targeted. They're locked in the enemy's crosshairs and being corrupted, defiled, and debased. They're being tempted away from our families, our values, even the basics of right and wrong. Our children are being robbed of their innocence and lured down a path of death... Unprecedented violence, sex, foul language, and immorality pour into our homes on network television, and open pornography via movies and the Internet. Big-government liberals are promoting the radical homosexual agenda in our schools... It is time for America to stand up and Save Our Children! Evil forces are at work, corrupting our kids and leading them away from the light and into lives of darkness and despair.³¹

CWA appealed for funds to run ads in newspapers across America, encouraging concerned parents to develop nationwide efforts to save the children. CWA also published a book entitled *Who Will Save Our Children?* that included articles concerned about the breakdown of marriage and family as an institution, the sexual slave trade, homosexuality, abortion, sex education, and the United Nation's assault on faith, family, and country.³²

Abortion Confronts the Church

In 1991 I was working behind the desk at an abortion clinic when a woman who was about six months pregnant walked into our office.

"You're in the wrong place, honey." I said...

Her tone was insistent. "I know what I want, and what I want is an abortion."

I left her standing there and went to the back to get a cigarette. You have to understand, when situations like these arose, I felt responsible. My name was on that affidavit. It was my pseudonym, Jane Roe, that had been used to create the "right" to abortion out of legal thin air. But Sarah Weddington and Linda Coffee had never told me that what I was signing would allow women to use abortion as a form of birth control. We talked about truly desperate and needy women, not women already wearing maternity clothes...

...abortions are an inherently dehumanizing business. You have to let a part of your soul die, or at least go numb, to stay in practice.¹

—Norma Jean McCorvey

In the early 1970s I subscribed to *Ms.* magazine. In 1972 *Ms.* launched a campaign to change attitudes and laws related to abortion by publishing a list signed by fifty-three American women, stating, "We have had abortions."² In the October 1972

issue, Ms. followed with a petition demanding repeal of all laws that restricted reproductive freedom, noting that approximately one million women had had abortions illegally in 1971, many under adverse conditions. Subsequently, over 1,300 women joined their name to the previous list. The list and petition were printed with instructions to “clip out and send to your state legislature.”³

I remember my grief at the idea that abortion would become normalized in society. Women are the givers and nurturers of life. Traditionally, the concern of women for the protection of human dignity has been a moral beacon that moves societies toward social betterment. I was especially anxious about how abortion would affect the moral decisions of women, especially young women who had not borne children and had not experienced the awe of love and meaning that children bring. To be given the right to destroy life is an awesome power, and such power has a corrupting effect.

The main beneficiaries of abortion were not women, but men. With the removal of birth as a consequence of sex, women were more likely to engage in casual sexual behaviors. Little discussion was given in the press or literature about the moral, emotional, and physical trauma that many women experienced in aborting their unborn children. Neither was there discussion about the remorse that many women felt later in life about their abortions.

Legislating Abortion: *Roe vs. Wade*

Before the mid-1800s abortion had been permitted in the United States until the “quickening” of the fetus. In 1845 Massachusetts became the first state to criminalize abortion. By 1910 all states except Kentucky had made abortion a felony, except in cases endangering the woman’s life. In the 1960s pressures were mounting to liberalize abortion laws. Beginning in the late 1960s, fourteen states liberalized their abortion laws to allow cases of mother endangerment, rape, incest, or fetal abnormality. Alaska, Hawaii, New York, and Washington then legalized abortion for all causes in early pregnancy.⁴

Sarah Weddington and Linda Coffee, two graduates of the University of Texas Law School, sought to challenge the constitutionality of the state abortion laws. They needed a woman who could show she had suffered injuries. When they met Norma McCorvey, a poor, divorced, twenty-one-year-old dropout, with a five-year-old daughter, Weddington and Coffee developed a test case for abortion rights on behalf of their plaintiff. They amended their suit to sue on behalf of “all other women similarly situated,” making it a class action suit. The lawsuit contended that “Jane Roe” had suffered injury and that her constitutional rights to privacy had been violated. In 1965, in *Griswold vs. Connecticut*, Justice William O. Douglas had proclaimed a constitutional right to privacy in a case where Planned Parenthood had prescribed contraceptives to a married couple. However, this case had been limited to married couples, not single people.⁵

In March of 1970 Weddington and Coffee filed their suit against Henry Wade, the criminal district attorney for Dallas County, Texas. They were successful in having the Texas abortion law declared unconstitutional, but the Federal District Court refused to enforce it. The lawsuit was appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court and *Roe vs. Wade* was reviewed by the Supreme Court in May of 1971. After much legal battling, the Supreme Court ruled, on January 22, 1973, that: during the first trimester of pregnancy, the decision of abortion is that of a woman and her doctor; during the second trimester, states could regulate abortions in the interests of safeguarding the health of the woman; and in the third trimester, states may limit or ban abortions in the interest of preserving the life of the child.⁶

Religious and Conservative Challenge to Abortion

Abortion immediately became an emotional, controversial, and divisive issue. With the moral, financial, organizational, and political lobbying support of the Catholic Church,

anti-abortion forces focused their efforts on Congress, state legislatures, and health departments, hoping to reverse the Supreme Court decision through an amendment to the United States Constitution that would declare the fetus a person from the moment of conception.⁷ The National Right to Life Committee opened an office in Washington, D.C. In October of 1973 the mail to Congress was running 100-to-1 opposing abortions. Full page ads appeared in newspapers, and anti-abortion groups leafleted the country with publications and pictures of aborted fetuses. Several pieces of legislation were passed by both the House and Senate that limited the effects of the Supreme Court decision. For example, legislation was passed exempting individuals and institutions from being forced to provide abortions if it was against their moral or religious convictions. Pressure was applied to politicians from anti-abortion constituents, and Catholic legislators were subjected to threats to their political futures from Catholic Church hierarchy.⁸

Pro-Choice/Pro-Life

A crucial issue in the politics of abortion was the terminology used by each side in referring to itself. "Pro-abortion" and "Anti-abortion" were rejected in favor of "Pro-choice" and "Pro-life." At the urging of the two sides, these terms were adopted by the press.⁹ Abortion became symbolic of an attitude structure. The pro-choice forces saw the decision of abortion as a woman's right, contending that the fetus was not a viable person. The pro-life supporters emphasized the personhood of the fetus, contending that abortion constituted the murder of a baby. The opposing interpretations represented attitudes toward social changes that were affecting women's roles, family and sexuality, and attitudes toward the social consequences of sexual behavior. Legalizing abortion transformed the meaning of sexuality. No longer was sexuality connected inevitably with pregnancy and motherhood.¹⁰

Two national coalitions developed around abortion concerns. The National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws (NARAL) was the leading pro-choice interest group, and The National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) supported pro-life interests. Besides their stands on abortion, these groups also varied in their support for the traditional family, acceptance of gays, and extramarital sex. Political actions that developed around abortion defended the validity of their general value system to the community.¹¹

Church Response to Abortion

Abortion created both divisions and coalitions between churches. Catholics and evangelicals, including charismatics, fundamentalists, and Pentecostals, were generally pro-life. As Catholics joined with evangelical Protestant denominations in opposing abortion, group identities blurred. Although Roman Catholics and Baptists had been hostile to one another for centuries, feelings about abortion were so strong that they began to work together to oppose it.¹² Mainline Protestants, including Presbyterians, Methodists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, and United Church of Christ were more generally pro-choice. Jews and those of no faith were also generally pro-choice.

Religious organizations with opposing attitudes toward abortion competed to develop morality policies and to lobby in support of their moral perspectives. As conservative churches competed effectively with other citizen groups to influence policy, pro-choice groups were inadvertently strengthened. For instance NARAL had more members in states with larger numbers of Catholics. Abortion attitudes were significant predictors of voting positions; consequently, state abortion policies were found to be strongly influenced by religious determinants.¹³

Abortion created division within churches. Individual members of denominations differed in their willingness to abide by the fundamentals of their faith or the leanings of their leaders. Catholics were divided between pro-choice and pro-life

positions. The abortion proscription was often used as a definition of a "True Catholic"... "Its power to divide members within the church is equivalent to ethical symbols which divide contemporary Protestants."¹⁴ A young unmarried Roman Catholic woman, who received an abortion in San Antonio, Texas said, "I felt like crying. But what I feel now is a great relief... I'm still a Catholic, though. I feel my Church's position on this is wrong. I don't feel I've done anything I have to confess to the priest the next time I go to confession..."¹⁵

Protestant churches were also widely divided on abortion. In 1972 the United Methodist Church General Conference narrowly approved the legalization of abortion. However, church members were widely divided in their support for abortion, and the church's stand on abortion was challenged by Pro-Life segments within the church. When statistics from the Center for Disease Control showed that 50 percent of abortions were the woman's second or more abortion, and reports from Planned Parenthood showed that 90 percent of abortions were done for birth control, the church stand on abortion was challenged by Pro-life segments within the church. In 1988 the General Conference added to the book of discipline the statement, "We cannot affirm abortion as birth control or gender selection."¹⁶ However, the UMC Women's Division continued to promote the goals of the political organization named the "Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice" (RCAR), which the denomination had helped to found in 1975. In 1992 the General Conference voted narrowly to continue support for RCAR.¹⁷ Although UMC officials supported President Clinton's veto of legislation that would have banned partial-birth abortion in 1996, the UMC General Conference of 2000 demonstrated a shift back to right of center by voting 70 percent against partial birth abortion.¹⁸

The Presbyterian Church (USA) also was divided in support for abortion. In 1992 the *Presbyterian Survey* called for essays on the subject of abortion. The 239 responses were

almost evenly divided: 106 supported Pro-Choice and 101 supported Pro-Life.¹⁹

“Jane Roe” Chooses Pro-Life

Norma McCorvey, “Jane Roe” of *Roe vs. Wade*, made the decision to leave the abortion rights movement and help women “save their babies.” In the summer of 1995, she resigned as marketing director of a Dallas women’s clinic and joined the anti-abortion group, Operation Rescue. She was baptized by the fundamentalist leader of the group. She was displeased with the disproportionate emphasis on abortion at the clinic, and what she saw as lies and deception. Although still believing in a need for legal abortion in the first trimester, she said, “I will not support a women’s right to choose a safe and legal abortion in the second trimester...(women) have literally been handed the right to slaughter their own children... I’m pro-life. I think I’ve always been pro-life, I just didn’t know it.” In 1988 McCorvey stated, “It is my sincere prayer that there be no 30th anniversary of *Roe vs. Wade*.”²⁰

Partial Birth Abortion and Fetal Tissue Research

In the late 1990s two other issues, partial birth abortion and the harvesting of fetal tissue for research, created deep concerns and ethical debates. In 1993 President Clinton signed the *National Institutes of Health Revitalization Act*, which lifted the ban on federally funded research involving the transplantation of fetal tissue. Although law prohibits profiting from the sale of human body parts, service fees may be charged. Buying and selling baby body parts became an industry, and Planned Parenthood became a major supplier of fetal parts. Fetuses eighteen to twenty-four weeks, about ten to twelve inches, were preferred by researchers. Fees were established for the different body parts, for example: brain, \$999; livers, \$150; and an intact embryonic cadaver, \$600. Although Congress banned federal

funding of human embryo research in 1996, no laws regulated the medical research of private companies.²¹

Senator Sam Brownback (R-Kansas) brought the issue into perspective,

Clearly, we must continue to fight to help cure disease and alleviate suffering. However, it is never acceptable to deliberately kill one innocent human being in order to help another...At the center of this debate is the question: Is the young human, person or property?²²

Clinton's Vetoes

Congress sent a bill to President Clinton in both 1996 and 2000 that proposed a law banning partial-birth abortion. On both occasions, Clinton vetoed the bill. In April of 1996, following President Clinton's veto, American Cardinals and the president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops sent a strongly worded letter to Clinton condemning his veto of the proposed partial-birth abortion ban. The Catholic leaders wrote, "Mr. President, you and you alone had the choice of whether or not to allow children, almost completely born to be killed brutally..." Noting that their writing in unison was "virtually unprecedented," they "vowed to continue to educate people about the procedure and to urge Congress to override Clinton's 'shameful veto.'"²³

Focus on the Family Responds

James Dobson lamented, "Abortion remains the single most critical moral issue of our day... Some 35 million unborn children have been legally killed since the U.S. Supreme Court's infamous *Roe vs. Wade* decision in 1973."²⁴ The work at Focus on the Family rests on five principles: the sanctity of human life, the preeminence of evangelism, the permanence of marriage, the value of children, and the relationship of church, family, and

government. Tom Neven, writing for Focus on the Family, summarized the concern.

We are witnessing today a shift in the way people view human beings... We are seeing the extinction of the idea that human beings are special and unique in themselves and therefore are specially and uniquely valuable...the doctrine of being created in God's image is no longer valid for a very large portion of our society.²⁵

Homosexuality Confronts the Church

The Scouts' legacy of standing on principle was exemplified in their clash with Dale, who was expelled as a New Jersey troop leader when he publicly announced his homosexuality a decade ago. The organization never wavered in its belief that the morality of its role models cannot be compromised, and the Supreme Court, in the case Boy Scouts of America vs. James Dale, rewarded that perseverance with a 5-4 vote in the Scouts' favor.¹

—Citizen magazine

The struggle between homosexual activists and the churches was dramatically played out at the turn of the millennium when James Dale sued the Boy Scouts. When the trial court rejected Dale's claims, he appealed his case. Both the appeals court and the New Jersey Supreme Court then ruled against the Boy Scouts. The Boy Scouts fought back, appealing the case to the U.S. Supreme Court, where it won by a close vote of 5-4. The Boy Scouts organization argued that leaders communicate moral values through their words and actions, and that the Scout code of moral conduct, to be "clean" and "morally straight," although vague, rejected homosexuals as members or leaders.²

The case was pivotal and closely watched by other organizations. At stake was the right of religious groups to determine the moral content of their faith and to hire leaders in sympathy with their moral values. Various religious groups lined up on differing sides of this volatile decision. The U.S. Catholic Conference, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and the Latter-Day Saints (Mormons) supported the Scouts. The United Church of Christ Board for Homeland Ministries, the Episcopal Diocese of Newark, and the Unitarian-Universalist Association supported Dale.³

The United Methodist Church, which sponsored more scouts than any other religious group, became involved in an internal contradiction as differing agencies of the church took different positions. The General Board of Church and Society supported a brief claiming the Boy Scout policy as discriminatory. However, the United Methodist Men who oversaw the Scouting program argued that they should not be compelled to accept leaders who violate values the Scouts seek to instill. As a denomination, the United Methodist Church denied the right of homosexuals to be ordained as ministers.⁴

Traditional Perspectives Toward Homosexuality

Heterosexuality has been the presumed sexual norm throughout the social institutions of the U.S. Until 1966 homosexual behavior was legally prohibited in every state and continues to be illegal in most states. As late as 1986 the U.S. Supreme Court upheld Georgia's law that makes sodomy punishable by up to twenty years. Marriage between homosexuals was illegal in all states.⁵ In December of 1999 Vermont granted marital benefits to same-sex couples but stopped short of same-sex marriage. In response to pressures by homosexual activists to legalize same-sex marriages, thirty states passed the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which only recognizes a marriage between a man and a woman.⁶ The Judeo-Christian heritage condemns homosexuality as a perversion of God's creation.

Although attitudes vary toward homosexuality, worldwide no society considers exclusive or predominate homosexuality to be the norm. Sociologist Arno Kadin noted, "Like sanctions against incest, adult-child coitus, and rape, the sanction against predominant adult homosexuality is universal." The family consisting of mother, father, and children represents the reproductive unit that carries a society and culture into the next generation. "To tolerate or approve general homosexual behavior would upset this fundamental biologically based arrangement."⁷

Counterculture Challenge

In 1963 concern about the increase in homosexuality prompted the New York Academy of Medicine to address the subject of homosexuality. Noting that some homosexuals were arguing that sexual deviancy is a "desirable, noble, preferable way of life," they issued the following statement

Homosexuality is indeed an illness. The homosexual is an emotionally disturbed individual who has not acquired the normal capacity to develop satisfying heterosexual relations.⁸

The Stonewall riots in Greenwich Village, New York, became a symbol of defiance for the homosexual community. On June 27 of 1969, when police tried to close a small gay bar called the Stonewall Inn, a riot ensued that continued for several days. People began to yell and boo. The police were threatened with rape. Middle-aged homosexuals, transvestites, teenage male prostitutes, a few lesbians, and some passersby joined the riot with marching, singing, and bottle throwing. This demonstration became a rallying point for gay and lesbian organizations. The day continues to be commemorated in many cities with parades and marches, dances, and other events.⁹ The years following the Stonewall riots saw an increase

in homosexuals who came out, pursuing recognition in politics, religion, and other institutions.

An important step in the demands for normalizing homosexual behaviors occurred in the early 1970s. A homosexual faction in the American Psychiatric Association (APA) planned to disrupt the annual meetings of the APA, challenging a paper presentation on homosexuality and transsexualism. The following year the APA agreed to sponsor a special panel led by homosexuals. The Gay Liberation Front planned a demonstration at the meetings. On May 3, 1971, gay activists broke into a meeting, grabbed a microphone, and declared, "Psychiatry has waged a relentless war of extermination against us. You may take this as a declaration of war against you." "In 1973 the APA voted to strike homosexuality from the officially approved list of psychiatric illnesses."¹⁰ Only about one-third of the membership was involved in this decision. A follow-up survey reported that "69 percent of psychiatrists disagreed with the vote and still considered homosexuality a disorder."¹¹ The American Psychological Association voted to follow the lead set by the APA in 1973.

The Jewish psychiatrist Jeffrey Satinover lamented that although psychiatry is presumably a scientific discipline and makes its decisions based on scientific evidence, the changes in definition and classification were determined not by scientific evidence, but rather they were corrupted by politics.¹²

Political pressure again affected decisions of the APA when in 1994 the chairman of the APA's Committee on the Abuse and Misuse of Psychiatry presented to the Board of Trustees a change, making it a "violation of professional conduct for a psychiatrist to help a homosexual patient become heterosexual even at the patient's request."¹³ When the board sent the statement to its legislative body, a fierce battle ensued. Therapists who help homosexuals change and ex-homosexuals threatened to file a lawsuit against the APA and reopen the consideration of the 1973 decision, which removed homosexuality from the list of mental illnesses. However, the Gay and Lesbian

Task Force continued to challenge not only psychiatrists who undertook reparative therapy, but also to challenge psychologists, social workers, pastoral counselors, and ministers.

Between 1973-1994, 34 of 61 cities with a population of 250,000 or more adopted civil rights protection for gays and lesbians, although 4 were repealed by referendum. There was a significant link between urbanization, higher education, and the presence of a large lesbian and gay community.¹⁴

Gay/Lesbian Studies Come to School

A comprehensive survey of sexuality, conducted in 1992 at the University of Chicago, documented that 2.8 percent of men said they were homosexual or bisexual, and 1.4 percent of women defined themselves as lesbian or bisexual.¹⁵ Although homosexuals represented a small minority, they were rapidly influencing American culture. Value shifts occurred in the nation's universities and law schools in support of homosexual rights, away from the legal institutions of marriage.

In the 1980s gay and lesbian studies developed in the universities. The University of San Francisco was the first to offer an undergraduate major in gay/lesbian studies. Yale, Pace, MIT, Cornell, City University of New York (CUNY), Duke, and Temple followed, and gay/lesbian studies are now standard curriculum at many universities. The Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies was established at the CUNY Graduate Center in 1991 with a grant from the Paul Rappoport Foundation, a major supporter of gay/lesbian concerns.¹⁶

In the early 1990s the gay agenda sought to promote tolerance and understanding of the gay/lesbian lifestyles in the public schools, and to normalize the lifestyles in the public perception. Homosexual activists pushed for schools to promote their sexual orientation as equal to heterosexuality through the elementary curriculum entitled *Children of the Rainbow*. The National Education Association promoted material entitled *Affording Equal Opportunity to Gay and Lesbian Students*.¹⁷

Religious groups responded throughout the country to these proposed changes in sex education. Christians, led by the Traditional Values Coalition of Anaheim, California, succeeded in stopping measures that promoted homosexuality. In Pennsylvania, Christian parents sought to neutralize material in a state developed health and sex education curriculum.¹⁸

In 1999 a ninety-minute video, entitled *It's Elementary: Talking About Gay and Lesbian Issues in School* was shown on public broadcasting stations across the country. The video showed elementary grade-level classroom discussions about homosexuality. Young homosexuals informed the students of the five gender orientations: male, female, gay, lesbian, and bisexual. Christian groups protested the airing of this video, which was aimed at normalizing the teaching of homosexuality in the elementary classes. In San Antonio the showing on Public Broadcasting Station KLRN brought organized protest. About 200 protestors picketed KLRN's television station to protest the showing. Their leader, Adam McManus, was angered that KLRN refused to air a response video entitled *Suffer the Children*, which was produced by the American Family Association.¹⁹

Defense of Marriage

Vermont became the first state to recognize homosexual unions in July 2000 . Although not called "marriage," the landmark decision granted about 300 state benefits to same-sex couples, including medical decision making, tax breaks, and inheritance.²⁰ The Vermont decision was a top-down decision by the Vermont Supreme Court, which required that the Vermont legislature either grant marital status or institute a domestic partnership scheme. The strategy of homosexual activists was to travel to Vermont, get "married," return to their home state, and sue for legal recognition.²¹

States made efforts to protect marriage from such an assault. In May of 2000 Colorado became the thirty-fourth state to pass a *Defense of Marriage Act* (DOMA). This act defined legal

marriage, in accordance with federal law, as a union between a man and a woman. In 1998 Alaska and Hawaii took steps to protect the marriage definition from being redefined by judges by passing constitutional amendments. Seventy percent of the voters supported these amendments.

In March of 2000 California voters supported the DOMA by 61 percent.²² In California the Catholic and Mormon churches were in the forefront of the campaign to halt the movement for same-sex marriage. The large Latino Catholic population played a strong role in the California defeat of the homosexual agenda.²³ For several years Catholics had been asking political parties not to support same-sex unions. The bishops stated, "We oppose all policies and legislation which dilute the central place of family and marriage or seek to change their definition...the family is foundational to the well-being of society."²⁴

Homosexual activists sought to engage the federal courts in removing state-law barriers to same-sex marriage, as was done in *Roe vs. Wade* with abortion rights.²⁵ Matt Daniels, the executive director of the Alliance for Marriage, contended that "a constitutional amendment to protect marriage from judicial redefinition may be the only way to save marriage for future generations."²⁶

Southern Baptist Convention/Statement on the Family

The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) passed a *Statement on the Family* in 1998 that supported a strong scriptural perspective on marriage and the family. The resolution included statements that

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society... Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime... The husband and wife are of equal worth before God... The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people... Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord.²⁷

More than 100 Christian leaders and organizations signed in support of the SBC resolution. Among them were Promise Keepers, Christian Coalition, Eagle Forum, National Religious Broadcasters, Prison Fellowship, Focus on the Family, and Campus Crusade for Christ.

Southern Baptists, the largest Protestant denomination with sixteen million members, however, has not been without challenge in its efforts to preserve conservative family values. In 1978 *The Other Side* magazine published an issue dealing with homosexuality, which included groundbreaking articles offering gay and lesbian speakers the opportunity to express their feelings and experiences. *The Other Side* was started in 1965 by Anne and Fred Alexander with the goal of convincing white fundamentalist Baptist Christians to commit to racial reconciliation. Because the oppositional stand made the Alexanders unwelcome in their denomination, they pulled away from the church to follow their own directions. Other interests developed, including working for change in third-world countries, justice education, and the development of study guides on homosexuality, taxes, charitable giving, Native oppression, and models of liberation education. In 1995 the thirtieth anniversary edition of *The Other Side* summarized the mission: "We have sought to revitalize the church, to keep alive the possibility of fundamental change."²⁸

A rebel group within the Baptist denomination, calling itself the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, challenged the conservative stands relating to homosexuality. The Southern Baptist Convention of 2000 was held in Orlando, Florida. The Cooperative Baptists who attended the convention affronted the stands of the church by being housed in Disneyland, which offered them a discount. The main body of Southern Baptists had been boycotting Disneyland for three years because of its "Gay Days."²⁹

Homosexuals Challenge the Churches

Churches were challenged to allow homosexuals to participate without discrimination in church activities and events.

In 1978 a Task Force on Homosexuality submitted a report to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA) recommending that avowed practicing homosexuals be ordained as ministers, ruling elders, and deacons. However, the 1978 General Assembly declared homosexual behaviors contrary to teachings of Scripture, and persons who practiced it could not be ordained.³⁰

Organized elements within the mainline Protestant churches began the systematic push to change thinking related to theological and ethical issues involving sexuality. In 1987 the General Assembly of the PCUSA appointed a seventeen-member committee to develop a study on human sexuality and Presbyterian policies and viewpoints relating to it. The committee was heavily weighted with members who condoned homosexuality. When the study was released, strong and stormy reactions were set off. The report repudiated scriptural morality and proposed legitimizing premarital, extramarital, and homosexual relationships. Marriage was not outlined as the normal prerequisite for sexual behavior. Mutual feelings were to replace fidelity in marriage. Eighty-six petitions for action were filed by Presbyteries across the country, most of which called for rejection of the document.³¹

The Human Sexuality Report was rejected by 94 percent of the delegation in the 1991 PCUSA General Assembly, strongly reaffirming the marital covenant between one man and one woman and the prohibition of ordination of practicing homosexuals.³² Following the vote 200 people marched through the plenary hall expressing support of homosexuality. A committee moderator stated,

We are convinced that the issue raised again by this report will not go away...Some of these are issues on which there is considerable theological and ethical disagreement within the church.³³

In May of 2000 same-sex unions were left open to interpretation when the Permanent Judicial Commission, the highest court of the PCUSA, ruled that local churches were free to bless “same-sex unions” as long as it was understood that it did not constitute marriage. The 2000 General Assembly of the PCUSA overturned the court order by 268-251. The vote was required to go to the denominations’ 173 local presbyteries for possible ratification. The closeness of the vote demonstrated the contentious division within the church.³⁴

Soulforce, Inc.: We Will Split You

Soulforce, Inc. was a roving protest group of multidenominational gays, lesbians, and transgendered persons committed to nonviolent action in support of the liberation of sexual minorities. Their goal was to challenge church doctrines on homosexuality. The organization was founded in 1998 by the Rev. Mel White. White, in the 1980s, co-authored books with Evangelical elites, including Billy Graham, Jerry Falwell, and Pat Robertson. After twenty-five years of trying to “cure” himself of his clandestine homosexuality, the father of two divorced his wife and moved in with his male partner. For six years White studied the tactics of nonviolence taught by Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. He then recruited Gandhi’s grandson, Arun, and King’s daughter, Yolanda, along with several hundred gays, lesbians, and transgendered persons to engage in protests aimed at challenging church doctrines on homosexuality.³⁵

In the summer of 2000, protests were organized to disrupt the general assemblies of the Methodist, Baptist, and Episcopalian denominations. Working with homosexual church activists who had been working in each of the denominations since the 1970s, Soulforce, Inc. staged demonstrations wearing T-shirts lettered with the words THIS DEBATE MUST END—WE ARE GOD’S CHILDREN TOO. White’s attitude toward the denominations is, “We don’t debate

anymore. Change your policies or we're going to split you apart and leave."³⁶ Some gay activists within the churches were concerned that the Soulforce demonstrations would make it more difficult for them to continue their in-church discussions. Said one Episcopalian, "He's just like Falwell in his own way."³⁷

The demonstrations brought fervent opposition from the evangelical forces within the churches. James Heidinger II, publisher of the conservative Methodist journal entitled *Good News*, said, "We don't feel good about outsiders coming in and using intimidation and pressure on our delegates for something that ought to be a family affair."³⁸ Although 1,300 United Methodist clergy had signed a statement supporting covenant ceremonies for homosexual partnerships, the vote by the delegates at the Methodist Conference rejected by a two-thirds majority any effort to alter the denomination's marriage-centered sexual morality or sexual standards for ordination.³⁹ However, by a vote of 78 percent the delegates approved a recommendation not to support the petition that would have directed the Methodist Board of Discipleship to create and implement a denominational program aimed at persons who seek to leave or not start the practice of homosexuality.⁴⁰

Episcopalians were also divided by the debates on homosexuality, both in the United States and within the seventy million-member worldwide Anglican Communion. In 1998 conservative Anglican bishops voted at the one-per-decade Lambeth Conference near Canterbury, England, that homosexual practice was incompatible with Scripture. The sexuality resolution was passed 526 to 70 votes, with 45 abstentions, indicating that a majority of bishops in England, Canada, and the United States voted for the resolution. The Lambeth vote was advisory and not a legal mandate because the Anglican Communion is a loose affiliation of churches without a top-down authority structure. However, the sexuality resolution met official rejection by many American Episcopalians, especially the denomination's ruling left wing. Conservative Episcopalians

formed a reform movement called Concerned Clergy and Laity of the Episcopal Church. Lamenting that the positions of power in the American church are largely held by liberals, they report, "Today, there are two religions in the Episcopal Church, one remains faithful to the biblical truth and received teachings of the Church, while the other rejects them."⁴¹

At the July 2000 General Convention of The Episcopal Church, the most charged debate was that of human sexuality. During the Convention, various outside groups demonstrated, including The Rev. Mel White's Soulforce and the Episcopal gay lobby called Integrity. A proposal for local option to allow each diocese to set its own standards regarding "homosexual unions" failed to pass. A proposal for liturgical rites for non-marital unions was narrowly defeated. However, a resolution passed that "treats marriage as morally equivalent to non-marital sexual relationships...(implying) that there is 'holy love' in extramarital sexual relationships. Married and unmarried alike are admonished to exhibit fidelity in monogamy, mutual affection, and respect, and 'the holy love that enables those in such relationships to see in each other the image of God.'"⁴²

Jewish Perspectives Vary

After the Vermont legislators recognized same-sex union in the eyes of the law, Reform Jewish rabbis sanctioned such unions. Although homosexuality is called an abomination in the Torah, Reform Jews do not interpret it literally. Reform Judaism, representing 1.5 million people, became the largest religious denomination in the country to sanction such unions.⁴³

However, Orthodox Jews, who took the scriptural admonitions more seriously, did not share the liberal perspectives toward homosexuality. Dr. Laura Schlessinger, a convert to Orthodox Judaism and the person behind the most-listened-to radio talk show in the late 1990s, became popular with Protestants, Catholics, Mormons, Muslims, and unchurched conservatives for her bold attacks on her show against "liberal

immorality,” including abortion, promiscuity, and homosexuality.⁴⁴ Dr. Laura believed she had a personal assignment from God, “And my job was basically to bring ethics—God’s decision of what’s moral, because God decides what’s moral...that’s what I’m supposed to be doing.”⁴⁵ Gay activists campaigned against the talk show. Hardcore activists even threatened Dr. Laura’s life with a sign, “Dead bigots can’t hate.”⁴⁶

The Debate on Reparative Therapy

While the churches struggled with inclusion of the gay and lesbian lifestyle, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) was meeting challenges to its assertion that counselors should refrain from helping homosexuals change their sexual orientation. Psychiatrist Robert L. Spitzer had drafted the APA proposal that declassified homosexuality as a mental disorder. At the age of sixty-eight, he rebelled against the advocacy of homosexuality and proposed a symposium on reparative therapy, contending that mental health professionals had abandoned homosexuals who were attempting to change their sexual orientation. After former homosexuals picketed a 1999 APA meeting, Dr. Spitzer talked to numerous ex-gays. Spitzer had a radical change of mind about the possibility of homosexuals changing their orientation. He proposed and organized a symposium on reparative therapy to be held at the 2000 Convention of the APA. However, his planned symposium was canceled at the last minute in favor of “political correctness.” Dr. Spitzer and a number of ex-gay leaders organized a protest and press conference at the Chicago Convention Center, where the APA meetings were being held. The demonstration featured dozens of people who had benefitted from reparative therapy.⁴⁷

In the mid 1990s professionals concerned about the APA retreat from therapy for homosexuals formed the National Association for Research and Treatment of Homosexuality (NARTH) to serve as an alternative to APA and a referral service for homosexual clients. By 2000 the membership was over

1,000. Many other groups were also active in developing effective seminars and educational sessions for homosexuals desiring to become heterosexual. Many homosexuals had “come out” of the gay/lesbian lifestyle, and many were happily married with children. Some groups involved in reparative therapy included: Exodus International North America, Focus on the Family, Evergreen International, and Transforming Congregations.⁴⁸

Teaching Tolerance for Homosexuality Is Criticized

In 1991 an educational program called *Teaching Tolerance* was developed and distributed by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), under the direction of Morris Dees. Dees, a Baptist lawyer, had organized SPLC in 1971 to confront the discrimination of white supremacy. By the Spring of 2000, 300,000 teaching kits had been distributed free of charge to schools and community organizations.

When *Teaching Tolerance* included tolerance for homosexual lifestyles and behaviors in its materials from early childhood education through high school, many Christian educators who otherwise supported the tolerance program objected. An editorial in the Spring 2000 issue noted this criticism.

The most consistent criticism this magazine receives comes from educators who identify themselves as Christian and object to our treatment of gay and lesbian issues. One recent letter read: “All people, by virtue of their humanity, deserve caring and respect, regardless of their color, actions or associations... But for schools and teachers to teach that the gay lifestyle is acceptable... is to trespass on the religious freedom of parents and families who may wish to pass on the values of their faith.”⁴⁹

Pornography Confronts the Church

Abercrombie & Fitch's quarterly catalog is filled with sex advice, alcoholic recipes, and naked coeds... Judiciously tucked in amongst the hedonism are lots and lots of casual clothing bearing the Abercrombie & Fitch logo.¹

—Jeff Hooten

Advertisements have long used provocative women and sultry men to sell products from cars to cigarettes. Even so, companies such as Calvin Kline and Abercrombie & Fitch (A&F) moved beyond demure sexual images of men and women to involve teens and even children in sexually suggestive images and situations. A&F's 1998 back-to-school catalog included an article entitled "Drinking 101," complete with recipes for cocktails with names such as "orgasm" and "Dirty Girl Scout Cookies." The Christmas catalog listed party games with "names like 'Strip Yahtzee,' 'Porno Celebrity,' and 'Naked Twister,' along with photos of a naked young man climbing onto a lakeside dock, a topless young woman riding an elephant, and another nude male in bed with four female companions."² A&F operates 200 stores across the country, mostly in malls. A mother of three who was protesting the A&F catalog outside a

Boston-area mall with other parents complained, "It's the 12- and 13-year-old kids who are going in there. The message this sends is that it's okay for young teenagers to be having sex."³

Advocates of free speech proclaimed that all ideas should be allowed free expression. They said it was the parents' responsibility to monitor what their children saw or read. As a parent, I found this to be an impossible dream, or rather a nightmare. To accomplish this would require being a social hermit or cutting off all contacts with the world. Blatant sexuality was everywhere. The media even brought every conceivable sexual image into the living room of our home. Our children were teens in the 1980s. For several years our elder son walked around the house listening to music through earphones. Unaware of the changes in moral tone that had taken place in music, I thought little of it. When I became aware of the suggestive content of much of the popular music, especially heavy metal music, and the fascination that it had on youth, I was deeply troubled. The music of bands such as Black Sabbath, AC/DC, Megadeath, and White Zombie focused on death, rape, murder, violence, and kinky sex. Respect for authority, society, or even life itself was strangely lacking. The sexual and violent images created a subculture of social deviancy. Youth who had little parental supervision and guidance could easily be led into delinquency.

MTV added vivid images of sex and violence to the music. When I came into our TV room one afternoon, where our children were watching MTV, I was astonished to see on the screen the popular star Madonna sexually writhing indiscreetly on the floor in her underwear. On her ears and around her neck dangled crosses. The moral incongruity startled and troubled me. I didn't take a vote or ask permission, but immediately switched off the television, explaining that this was not welcome in our home.

Behavior is not formed in a vacuum. Behavior develops from the images we form in our minds. It is a truism that we

become the images we form in our mind. Behavior is first imagined before it is enacted. Children have neither the experience nor the maturity to evaluate extreme images that are presented to them.

It is a responsibility of every society to train children in the way they should go so they will be responsible citizens. Television and music industries were projecting into the minds of children images that parents were unable to control or monitor. These images were often tantamount to mental rape or sexual child abuse. It was quite strange that while other businesses were being held accountable for pollution of the waterways and air, there was no accountability for cultural and moral pollution.

Pornography Is Big Business

Pornography is profitable to an extensive network of people. Profits from pornography cover home mortgage payments, car payments, and grocery bills for many Americans. Included as the beneficiaries of the pornographic industry are writers, publishers, actors, film makers, video and bookstores, theaters, cable TV, corner newsstands, supermarket chains, banks, financiers, and, now with the Internet, AOL and Compuserve.⁴ In June of 1999 *Forbes* magazine contended that the mainstreaming of pornography had developed into a \$56 billion business that continued to grow rapidly. According to *Forbes*, X-rated videos brought in \$5 billion dollars in 1999. The production of hardcore videos exploded from 1,275 videos in 1990 to 8,948 in 1998.⁵

However, what benefits some is offensive to many. Criminal Justice statistics document that in 1996, 38 percent of Americans thought pornography should be illegal for everyone, and 58 percent thought it should be illegal for persons under eighteen. Only 3 percent agreed that it should be legal for everyone. Portrayals of sex with children created the greatest concern. Difficulty arises in defining what is pornographic.

What constitutes pornography is ambiguous and controversial. Females, whites, older people, Protestants, and those having only a high school education were most supportive of bans on pornography, while males, African Americans, college graduates, younger people, and Jews were least likely to support restrictions on the distribution of pornography.⁶

The Government Addresses Pornography

The landmark decision of the U.S. Supreme Court, entitled *Roth vs. U.S.*, outlined guidelines for pornographic materials in 1957. Material was considered pornographic or obscene when, taken as a whole, it appealed to “prurient interest” in sex, when it affronted “contemporary community standards,” and when it was “utterly without redeeming social value.”⁷ Because these guidelines were vague and ambiguous, they were interpreted in different ways. Prosecutors had difficulty obtaining convictions. In 1973 the Supreme Court, in *California vs. Miller*, refined the guidelines, keeping the “prurient interest” theme, redefining community standards as the local community, and removing the criterion of “redeeming social value.”⁸

Concern over the corrupting influence of pornography drew government investigations. In 1967 President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed a National Commission on Obscenity and Pornography. After three years of research, the commission concluded that the real problem was “the inability or reluctance of people in our society to be open and direct in dealing with sexual matters.” In 1970 an additional government-funded project, the U.S. Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, concluded, “(We) find no evidence that exposure to or the use of sexually explicit material plays a significant role in the causation of social or individual harms.”⁹

Pornography increased during the 1970s and 1980s, and some sixteen years later President Reagan appointed another commission, under the direction of Attorney General Edwin Meese, to further study the problems related to pornography.

After intensive investigation and testimony, the Meese Commission concluded there was a positive link between rape and pornography by making rape seem legitimate. Males exposed to pornography became desensitized to the worth of the victims.¹⁰ Prominent members on this committee included Dr. James Dobson of Focus on the Family and Rev. Donald Wildmon of the American Family Association.

Feminists Confront Pornography

Feminists contended that pornography victimized women by degrading them in society. Research conducted by Debbie Then at Stanford University's School of Business Administration confirmed that soft porn affects the views of men who view pornography. Men enrolled in the school were asked to name their favorite men's magazine. *Playboy* came first, with *Penthouse* a close second. Half of the men commented that the magazines undermined their relationships with women by setting unrealistic physical standards. They were especially critical of overweight women. Gary Brooks, author of *The Centerfold Syndrome*, says that "the results are easy to believe because boys are socialized in similar ways. We all become visually addicted when we're bombarded by images of semi-clad women."¹¹

Some feminists made a clear distinction between erotica and pornography. Gloria Steinem, in the November 1978 issue of *Ms.* magazine said, "Erotica is about sexuality, but pornography is about power and sex-as-weapon. In the same way we have come to understand that rape is about violence, and not really about sex at all. Erotica is sexual expression between people who have enough power to be there by positive choice."¹² Robin Morgan summarized the concerns about pornography, saying, "Pornography is the theory and rape is the practice."¹³ In response to charges of censorship, to which feminists are generally opposed, the charge of cultural pollution was argued. "Just as an EPA report of air pollution need not imply closing down the factory, or a diagnosis of alcoholism

does not imply prohibition, a diagnosis of cultural pollution due to pornography does not imply censorship.”¹⁴

Characteristics of Sexual Addiction

Stephen Arterburn, co-director of the New Life Clinics and author of *Addicted to Love*, studied sexual addictions. He found that sexual addiction, like drug addiction, is an attempt to deaden pain and overcome loneliness, anxiety, rejection, and fear. The pleasure of the sexual encounter becomes an antidote to the stresses and pressures of life. Sexual addiction parallels other addictions in building tolerance, requiring greater stimulation, developing obsessive-compulsive behavioral patterns, producing withdrawal symptoms, and producing shame.¹⁵

A number of characteristics set addictive sex apart from normal sexual desire and conduct. Addictive sex is secretive and done in isolation. It is self-centered, devoid of interpersonal relationships and intimacy. The addict becomes blinded to the harmful effects his behaviors have on others. Rather than being an experience that ends in shared fulfillment, addictive sex ends in despair and guilt. A sense of emptiness may leave a feeling of abandonment and helplessness.¹⁶

Sexual addiction escalates, moving to progressively more destructive levels. Early levels of involvement include sexual fantasy, the use of pornography and masturbation. Progressing to the next level involves visits to bars featuring live pornography, nude dancing, the use of fetishes, sexual touching, sex with multiple partners and affairs. Involvements escalate to minor criminal offenses, including prostitution, voyeurism, and exhibitionism. Addictive behavior then pulls the sex addict into felony behaviors with severe legal consequences, including molestation, incest, and rape.¹⁷

The clinical psychologist Dr. Victor Cline, who treated hundreds of sex offenders who had intensive exposure to pornography, also found an escalating four-step pattern that explained their pathology. The addict first gets hooked on

materials that provide an exciting aphrodisiac. The addiction escalates to a need for more sexually shocking material. The addict becomes desensitized as the gross and taboo become the commonplace, then a tendency to act out the sexual fantasies results.¹⁸

Sexual addiction is about lust not love. It involves short-lived emotions and hormones that focus on any available target. The origins of sex addiction often grow out of childhood experiences, including family dysfunction, abandonment, and physical and sexual abuse. Studies have estimated that 80 percent of sex addicts may have suffered sexual abuse in childhood.¹⁹

Research by Dr. James L. McGaugh suggested that memories of sexually arousing experiences become locked in the brain by the chemical epinephrine, making them difficult to forget. The person becomes the images formed in the mind. Masturbating to fantasies leads to acting out with willing or unwilling victims. Crime reports of the Michigan State Police document the use of pornography in 41 percent of the 38,000 cases of sexual assault.²⁰

Before his execution, the serial killer, Ted Bundy, said, "I have lived in prison a long time now and I've met a lot of men who were motivated to violence just like me. And without exception, every one of them was deeply involved in pornography, without a question, deeply influenced and consumed by an addiction to pornography."²¹

The Rev. Donald E. Wildmon Tackles Social Pornography

One night in December of 1976, The Rev. Donald E. Wildmon flipped through the TV channels and was unable to find even one show that didn't feature sex, violence, or profanity. Taking this as a call from God to fight for cleaner television, he resigned his ministry with the United Methodist Church to establish the National Federation for Decency (NFD). In 1980 his 1,410-member organization joined with the Reverend Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority in a campaign to boycott TV networks

and advertisers that supported sexually oriented and violent programming. The new coalition, the Coalition for Better Television, represented 3 million people who were prepared to boycott the advertisers who sponsored the worst programs on television, rated on the basis of sex incidents per hour, scenes of violence, and profanity.²²

The networks fought back with an opinion poll that showed that the public opposed the boycott, contending that only 1.3 percent of respondents said they would back the boycott. In 1981 Falwell was having second thoughts. A survey showed that his followers would not necessarily support a boycott. The Moral Majority resigned from the boycott, taking with them their \$2 million of support. With the withdrawal of the Moral Majority, the Coalition for Better Television was ineffective, and after a failed boycott, it lapsed. Nonetheless Wildmon's NFD, continued the fight against indecency in the media by boycotting chain stores that sold *Playboy* and *Penthouse* magazines. In 1986 the Southland Corporation announced that it was removing *Playboy* and *Penthouse* magazines from its 4,500 stores. Many smaller chains followed its lead.²³

Wildmon received national prominence in 1985 when he was appointed to serve on the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography under the direction of Edwin Meese. At a public hearing Wildmon told the Meese Commission that more than twenty-two major corporations were also involved in pornography distribution, including CBS, Time, Ramada Inns, and chain and video stores.

Wildmon's NFD encountered financial problems in 1987. The sex scandal related to the TV evangelist Jim Bakker hurt funding for organizations that depended on evangelical Christians. Wildmon closed the NFD and formed the American Family Association (AFA) to continue the efforts begun by the NFD. The AFA organized protests in seven cities directed against the film *The Last Temptation of Christ*. With this moral momentum, the AFA showed an income of over \$5 million from

contributions and gifts in its first year. Wildmon continued to challenge advertisers who supported shows in “poor taste.”²⁴

During the 1990s the monthly *AFA Journal* continued to publicize the organization’s campaign against pornography. Pornography Awareness Week was sponsored as an annual event in the fall to raise public awareness for the victims of rape, pornography, incest, child molestation, and sexual addiction. Information packets were made available to help local communities become involved in the White Ribbon Campaign Against Pornography. The white ribbon symbolized purity.²⁵

Each issue of the *AFA Journal* contained articles listing offensive programming and the names of companies that supported these programs through advertising. “A total of 86 percent of all sex presented on prime-time programming on ABC, CBS, NBC, and FOX is depicted outside marriage”... “AFA’s Dirty Dozen: The score is based on the average number of sex, violence, and profanity incidents sponsored per 30-second commercial aired.”²⁶ “Retail companies which profit from pornography: the leading retailers of pornography—K-mart, Circle K...the leading retailers of motel-in-room porn movies—Holiday Inn, Hilton, and Hyatt... The leading advertisers in porn magazines—Phillip Morris, Nabisco...”²⁷

“A study of pornography on computer information networks... discovered that 917,410 explicit images, including child pornography and other perversions were available.”²⁸ The AFA also offered intensive outpatient counseling and workshops for individuals who were affected directly and indirectly by sexual addiction. “Christ-centered” therapy was offered both to individuals and to couples.²⁹

Porno Sprawl and Strip Club Victims

A phenomenon called porno sprawl describes the spreading of pornographic strip clubs into the suburbs, rural communities, and small towns. Mr. Scott Berghold, the executive director of the Community Defense Counsel (CDC), represented 700 small

to mid-sized cities in their fight against porno sprawl. Pornographic websites have aided the growth of strip clubs, because people who become addicted to sex look for a place to act on it. CDC found allies among the women who sought to escape from the glittery lifestyle of the sex industry. Dallas ex-stripper, Amy Dupree, joined with CDC to file a class action suit against Dallas area strip clubs. Dupree had been a traveling "feature dancer" making \$100,000 a year. However, the anger and pain associated with the pressure to engage in lewd acts troubled her. After stopping at the Preston Road Church of Christ in Dallas for advice, she decided to leave the sex industry and help other women do so also. She formed a counseling and support group called Amy's Friends, which met at the Preston Road Church. Over a two-year period the group helped thirty women escape the sex industry. Using biblical resources and a framework similar to Alcoholics Anonymous, the women affirmed, "We embrace our powerlessness and we stop pretending." Nationwide at least nine groups were dedicated to helping women escape strip clubs.³⁰

Northern Indiana was alerted to the dangers of strip clubs when victims of pornography advertised on black-and-red billboards along the highways that read, "Strip Bars and Pornography Victimize Women and Children." More than 300 churches became involved when Vickie Burgess of the American Family Association asked pastors to distribute invitations to a community rally. Over 700 people came to hear an ex-stripper expose the dangers in the local strip clubs. Following her talk the Fort Wayne city council announced plans to hire the CDC.³¹

The Growth of Internet Porn

Dr. James Dobson was concerned that the rapid growth of the Internet, along with neglect from the Clinton administration, had created a boom in pornographic material that was available even to children. The Center for Missing and

Exploited Children conducted a survey that indicated that one of four children (ages 10-17) was exposed to Internet pornography the previous year. Noting that the Attorney General, Janet Reno, had refused to enforce laws that target even the worst type of illegal pornography, Dobson contended that the next president, the Justice Department, and Congress should work together to protect children from the harmful images online. He argued that schools and libraries should be required to filter out pornography.³²

On December 15, 2000, Congress passed the *Children's Internet Protection Act* by a vote of 292 to 60. President Clinton signed the bill into law a week later. The new law mandated that schools and libraries receiving federal monies must use Internet filtering software to protect children from pornography beginning the following year. Schools and libraries would lose federal funding if they failed to certify to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) that they had chosen technology that filtered or blocked access to obscene or pornographic materials. School and library administrators were free to choose a system that best suited their community standards.³³

The ACLU vowed to challenge the law in court, contending that filtering programs significantly reduced the diversity of available speech and information. Supporters of the law, however, said that the law was drafted to be sure it was constitutional, and that it could withstand a court challenge. Senator John McCain, one of the sponsors of the bill, said,

Parents can protect their children from Internet smut at home but have no control over the computers at school. This legislation allows local communities to decide what technology they want to use and what to filter out, so that our children's minds aren't polluted.³⁴

Divorce Confronts the Church

I take thee to be my wedded husband/wife to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, or worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance: and thereto I pledge thee my faith.

Vows similar to those above have been and continue to be the traditional promises made in the marriage ceremonies of most Christian churches. However, between the years 1960 and 2000 divorce rose from rare to routine, even among those who called themselves biblically based Christians. For Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists, one in four marriages ended in divorce. For Lutherans and Roman Catholics, one in five marriages succumbed to divorce.¹ Although Christians hold marriage to be a covenantal relationship, their success rate did not differ significantly from the rest of society. The secular divorce culture dominated over the biblical matrimonial culture.

When our daughter graduated from the University of Texas in 1988, she said to me, "Mom, of all my friends, you and Dad are almost the only parents who are still married to each other." I realized at that moment the incredible changes that

the sexual revolution had effected in only one generation. Children born following the advent of the volatile 60s were raised with a social atmosphere and marital and family expectations far different from previous generations. The assumptions about expected and appropriate sexual and family patterns had been “stood on its head.”

Normalization of Divorce

In 1993, in his book, *World Changes in Divorce Patterns*, W. J. Goode argued that divorce should be normalized and institutionalized. Many Christian congregations and organizations accepted divorce and remarriage as normal. As the culture increasingly embraced divorce and remarriage as expected and normal, not only “unhappy marriages” ended in divorce, but more and more marriages became unhappy.²

Divorce is usually a painful decision and a painful process accompanied by anger, anxiety, and anguish as hopes and dreams for the future are extinguished. Support networks and relationship ties with friends and family are interrupted, often creating permanent separations. The processes of divorce are complex, taking place on many levels. Emotional disengagement and legal decisions on property settlement and child custody must be accomplished at the same time that new community and personal identities are forged.³ Why did behavior that causes so much grief and is so contrary to traditional church doctrine become so popular?

Social Legislation: From Family to Individual

Until the 1960s social legislation relating to family law focused on the creation of a social status with rights and responsibilities in regard to spouse, parent, and child. The marriage and family relationships were outlined as a social institution. A spouse wishing to change his or her social status through divorce faced obstacles in proving the necessity of the social change. To leave a marriage a person was required to

prove egregious wrongdoing on the part of the spouse. In 1888 the Supreme Court stated:

Marriage is more than a mere contract. The consent of the parties is of course essential to its existence, but when the contract to marry is executed by the marriage, a relation is created between the parties which they cannot change.⁴

In contrast, the modern era was moving away from social status to an emphasis on personal contract in which individuals decided their own terms of relationship.⁵ Social organizations, including child care centers, schools, hospitals, businesses, churches, and government agencies, were assuming many of the functions previously performed predominantly by the family.

In 1960 the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws developed a model for state legislatures to consider called *The Uniform Marriage and Divorce Act*. Fault was eliminated as a necessity for divorce. An individual could petition for divorce on the grounds of “irretrievable breakdown,” regardless as to whether the other spouse agreed.⁶ California established the first no-fault divorce law in 1970. Within ten years most states had developed some form of no-fault divorce law, and soon all fifty states had adopted no-fault divorce laws. Fault was eliminated as grounds for divorce, eliminating the legal adversarial process. Settlements were based on equity, equality, and need rather than fault or gender. Limitations were placed on alimony, assuming that a woman would work. The husband was no longer considered solely responsible for support.⁷

The change in social legislation created changes in social acceptance of divorce. Without the consideration of fault, the stigma connected with divorce was reduced, leading to decreased social disapproval. Increased social focus on the rights of indi-

viduals emphasized personal feelings and personal decision above social responsibility. Romantic images in the media portrayed feelings as more important than commitment to a relationship. As the sexual revolution advanced in the 1960s, the new sexual norms were creating greater availability for sex outside of marriage. The increase in industrial housekeeping services, including food establishments, laundry facilities, and cleaning services further reduced the functions of the family unit.⁸

Social Consequences of Divorce

Following the establishment of no-fault divorce laws, the number of divorces increased rapidly. In 1970 four million Americans had divorced. By the year 2000 the number had grown to twenty-two million.⁹ The statistics held different interpretations. Couples in troubled and abusive relationships had the opportunity to leave an unhealthy marriage and start over again. However, a damaging consequence of the no-fault divorce laws was the downward social mobility of many women and children. After divorce, women were primarily responsible for the children of the marriage, and consequently were at greater risk of poverty. Some who studied marriage and the family noted,

More than a third of middle-income women and a quarter of upper-income women find themselves needing welfare following divorce. The majority of single mothers become poor as a result of their marital disruption.¹⁰

Children suffer in a divorce in many ways. Besides losing the nurturing presence of a parent, a study by the Census Bureau found that children could expect to become 37 percent poorer following the divorce of their parents. Fewer than half the children surveyed (44 percent) received child support from their fathers after the divorce. The study, entitled *Family Disruption and Economic Hardship: The Short-Run Picture for Children*, followed the progress of 200 families for three years,

beginning in 1983. The families were drawn randomly, as a representative sample of the larger population. The findings showed that following a family breakup the percentage of children living in poverty increased from 19 percent to 36 percent; the number of children receiving food stamps increased from 10 percent to 27 percent; and the number of children in families receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children doubled from 9 percent to 18 percent.¹¹

Research by Dr. Judith Wallerstein documented the emotional effects of divorce on children. In her book *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce: A 25 Year Landmark Study*,¹² Wallerstein noted that one in four adults is a child of divorce. She stated that the effects of divorce on children accumulate over time, getting worse instead of better. Children were thought to be able to work through the issues of divorce by late adolescence; indeed, her research showed that the consequences of divorce were more complex and far reaching. Adult children of divorce lacked a healthy model of marital partnership, while children from intact marriages took strength from their parent's decision to stay together. The positive experiences of childhood were not cited by children of divorce.

Divorce also hindered higher education for children because child support payments ended in most states when a child reached eighteen. Only 30 percent of fathers of divorced children contributed to college expenses compared with 90 percent of children from intact families who had fathers who helped with the costs of college expenses.¹³

Bible Belt Breakups

In 1999 the national average for divorce in the United States was 4.2 per 1,000 population. However, the probability for divorce was not evenly distributed. Nevada was the state with the highest rate of divorce at 8.5 per 1000. Massachusetts had the lowest rate with 3 per 1,000. Also leading the nation in divorce, with rates of 6 per 1,000, were the so-called Bible Belt

states, the Southern states with the most evangelical Christians, including Tennessee, Arkansas, Alabama, and Oklahoma.¹⁴

Many churches failed to prepare their followers for life-long marriage. In 1999 the Barna Research Group released data which found that professing Christians had divorce rates higher than the general population, including atheists and agnostics. Christians describing themselves as “born again” had a divorce rate of 27 percent, compared to 24 percent of the general population. Christians in the Bible Belt were particularly vulnerable to divorce. Dr. Rick Perrin, senior pastor of Cornerstone Church in Columbia, S.C., contended that “antinomianism” explained this problem. This theology contends that

once we are justified by faith in Christ, we no longer have an obligation to the moral law, because Christ freed us from that. We are not bound by the law, but rather led by the Holy Spirit which God gives us as a guide...we often discern God’s direction by asking: “Will it make me happy?”... This is a discipleship of self-fulfillment rather than self-sacrifice, a pursuit of happiness rather than holiness.¹⁵

The divorces and marriage of the Christian music megastar, Amy Grant, and Nashville country crooner, Vince Gill, exemplified the justifications of personal fulfillment. Grant recalled her counselor’s words,

Amy, God made marriage for people. He didn’t make people for marriage... He provided this so that people could enjoy each other to the fullest. I say if you have two people that are not thriving healthily in a situation, I say remove the marriage.¹⁶

Dr. Albert Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, claimed that churches had failed to prepare members for marriage because their “leaders

have lost the theology of marriage.” He said that divorce redefined marriage by failing to recognize the integrity and sanctity of the marriage covenant. Mohler contended that if evangelical church leaders continued to redefine the marriage covenant in regard to divorce, they would be unable to defend marriage against same-sex marriage and other redefinitions of the marriage relationship. He noted that it is essential that Christians be able to “explain why marriage really matters theologically, why maleness and femaleness have real meaning and how marriage is God’s way of completing these two sides of humanity.”¹⁷

Robin Meyers, a liberal clergy from Oklahoma, contended that the rigid dogma of evangelicals creates a fairy tale conception of marriage that leaves the marriage partners unable to deal with the real problems that arise in marriage. Stewart Beasley, president of the Oklahoma Psychological Association, said that evangelicals place the husband as the spiritual head of the family, creating a moral crisis for women. He argued that the teaching of no sex before marriage encourages younger marriage before the couple may be ready for a committed relationship.¹⁸

Countering these arguments, Gene Edward Veith¹⁹ identified studies showing that conservative Christianity contributes to strong marriage and that religious people tend to be more satisfied with their marriage and their sexual relationships than people who are not religious. These studies showed that sex before marriage correlated to higher rates of divorce. Sex before marriage related to a 71 percent higher divorce rate for women. Couples who cohabited before marriage were 50 percent more likely to divorce.

Backlash and State Response to High Divorce Rates

In 1997 a CNN poll, reported in *Time* magazine²⁰, documented a public backlash to the high divorce rates. In response to the question, “Do you believe it should be harder than it is now for married couples to get a divorce?” 50 percent of respondents replied “Yes.” To the question, “Should it be harder than

it is now for married couples with young children to get a divorce?" 61 percent replied "Yes."²¹

State governments sought ways to build up marriages and reduce the number of divorces. Oklahoma governor, Frank Keating, encouraged clergymen, lawyers, psychologists, and academics in a campaign to reduce the divorce rate by one-third over a ten year period.²² In 1997 Louisiana began offering a new kind of marriage commitment that allowed a couple to choose either a regular marriage or a covenant marriage.

A covenant marriage requires both parties to agree that, before they ever seek a divorce, they will turn to marriage counseling. They also agree that they will not divorce unless one partner commits adultery, abandons the other for at least a year, becomes a drug or alcohol abuser, assaults the partner or a child, or is sent to prison for a serious crime. What spouses who select a covenant marriage cannot do is walk away from each other simply because they no longer want to stay married.²³

Churches in these states responded by making the protection of marriage and the prevention of divorce a priority. The Southern Baptist Convention, required clergy to ensure that couples take a marriage preparation course. Anthony Jordan, executive director of Oklahoma's Southern Baptist Convention said, "In the name of being loving and accepting, we have not placed the stigma on divorce that we should have."²⁴

Church Response: Liberal Accomodation

Church organizations and church members responded in different ways to the changing societal norms related to marriage and divorce. The Unitarian Church took an accepting view on divorce. In a book entitled *Celebrating Life*, the church offered a ceremony recognizing the end of a marriage.

Each partner affirms:

"I confess to God and to you that I have hurt you and caused you pain, and that I have not been able to fulfill my marriage promise to you."

The spouse responds:

"I forgive you, may God also forgive you."

The minister then states:

"You are now a free person and may marry again if you wish. May you find peace and happiness."²⁵

After affirming to care for the children of the marriage, each spouse wishes the other well.

The Unitarian ceremony resembled the Jewish traditions of divorce. Divorce has been accepted in Judaism as a way of life for thousands of years, maintaining that it is better to divorce than to live in a state of bitterness. The concepts of the modern no-fault divorce practices can be recognized in Jewish law, where a man can divorce a woman for any reason or no reason. According to the Torah, divorce is accomplished by writing a bill of divorce, commonly called a "get," and handing it to the woman. In some cases of misconduct, the man is required to pay the wife a substantial amount of money. After receiving a get, the woman is free to marry again. A civil divorce is not sufficient to end a Jewish marriage. In Jewish law the couple remains married until the woman receives the get. If a woman remarries without receiving a get, she is considered to be living in adultery, and her children are considered illegitimate.²⁶

The United Methodist Church accommodated divorce as a regrettable alternative "when a married couple is estranged beyond reconciliation." In the outline of *Social Principles* published in the *Book of Discipline*, the church acknowledged that "divorce publicly declares that a marriage no longer exists." The church urges mediation to minimize adversary and faultfinding, provide respectful negotiations in regard to minor children, and compassionate ministry "to those in the process of divorce, as well as members of divorced and remarried families." "Divorce does not preclude a new marriage."²⁷

Church Response: Crisis in Leadership and Conservative Backlash

In the modern easy divorce culture, the Roman Catholic Church continued to reaffirm marriage as one of the seven sacraments of the church, even though one in five Catholics had divorced. The sacramental state occurs when two baptized people freely exchange marriage vows. The Catholic Church continued to proclaim Christ's teachings on the indissolubility of marriage. Couples that lived apart were not free to remarry, and a person who divorced and remarried was considered to be living in adultery, a state of mortal sin. The sacramental bond of marriage could only be changed by an ecclesiastical court annulment declaring that the marriage was invalid.²⁸

Jack Hayford, an internationally recognized senior church statesman and founding pastor of The Church of the Way in Van Nuys, California, contended that in regard to divorce, the church was at a point of crisis. He noted that failed marriages were evident in the leadership of the church across the spectrum, including renowned evangelical preachers, charismatics, evangelists, national youth leaders, and Christian TV superstars. He decried the high level of marital breakdown of Christian marriages. Contending that "Sheep follow shepherds," he stated that too many churches fail to apply biblical standards for leadership that include marital commitment and moral fidelity. Urging a renewed commitment to marriage and clearer teaching from leaders, Hayford said, "This is not a call to legalism, but a call from a growing sloppiness called 'grace in the name of love,' but without love's commitment or grace's power."²⁹

In an editorial in the conservative news magazine *World*, Joel Belz contended that "God's people need to resist divorce when it is threatened... God's people...ought to be showing to all the world a really distinctive picture of marriage and the family...God...forgives divorced men and women, but as long as the church equates divorce with...cheating on your diet,

God's people will be just as devastated as the rest of society."³⁰ Belz argued that few churches take any action other than to wring their hands, acquiesce, and go along. Belz offered an extreme solution contending that when one partner simply deserts another, the officers of the church need to assume their authority by identifying the guilty party, publicly proclaiming their responsibility in the marital breakdown, and possibly separating that person from the church. He argued that embarrassment may prompt others to think twice before divorcing. He argued also that churches should be careful about welcoming into membership those who have walked away from marital vows.

Peter Toon, writing for the Prayer Book Society of the Episcopal Church, said that a major countercultural effort is needed to demonstrate God's expectations for matrimony and family life.

As the divorce culture is the result of a social revolution occurring in the 1950s and 1960s, so a Christian matrimonial culture within conservative churches will also be the result of a revolution in terms of hearing and obeying God's gracious word in 1999 and 2000. Let the revolution begin.³¹

Toon argued that the process of renewal and obedience should begin with the clergy, and a specific date should be set where no divorced person should be ordained.

The American Family Association Launches *Marriage Savers*

If a disease were to afflict the majority of a populace; spreading pain and dysfunction throughout all age groups, we would be frantically searching for reasons and solutions. Yet this particular scourge has become so endemic that it is virtually ignored. The scourge is

divorce, an oddly neglected topic in a nation that has the worst record of broken marriages in the entire world.

Divorce is a “root problem” in our country and is the cause of any number of other social ills.³²

In July of 1994 the American Family Association (AFA) launched a campaign to save marriages. Resources were developed and made available to churches to help America’s churches make a difference in the national divorce trends. The *Marriage Savers Resource Collection* included six videos, two books and a leaders’ guide based on research by columnist Mike McManus. McManus argued:

The church itself is part of America’s divorce problem. Three-fourths of all American marriages are blessed by pastors, priests, and rabbis of the nation’s churches and synagogues. Two-thirds of Americans are even church members. So the church clearly has access to most marriages. Yet 60 percent of new marriages are failing. Unfortunately most churches are “blessing machines” or “wedding factories” that only prepare couples for ceremonies, not life long marriages.”³³

McManus proposed mentoring as an answer for saving marriages. He contended that older couples with solid marriages could be trained as mentors for younger couples. Many are willing to help, and they constitute an untapped resource. He and his wife trained mentor couples to work with engaged couples. McManus based his approach in *Marriage Savers* upon enrichment programs that had already proven effective for many couples. He used a premarital inventory called PREPARE to help dating couples think through their relationships. Couples who had participated in popular seminars and weekend retreats such as Marriage Encounter and Retrouvaille explained what the programs were like and how they were

helped in their marriages. “Retrouvaille” is a French word meaning “Rediscovery.” These weekend retreats were begun in France to help couples on the verge of divorce reflect about their mistakes, hopes, and dreams.³⁴

Marriage Encounter

In 1952 Father Gabriel Calvo, a young priest in Spain, developed conferences for married couples to help them develop an honest relationship and learn to live out the sacramental relationship of marriage. Marriage teams traveled throughout Spain with these conferences. In 1966 the weekend conference spread to Latin America and to Spanish-speaking couples in the United States. In 1967 a couple and a priest took the weekend conference to Notre Dame University, and in 1968 fifty couples and twenty-nine priests were involved in presenting weekend conferences in the United States.³⁵

A national executive board was formed to coordinate the movement in the U.S. and Canada. The conference was seen as a means of renewing the Catholic Church through the renewal of the Sacrament of Matrimony. Worldwide and National Marriage Encounter programs that exist today are an expression of the original weekend experience developed by Father Gabriel Calvo. The first Encounter weekends in the U.S. were held in New York under the leadership of Father Chuck Gallagher. As of 1996 weekends had been offered in many languages in eighty-three countries in Latin America, Europe, Africa, Australia, and Asia.³⁶

A Marriage Encounter (ME) weekend helps couples examine their lives together and discover new techniques of communicating and sharing with each other. The weekend conference is for any couple who wants to find a richer and fuller relationship in their marriage. It is not a group-oriented session, but rather it helps couples learn to work better with each other. The encounter weekends are conducted in the framework of Christianity, expanding from a Catholic framework.

Marriage Encounter weekends have been developed for many denominations, including Lutheran, Episcopal, Methodist, Jewish, Baptist, Presbyterian, Seventh Day Adventist, Assemblies of God, and the United Church of Christ.³⁷

Donald E. Wildmon, president of the American Family Association, supported Marriage Encounter as a retreat in which nine out of ten couples “fall back in love.” Dr. James Dobson, director of Focus on the Family, strongly supported the ME experience. He said, “A Marriage Encounter gave Shirley and me the opportunity to occasion the deepest, most intimate exchange of feelings we had known in twenty years... It proved to be one of the highlights of my life.”³⁸

Ambiguous Support from the National Council of Churches

The National Council of Churches (NCC), which had alienated many conservative churches and even many of its own members by its left-leaning theology and politics, made an effort to increase ecumenical support by releasing, on November 14, 2000, a document entitled *A Christian Declaration on Marriage*. The document was signed by Bishop Anthony O’Connell, Chairman of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Marriage and Family Life; Dr. Richard Land, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention; Bishop Kevin Mannoia, president of the National Association of Evangelicals; and Dr. Robert Edgar, general secretary of the National Council of Churches. The Declaration affirmed: “We believe that marriage is a holy union of one man and one woman in which they commit, with God’s help, to build a loving, life-giving, faithful relationship that will last for a lifetime.”³⁹ Churches were called upon to strengthen marriage by providing prayer, encouragement, education, preparation, pastoral care, help for marriages in difficulty, and “influence within the society and the culture to uphold the institution of marriage.”⁴⁰

Several days after the statement was released, however, Dr. Edgar, who is a minister of the United Methodist Church, which bans same-sex unions, withdrew his name from the statement in response to a small minority within the NCC that was campaigning for the legitimization of homosexual relations. The phrase defining marriage as behavior between one man and one woman offended them. Edgar offered an apology to those who had been offended by his signature on the marriage declaration. Although Edgar had been hired as the NCC general secretary the previous year to increase confidence and reverse the downward trend in membership and financial support, his withdrawal of support for the marriage declaration jeopardized efforts for ecumenical progress within the NCC.⁴¹

Sexual Misconduct Confronts the Church

*Sexual misconduct is defined as sexual activity or contact...in which the pastor or pastoral counselor takes advantage of the vulnerability of the parishioner, client, or employee by causing or allowing the parishioner, client, or employee to engage in sexual behavior with the pastor or pastoral counselor within the professional relationship.*¹

—Marie M. Fortune

Religious authorities hold a special position in their spiritual communities. Christians are taught that the priest or minister is “called” by God. Zen Buddhists bow to their teacher, and Hindu devotees stand as their guru enters the room. Followers are taught that their spiritual leaders are representatives of God on earth, teachers sent to impart spiritual knowledge and experience, who possess special discernment and benevolent concern for the well-being of their followers. Religious organizations are “trusted hierarchies,” and this organizational structure creates the opportunity for abuse.²

Rev. Doctor Marie Fortune said in her book *Love Does No Harm* that most organized religions are fundamentally patriarchal. She contended that this hierarchical relationship creates a

sexual power imbalance of dominance and submission that is “ordained by God,” sending a message that women are second-class citizens and available for exploitation by superiors.³ Rev. Fortune, a minister in the United Church of Christ, claimed that this relationship too often results in sexual abuse. Fortune is the founder and executive director of the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, which took a leading role in addressing the prevention and recovery from clergy sexual misconduct.⁴

Extent of Sexual Misconduct within the Church

Clergy sexual abuse (CSA) was something that was seldom discussed. When allegations were made, they were generally covered up. However, in the 1980s the problem was researched and brought out into the open. The extent of occurrence was alarming because institutional churches proclaimed themselves to be the moral backbone of society. The abuse was generally that of a male clergy or counselor abusing or harassing a female parishioner or female church worker. Pamela Cooper-White, former director of the Center for Women and Religion at Berkeley, California, estimated that 95 percent of victims were women.⁵ However, men and children have sometimes been abused. As more women enter the ministry, the temptations may involve more women clergy in sexual abuse. Abuse may involve parishioners, counselees, church volunteers, church employees, or professional colleagues. The following documentation indicated a problem of major concern that needed attention and correction.⁶

- ♦ A study by Catholic researchers supported by major religious orders found that 40 percent of nuns reported having experienced sexual abuse.
- ♦ A survey by the Wisconsin Psychological Association found that 11 percent of clergy had engaged in sexual offenses within their profession.

- The Center for Domestic Violence found that 12.6 percent of clergy said they had had sex with church members. Forty-seven percent of clergy women had been harassed by clergy colleagues.
- The Presbyterian Church stated that 10-23 percent of clergy have had “inappropriate sexual behavior or contact” with clergy and employees.
- The United Methodist research (1990) showed 38.6 percent of Ministers had sexual contact with church members and that 77 percent of church workers experienced some type of sexual harassment.
- The United Church of Christ found that 48 percent of the women in the work place have been sexually harassed by male clergy.
- The Southern Baptists claim 14.1 percent of their clergy have sexually abused members.

Sexual misconduct was also present within the Jewish community. Charlotte Schwab, a psychotherapist involved in research on Rabbinic sexual abuse and misconduct, placed an Internet announcement calling for victims to contact her. She stated, “I already have over two hundred cases of women who have been sexually exploited/abused by Rabbis, including ex-wives of clergy who suffered through their husbands’ sexual misconduct.”⁷

Definitions Related to Sexual Misconduct

Sexual misconduct by anyone engaged in the ministry of the church is unethical and unprofessional behavior. A church is thought to be a safe and healthy environment where people can learn about and experience God’s love. To deal with the problem and prevent future ones, church denominations needed to think clearly about the issues involved. The following definitions were used in discussing the issue of sexual misconduct.⁸

♦ Ministerial Relationship

The relationship between one who carries out the ministry of the church and the one being served by that ministry.

♦ Sexual Exploitation

A minister engaged in the work of the church takes advantage of the vulnerability of a participant by causing or allowing the participant to engage in sexual behavior with the minister.

♦ Sexual Harrassment

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances directed toward another person with the intent of intimidating, humiliating, or embarrassing the other person.

The behavior may include written, verbal, or physical contact, or visual contact such as leering, staring, gesturing, or displaying suggestive materials. Sexual advances and requests constitute sexual harassment when:

- ♦ submission is made a condition of employment or participation,
- ♦ submission or rejection is made a basis for evaluation,
- ♦ the conduct interferes with participation, and/or
- ♦ the conduct creates a hostile or offensive environment,

Abusers were identified as either “wanderers” or “predators.” Both predators and wanderers have little sense of the harm caused by their behaviors. They are often charismatic and talented, with little impulse control and little understanding of their own sexual feelings and behaviors.⁹

♦ Predators

Predators are sexual abusers who repeatedly prey on vulnerable women and lack remorse for their behavior.

♦ **Wanderers**

Wanderers are people who have crossed sexual boundaries inappropriately, but who with treatment have a good prognosis for change.

A Violation of Trust—It's Not an Affair

Sexual abuse within a ministerial relationship involves a violation of sacred trust. It interferes with the moral message and teaching of the church. Ministers are often granted trust in ways other professionals are not. Alexa Smith, in her article, "When Mentor Becomes Molester," said that "Many victims say it was their absolute trust in their minister that got them into trouble."¹⁰

Church members who interact with or seek help from religious clergy or counselors, may develop an emotional dependency on their confidante, counselor or priest. A troubled parishioner may look up to a clergy or church leader as a "hero." Persons who become emotionally dependent upon their mentors usually want to please the one who has befriended them, encouraged them, and taken their feelings and intellect seriously. Marie Fortune, one of the foremost experts on clergy sexual misconduct, contended that the victim's faith compromised his or her moral sense. She says, "He basically talks them into things, justifies, rationalizes, makes it OK."¹¹

A sexual contact between a clergy and a parishioner has often been dismissed as an "affair" between consenting adults. However, the power differential is crucial. Parishioners are spiritual seekers, while clergy are spiritual leaders. A person who comes to church seeking pastoral care is often in the midst of a personal, spiritual, or family crisis. Although the person may respond willingly to affectionate attention and advances, sexual contact between clergy and parishioners constitutes misconduct. It is inappropriate to equate sexual exploitation or harassment with an "affair." An affair between consenting adults describes a relationship between equals. It is always the

responsibility of professionals to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. For a clergy (choir director, youth worker, or other church leader) to pursue or initiate sexual relationships with parishioners is a violation of professional boundaries.¹²

Help for the Victims

Clergy sexual abuse will “only stop when laity get upset enough to hold their leaders responsible for incompetency in stopping the gross immorality within the profession.”¹³ However, cases of misconduct often go unreported because of feelings of shame, embarrassment, or fear by the victim. Victims may believe that it was their fault and that others will blame them. Abusers often either deny their behavior when confronted or accused, or they blame the victim. A Southern Baptist clergyman, who said, “I’m no novice at this business. I’ve dealt with at least fifty cases!” asked an accuser, “Don’t you think you are also partially responsible for what happened to you?”¹⁴

Persons who have been molested by a pastor are hurt and hurting. They struggle with anger, anxiety, fear, and a sense of betrayal. If the victim is married, the person’s family is also hurt, often not understanding why. The abuse affects the victim’s spiritual life and the lives of his or her spouse and children. The abused person may find it necessary to leave the church to escape the ambiguity of the relationship. The abuse may leave persons unable to trust themselves or another professional helper.¹⁵

When misconduct cases were reported, victims usually did not demand money or jail for the abuser. They sought repentance, restoration, and spiritual renewal.¹⁶ However, too often denial was the response of the church community. If the pastor was removed from the church, the members of the congregation may blame the victim. Church members may shun or blame the victim/accuser who is punished for breaking the silence and for seeking help. The reassignment of abusing pastors was a common

practice. Dee Miller, in her study of abuse in the Southern Baptist Church, noted that the Texas Baptist standard is that “every effort will be made to recycle perpetrators under the guise of ‘wanderers,’ as opposed to ‘predators.’”¹⁷ The practice of reassigning an abusive pastor to another parish compounds the abuse, because other women are put in jeopardy.¹⁸

An Open Letter to Religious Leaders

A retreat for women survivors of clergy sexual abuse was held in August, 1998 at the Adelynrood Conference and Retreat Center in Byfield, Massachusetts. The women came together for empowerment and healing. At the close of the retreat the women formulated a letter to religious leaders.¹⁹

We are survivors of clergy sexual abuse... What we were subjected to was not sex education, an affair, a lack of judgment, a disagreement or a cultural difference. It was not a factor of your marital status, gender, or affectional orientation.

Clergy sexual abuse is not about sex or romance... It is an exploitation of your professional status and a deep violation of your professional role. It encompasses emotional, psychological, and spiritual abuse that has caused life long repercussions...

We hold you accountable for this victimization... We want you to:

- ♦ Enforce a stance of zero tolerance for sexual abuse of power and trust by clergy.
- ♦ STOP recommending the reemployment of clergy known to be abusive...
- ♦ Mobilize resources for healing when learning of disclosures of clergy sexual abuse rather than silencing the victims...
- ♦ Develop rules and guidelines for accountability of clergy...

- ✦ STOP the ordination of individuals who demonstrate a propensity to abuse their position of power and trust.
- ✦ Provide an annual report on the health of the ministry which includes statistics ...
- ✦ STOP putting the responsibility for maintaining your professional boundaries on us.
- ✦ STOP colluding with your abusive colleagues.
- ✦ STOP the coverup of this massive systemic victimization.

Need for Professional Training and Professional Policy

Ministers are called to be caring spiritual guides for their parishioners, not exploiters. As professionals, clergy should not look to their parishioners to meet their emotional needs. Because ministers and other people working with the church deal with people who are emotionally or psychologically vulnerable, it is essential that spiritual leaders maintain their own psychological, emotional, and spiritual health. Jim Sparks, professor at the University of Wisconsin, trained pastors in regard to personal and sexual ethics. Sparks counseled married pastors to take care of their marriages and turn to their spouses for emotional help; celibate pastors were directed to seek the support of friends and colleagues.²⁰

To preserve the local church as a sanctuary where members felt safe, it was essential that churches and denominations develop guidelines and policy statements that would include behaviors for lay misconduct and clergy misconduct. The first step in dealing with the problem of sexual misconduct within the church was to name the problem and bring it out into the open. The second step was to make clear that certain behaviors would not be tolerated and to establish boundaries. In the Spring of 1993, the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women published a special supplement to their newsletter entitled: *Sexual Harassment in the United Methodist Church: Prevention, Intervention and Advocacy*. The denomination

had worked to eliminate sexual harassment and clergy sexual misconduct within the denomination and its institutions. Guidelines were drawn for the establishment of a policy statement for local churches to include the following policies:²¹

- the theology related to appropriate behavior;
- definitions of sexual abuse and harassment;
- a statement of non-tolerance;
- a commitment to investigate allegations;
- a procedure and a place for reporting misconduct;
- a commitment to training and education as to appropriate sexual behaviors;
- and a statement identifying the consequences for offenders.

Churches have more than a legal responsibility in regard to appropriate sexual behavior. Churches are called to be “communities of welcome, hospitality, and respect.” Many church people are unaware that sexual harassment occurs also in the church. As a step in education and training, the United Methodist Communications have produced a film entitled *Ask Before You Hug*. This film helps members of the local church know how to recognize sexual harassment and recognize and respond to inappropriate behavior.²²

Church Responses to Concerns about Sexual Misconduct

Churches began to grapple with the serious and long-standing issues involved in sexual misconduct. In 1981 the United Methodist Church (UMC) first began to address the issue of sexual misconduct in the church by developing sexual harassment policies. At the 1988 UMC General Conference, a resolution was passed stating that the church “stands in opposition to the sin of sexual harassment in the church and the society.” The resolution mandated education and prevention measures to change attitudes. Churches began viewing the problem not just as a clergy problem, but as a Church problem.

A 1990 survey report dealing with sexual harassment in the church concluded that “unwanted behavior damages the moral environment where people worship, work, and learn.” In 1992 the UMC General Conference passed a resolution, stating, “Sexual harassment is a significant problem in the United Methodist Church, and (it) detracts from the ministry and mission of Jesus Christ.”²³ Ann Brookshire Sherer, a UMC bishop, pointed out that the culture was beginning to change.

Instead of being scolded or having an incident swept under the rug, our people have an understanding that if they cross certain boundaries, the church will not tolerate the behavior and that their actions have consequences.²⁴

The 1996 UMC Book of Resolutions indicated that 56 of 69 church annual conferences in the U.S.A. and Puerto Rico had approved policies on sexual misconduct within the ministerial relationship. Many conferences offered training for cabinets, clergy, and laity, and the 124 UMC related colleges and universities and the 13 UMC schools of theology had or were developing sexual harassment policies and grievance procedures.²⁵

In March 2000 the Roman Catholic Diocese of Santa Rosa (California) agreed to do something “never done before.” The Diocese agreed to “apologize to the victims of an accused priest, and to fund a counseling program that will be overseen by abuse victims or their representatives.”²⁶ The agreement was a sign of change in a diocese that had been rocked by sexual and financial scandals. Six million dollars in settlement fees had been paid to victims of sexual abuse by the Santa Rosa Diocese over the previous decade. However, the scandal led the way to a revitalized diocese and church. The diocese leaders agreed to hold town meetings to let laymen and women, nuns and priests air their feelings of fear and anger.²⁷

Reproductive Technologies Confront the Church

Some bio-ethicists see themselves as the creators of a new moral paradigm that will replace the archaic Judeo-Christian order as the philosophical underpinning of society.¹

—Wesley J. Smith

The New World of reproductive technology presented many questions about the future of social, sexual, ethical, and family practices. Scientific developments raised questions that strained the shared cultural values of society. The science of reproductive technology continues to experiment with life in ways that will drastically and dramatically change the social, moral, and relationship variables of human life. Changes in behavior patterns challenged the legal system to establish guidelines and laws to regulate the many problems that arose and will continue to arise as new discoveries are made.

Birth Control Techniques Challenge Religious Beliefs

With the passing of the *Comstock Law* in 1873, Congress classified use, importation, or mailing of drugs, devices, and articles that prevented conception or caused abortion to be

criminal. In the early 1900s public opinion and social organization, including religion, law, politics, medicine, and the media were opposed to the idea and practice of birth control. In 1917 Margaret Sanger founded the *Birth Control Review* with the theme of eugenics, liberalized sexuality, birth control, population control, and planned reproduction as prominent issues.²

Sanger formed the American Birth Control League in 1926 to lobby members of Congress to introduce a bill to amend the *Comstock Law*. With the Catholic Church and twenty non-Catholic lay or religious organizations lined up to oppose the amendment, none was willing to tackle this issue. Seeking to create sectarian strife, Sanger blamed the Catholic Church and sought to drive a schism between Catholic and Protestant groups. Catholic bashing became her strategy. Sanger issued a statement:

Everywhere there is general acceptance of the idea, except in religious circles... The National Catholic Welfare Council has a special legislative committee organized to block and defeat our legislation. They frankly state that they intend to legislate for non-Catholics according to the dictates of the church.³

Sanger supported and encouraged a group of social elite Protestants, including Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, which was advocating birth control through a committee of the General Council of Churches (later the National Council of Churches).⁴ By 1930, 100 groups in medicine, education, and religion had passed resolutions favoring birth control, and in 1937 the American Medical Association gave official recognition to birth control as a part of medical practice and education.⁵

A major legislative decision occurred in 1965 when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Griswold v. Connecticut* that Connecticut's law prohibiting the use of birth control by married couples violated a newly defined right of marital privacy.⁶

Concern for Population Control

The movement toward population control accelerated in 1968 when the Stanford University professor Paul Ehrlich published *The Population Bomb*, which sold three million copies. Describing population growth as a cancer, Ehrlich followed the lead of Thomas Malthus, who in 1798 predicted widespread starvation because of an inability of food supply to keep pace with population growth. As solutions to the problem, Ehrlich suggested involuntary sterilization, financial penalties for childbearing, privileges for childless couples, and pressures directed at the Catholic Church toward reversing its birth control policies.⁷

Leaders in academia, politics, and the media, contending that the world was dangerously overcrowded, widely promoted the need for massive population control measures. Hysteria related to population concerns supported campaigns for nonreproductive sexuality, including abortion and homosexuality. Women were encouraged to marry later, postponing marriage for education and careers, and encouraged to have fewer children. Single children families and childless couples were popularized as family lifestyle patterns.

In 1992 U.S. Senator Al Gore, in his book *Earth in the Balance*, outlined the stabilization of the human population as the most crucial goal in healing the problems of the global environment. Tim Wirth, Undersecretary of State for Global Affairs under President Clinton, declared that overpopulation would overwhelm political and economic institutions and destroy the environment.⁸

In 1996, however, Ronald Reno analyzed the “myth of the population bomb” and concluded that “clearly our planet is not overcrowded in any meaningful sense of the word.”⁹ Describing the population scare as an ideological and political tactic, Reno noted that the entire world population (then 5.7 billion people) could fit comfortably into the state of Texas (261,914 square miles) with each person allotted 1,300 square feet. The rest of

the world would be available for agricultural, industrial, and recreational uses.

Infertility Becomes a Problem

Population concerns, the sexual freedom revolution, and the women's liberation movement contributed to an increase in fertility problems. Women who postpone childbearing for education and career naturally suffer a decline in fertility with age. The Dalkon Shield, an intrauterine device that was used as a contraceptive technique, also left many women permanently infertile.¹⁰

Women who had sex with multiple partners often suffered from untreated low-level gynecological infections and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) that caused damage to reproductive organs. STDs are asymptomatic in women most of the time, and resulting health problems are more severe for women than for men. A major cause of infertility is pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), which is caused when an STD spreads into the uterus and fallopian tubes. Chlamydia, a major cause of PID, was a rapidly spreading STD that was often untreated because it showed no symptoms of infections in most women.¹¹ At the end of the millennium, Dr. Robert T. Francoeur, professor of human sexuality and embryology, noted that about 25 percent of women between twenty to thirty-five years of age were infertile.¹²

Infertility is clinically defined as "failure to conceive after one year of unprotected intercourse."¹³ A study conducted by Dr. Ralph Dougherty revealed that American males also suffered from infertility. Dougherty noted that close to 25 percent of American males were functionally sterile. In 1929 the median count was ninety million sperm per cubic centimeter, but in 1979 the sperm count per cubic centimeter had fallen to sixty million. Environmental pollutants and an increase in STDs were possible causes.¹⁴

In just a few decades, the commercial operation of reproductive technology became a lucrative business with few con-

trols governing its practice. By the late 1990s the industry drew annual revenue of \$2 billion serving the 1 in 6 American couples who sought help for infertility problems. Annually about 60,000 births resulted from sperm donor insemination, 15,000 from in-vitro fertilization, and 1,000 from surrogate motherhood arrangements.¹⁵

Artificial Insemination

Prior to the late 1970s artificial insemination (AI) was the technology available to help couples who experienced male infertility. The procedure involved the insertion of sperm into the female reproductive system by means other than intercourse. A concentrated collection of sperm from the husband (AIH) would be used, or a donor other than the husband would be the sperm provider (AID). In 1949 Pope Pius XII expressed opposition to both AIH and AID, but few laws dealt with the issue.¹⁶ The state of Illinois, in 1954, in one of the first cases in the country that dealt with AI, ruled that artificial insemination by donor was adultery, even with the husband's consent. However, a later California case rendered an opposing decision.¹⁷

Most sperm donors were medical students who could earn \$50 a donation. With no legal regulations, most AI practitioners placed few limits on how many times sperm donors could contribute. Women who received sperm donations were given very little information about the donor of the sperm. Generally there was little screening of the donors nor were thorough records maintained.¹⁸

A tragic case of deception was revealed when Dr. Cecil Jacobson was prosecuted in 1992 after DNA testing revealed that fifteen and possibly up to seventy-five children born to his patients were conceived using his own sperm. Jacobson, a pioneer in reproductive and genetic technology and a married man with eight children, was a devout Mormon who asked his patients to pray with him. During his trial, members of the Mormon

Church fasted on his behalf. Because there were no laws prohibiting the practice, Jacobsen felt he had done nothing wrong.¹⁹

In 1979 a national survey showed “that fewer than 10 percent of infertility doctors would provide sperm to single women.”²⁰ However, in 1982, the Sperm Bank of California was created to provide sperm to unmarried and heterosexual singles and lesbian women. The sperm, delivered to their door in a liquid nitrogen tank, could then be taken to their doctor for insertion, or they could do it themselves with a turkey baster.²¹ Frozen sperm from a sperm bank generally cost \$200-\$400 per cycle, not including the cost of insemination.²²

In-Vitro Fertilization

In-vitro fertilization (IVF) involves removing mature eggs from a woman, combining eggs and sperm in a laboratory petri dish, and then transferring several embryos back into the uterus.²³ The IVF process opened the door to many reproductive possibilities of manipulation that raised questions of “pressing significance.” Lori Andrews, a professor of law, the director of the Institute for Science, Law, and Technology, and an advisor on genetic and reproductive technology to health organizations and governments, cautioned,

Once the embryo was isolated in the petri dish, it could be used to create a child for the progenitors, it could be donated to another couple, it could be genetically manipulated, or it could be used for other research purposes.²⁴

Andrews recorded her experiences in *The Clone Age: Adventures in the New World of Reproductive Technology* in 1999. She reported:

Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center in Manhattan will customize an embryo by choosing both an egg donor and sperm donor to match the desires of the parents. The

clinic, run by Mark Sauer, allows couples to “adopt” an embryo for \$2,725. The embryos are made from the surplus of donated eggs from women who have undergone fertility treatment for themselves, and from sperm donated to the clinic.²⁵

The first in-vitro fertilization baby was born in England in 1979. The church and Parliament strongly criticized the procedure, calling it immoral, unnatural, and playing God. The IVF process offered the opportunity to design embryos. In 1980 Carol Pavek became a surrogate mother for a California couple, opening the possibility of buying an embryo and hiring a surrogate to carry it to term.²⁶ Egg donation became a commercial enterprise in 1984 when women began “donating” eggs. At first, women were paid \$250, but the price soon rose to \$1,500 or more, depending on the market value of the person offering the eggs.²⁷ The freezing of sperm, eggs, and embryo offered the opportunity to place reproductive tissue in storage for use at a later time. The first baby born from a frozen embryo was delivered in an Australian clinic on March 28, 1984. By the end of the millennium, there were over 100,000 frozen embryos held in storage in clinics of reproductive technology in the U.S.²⁸

Egg donation and surrogacy offered the possibility of older women bearing children. In 1991 Arlette Schweitzer bore her own grandchild created from an embryo developed from her daughter’s egg and son-in-law’s sperm.²⁹ In 1996 a sixty-three-year-old woman, Arceli Keli, gave birth after obtaining eggs from a younger donor.³⁰

Genetic testing on embryos before implantation became possible with the development of in-vitro fertilization, leading to the possibility of designer babies. Embryos could be chosen, rejected, or enhanced based on a number of characteristics, including sex, intelligence, physical abilities, and potential genetic diseases. The new gene insertion techniques allowed parents to create “better children” by inserting desirable genes.³¹

Cloning and Stem Cell Research

Cloning of humans became a topic of conversation and speculation when the Scottish scientist Dr. Ian Wilmut successfully cloned Dolly the sheep in 1996. Cloning produces an exact duplicate of an organism. A clone “is produced by removing the nucleus of an unfertilized egg and replacing it with the nucleus of a human adult cell or an embryonic cell.”³² Cloning also showed possibilities of use in finding cures for diseases.

Research on stem cells filled the news in late 1998 when scientists isolated and cultured stem cells from human embryos. “Embryonic stem cells are the earliest cells from which body organs are developed and have the ability to grow into the 210 types of tissue in the human body.”³³ Researchers contended that stem cells hold potential for treating conditions such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes.

The Religious Response

In 1999 Focus on the Family issued a *Statement on Human Embryo Stem Cell Research* opposing research using human embryos. They stated:

In order for scientists to isolate and culture embryonic stem cells, a living, human embryo must be killed. It is never morally or ethically justified to kill one human being in order to help benefit another.³⁴

They argued that stem cells could also be found in adult tissues, bone marrow, and umbilical cord blood.

The Vatican consistently opposed the use of reproductive technology on the grounds that it tempts man “to go beyond the limits of a reasonable dominion over nature.” On March 10, 1987, the Vatican issued *Instructions on Respect for Human Life in its Origins and on the Dignity of Procreation*. In this document the Vatican morally opposed in-vitro fertilization, artificial insemination by donor, surrogate motherhood, embryo freezing, and

artificial insemination by husband when semen was collected through masturbation on the grounds that the sanctity of the marriage covenant would be violated.³⁵ In this document the Vatican also rejected human cloning because it would turn human reproduction into a process of “making” rather than “begetting.”

Lisa Cahill, a Roman Catholic moral theologian, argued that “the child who is truly the child of a single parent is a genuine revolution in human history, and his or her advent should be viewed with immense caution.”³⁶ She argued that the kinship network is important to social cooperation and the development of a sense of self. Cloning humans would not only liberate people from male-female relationships but would also “allow for the emancipation of human reproduction from any relationship.”³⁷

Protestant groups called for a ban on human cloning. In 1997 the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention supported President Clinton’s decision to prohibit federal funding for human cloning research. They issued a resolution requesting that Congress make human cloning unlawful and called on “all nations of the world to make efforts to prevent the cloning of any human being.”³⁸

Protestant theologians took a wide range of views on reproductive technology. Joseph Fletcher and Paul Ramsey took opposing public stands on the issue of cloning. On one extreme, Fletcher favored the expansion of freedom and control over human reproduction and laboratory reproduction because it was “deliberate, designed, chosen, and willed.”³⁹ On the opposing side, Paul Ramsey rejected cloning as a “moral boundary that could be crossed only at risk of compromise to humanity.” Ramsey argued that clonal reproduction would require “managed breeding to serve the scientific ends, involve non-therapeutic experimentation on the unborn, assault the meaning of parenthood...and the procreative ends of human sexual expression, express the sin of pride, and could also be considered a sin of self-creation as humans aspire to become a ‘man-God.’”⁴⁰

The liberty of a cloned individual became a topic of debate. The Vatican was concerned with a violation of human dignity, that the child would become an object of manipulation, jeopardizing the “unique identity of the clone (or clones) as well as the person whose genome was duplicated.”⁴¹

Jewish thinkers also were concerned. Rabbi Elliott Dorff argued that “no clone may legitimately be denied any of the rights and protections extended to any other child.”⁴² In considering the possibilities of using cloning to find cures for diseases, however, Rabbi Dorff argued that it would be moral to clone a person with leukemia to transplant bone marrow from the created child on the condition the second child was raised as an equal. Rabbi Dorff commented:

the Jewish demand that we do our best to provide healing makes it important that we take advantage of the promise of cloning to aid us in finding cures for a variety of diseases and in overcoming infertility.⁴³

Leadership/Seminaries in Crisis

We need to help students minister in a society whose value system is being eroded and whose very pluralism and diversity make it harder for us to think in terms of theological absolutes.¹

—George Brushaber

The changing moral values and practices in the country put stress on seminaries to provide ministerial training for religious support that was sensitive to both the need for diversity and the need for stability. The social changes that took place in the U.S. beginning with the dynamic 60s were felt also in the theological seminaries. As ethnic groups, women, and older, second career students entered the seminaries, new perspectives and experiences challenged traditional patterns of theological education. Many students were entering the seminary more concerned with their own spiritual searching and enrichment than with preparation for ordination or professional ministry. Seminaries were challenged to discern the ways in which the faith could adapt to secular inroads without compromising essential spiritual fundamentals,²

The Association of Theological Schools (ATS)

The Association of Theological Schools is the accrediting agency for seminaries in the United States and Canada. In the Fall of 2000, 209 schools were accredited members of ATS, 7 were candidates for accreditation, and 27 were associate members. Member schools reflected the spectrum of doctrinal, ecclesiastical, and theological perspectives and included Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox graduate schools of theology.

The Association's Commission on Accrediting is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and by the nongovernmental Council for Higher Education Accreditation for the accreditation of graduate, professional theological schools in the U.S.³

In the fall of 1999, 70,432 persons were enrolled in ATS affiliated schools. Women comprised 34 percent of the enrollment, and racial and ethnic students constituted 20 percent. On the surface, seminary education appeared to be strong and growing. Between 1995 and 1999, the number of students enrolled in the Master of Divinity (M.Div) program increased by 2,345 students, and enrollment in pastoral studies rose by 32 percent.⁴ The recent increases, however, differ from the trends over the last several decades, which have been away from pastoral studies. From 1970 until the mid-1990s, enrollment in preordination programs (M.Div.) and pastoral preparation programs had declined from 80 percent of the total enrollment to 50 percent. Students had shifted from pastoral preparation to a "community of faith paradigm" with emphasis on a "multi-purposed nurturing of knowledge."⁵

Many critics said that seminaries faced a "crisis of credibility." Tensions developed between ivory-tower theory and practical spiritual and theological education. The tension was increased by "the sometimes radically new answers given to age-old questions."⁶ In 1994 a study on graduate theological education in the

Pacific Northwest was funded by the Murdock Charitable Trust. Because so many seminaries were making requests for large grant requests, Murdock officers wanted to find out about the state of seminary education and its effectiveness. When 800 laypeople, pastors, and seminary professors were surveyed, dramatic differences were documented in regard to expectations in training and abilities for pastoral preparation. Whereas professors listed “theological knowledge” at the top of the list of five priority issues, pastors listed “the development of relational skills,” and laypersons listed “spirituality.” John Woodyard, program officer with the Murdock Trust says, “The seminary faculty do not have a good understanding of the needs of local churches or the culture.”⁷ Woodyard contended that the seminary students of today are different from twenty years ago. Seminary students often have the same doubts as nonbelievers. They’ve been “banged around” by the culture and many have a low sense of “being called.”

Many seminary students were embarking on a second career, operating on a very low budget, and attending the seminary that was closest to their home. For example, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, located in suburban Chicago, was associated with the Evangelical Free Church of America, but only 13 percent of the students were affiliated with the denomination. The remaining students came from 122 other denominations. Trinity’s academic dean, W. Bingham Hunter, said that increasing expectations are being placed on pastors and the seminary.

Today’s pastor is asked to run a multiplicity of ministries, including coping with racial issues, unemployment, divorce, marital counseling, and crisis intervention. Those expectations are sometimes based on unrealistic standards.⁸

Evangelical Seminaries

In the 1990s evangelicals claimed 63 divinity schools and theological seminaries affiliated with the ATS. These schools enrolled about 30,000 students. “In fact, the six largest accredited

schools, which account for 20 percent of seminary enrollment nationwide, are Southern Baptist institutions or seminaries with northern evangelical roots (Fuller, Trinity and Dallas)."⁹ Evangelical ministerial training differs from both old-line Protestant and Roman Catholic traditions.

Evangelicals...have been especially wary of religion that appears to be automatic or routine, and they have desired ministers and leaders who have experienced firsthand a vital and deep encounter with God's grace and who could instill and reproduce such characteristics within other believers.¹⁰

In his book *No Place for Truth*, David Wells contended that the pastoral vocation was in trouble. Whereas previously ministers had been important and respected leaders in their communities, Wells noted that ministers are increasingly being "dislodged from the network of what is meaningful and valuable in society." The structures of modern life "offer no plausibility for the work they do." Evangelical ministers have even lost standing in the Christian community.¹¹

Baptist Tensions

Tensions grew between Baptist universities and the Baptist state conventions that supported them in regard to university trustee independence and academic freedom. In Georgia, R. Kirby Godsey, president of Mercer University, was criticized for his book *When We Talk About God...Let's Be Honest*. Among Baptist universities, Mercer, with 7,000 students, ranked second in size, after Baylor. Godsey wrote of Jesus, "This historical person to be followed was soon changed by his followers into a divine figure to be worshiped. This transformation is largely a mistake."¹² Mercer's forty-five member board of trustees gave Godsey a vote of confidence. However, Frank Cox, president of the Georgia Baptist Convention, said, "The

theology that is espoused...is out of the mainstream boundaries of Southern Baptist Doctrine.” Godsey argued, “I think the only boundary is Christ.”¹³

Southern Baptist colleges and universities became more independent of the state conventions. Nancy Ammerman, a professor at Hartford Seminary, noted that the seminaries can assert greater autonomy without losing their Baptist flavor, but she also acknowledged that “whenever there isn’t an official structure of control from religious institutions, then there is the possibility that an institution is less influenced by its religious connections.”¹⁴

Another struggle within Baptist denominations involved The Baptist Joint Committee (BJC), founded in 1936 as a cooperative effort to deal with church-state issues. Originally the group stressed religious liberty and church-state separation. As time passed, however, the leadership of the BJC moved toward support of liberal positions on church-state issues, attacking conservative Christians and working closely with pro-abortion and pro-homosexuality groups. Some leaders of BJC sat on the boards of liberal groups, including People For The American Way and Americans United for Separation of Church and State. James Dunn, the leader of the BJC during the 1980s and 90s, frequently attacked leaders of the “radical religious right” such as Gary Bauer, James Dobson, Jerry Falwell, and the Moral Majority, while praising the “spiritual depth of Bill and Hilary Clinton.”¹⁵

In 1991 The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) withdrew funding from the BJC. In 1997 Bob Fischer, a Rapid City, South Dakota businessman, studied the withdrawal of the SBC from financial support of the Baptist Joint Committee. He became aware that his own religious body, the North American Baptist Conference, was also giving financial support to the committee. In the summer of 2000, he lobbied the North American Baptist denomination to withdraw funding from the BJC. Fischer said, “I don’t want them claiming to represent me or my church in Washington. We’re a conservative church, and

I don't want members of Congress getting the wrong idea about what we believe."¹⁶ When a committee of the denomination vouched for the BJC, Fischer's request failed to receive sufficient support. Fischer noted that many North American Baptist leaders have served on the BJC board.¹⁷

Catholic Universities

Both Catholic and Protestant churches had problems with the conservative/liberal debate within their organizations of education. The Catholic Church operated 235 Catholic universities. Some Catholic laity and the Vatican were concerned that Catholic theology professors were not always true to Catholic doctrine and teachings. In 1990 a Vatican document, *Ex Corde Ecclesia*, required the church's universities to maintain a strong Catholic identity. Beginning in 2002 *Ex Corde Ecclesia* was to require that Catholic theology teachers obtain a mandatum, a bishop's certificate of faithfulness to church doctrine. However, the bishops' control over professors is limited, because most Catholic universities are run by governing boards, and many theology professors have tenure. Some theologians planned to refuse the mandatum on the grounds that other institutions may believe that a Catholic institution does not have academic freedom. Some feared that the mandatum would give leverage over their teaching to conservatives who want to ensure doctrinal accuracy in classrooms. In San Antonio, Texas, a city with three major Catholic universities, concern ran high on both sides. Edmundo Vargas, founder of a conservative San Antonio group, said that if *Ex Corde* had been implemented when first published in 1990, it might have corrected a "drift into secularism."¹⁸

Presbyterian Seminaries

In 1997 The Pew Research Center documented that Presbyterian churchgoers are more conservative politically. Of main-line Protestants who designated a political affiliation, 34 percent

listed Republican and 26 percent listed Democrat. Presbyterians were seen to be most conservative with 60 percent Republican. Most mainline pastors respect the political feelings of their parishioners. However, mainline church officials can be more outspoken because they are not directly accountable to a local congregation.¹⁹ The movement of the mainline churches toward liberal/leftist perspectives was often supported by officials and leaders of the denominations. Church members who adhered to Scripture and church doctrines expressed widespread concerns that the church seminaries were failing to provide pastors appropriate training.

In the fall of 1995, four top Student Government Association leaders at the Presbyterian Union Theological Seminary delivered a statement to the faculty criticizing the direction of the seminary. In the statement they said,

We are concerned by what we perceive to be a growing schism between the needs of the church and the teaching found at Union Seminary. Presbyterians are demanding leaders be faithful to Scripture, but Union Seminary is moving in the other direction.²⁰

In February of 1995 Jack Dean Kingsbury, a Lutheran Scholar and a longtime faculty member at Union Seminary, expressed misgivings about the theological direction of the seminary during a joint meeting of the faculty and board of trustees, warning that the direction in which the seminary was heading could sever its relationship to its supporting churches, its source of students, and its spiritual and financial support.²¹ Kingsbury said,

The Mission Statement of Union Seminary says that it is an institution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Professors have taken vows of ordination as either clergy or elders. If these things mean anything, they mean that

there are confessional and scriptural boundaries that professors obligate themselves to in coming here. Professors are not hired to advocate their own private theology.²²

Union Seminary President, Louis Weeks, flippanantly dismissed Kingsbury as a “fundamentalist troublemaker.”

Methodist Seminaries and Leadership

Concerns about the directions of the seminaries were also expressed by critics of the United Methodist Church. The conservative Methodist magazine entitled *Good News* contended that the thirteen seminaries had increasingly added humanistic curriculum of sociology, psychology, and management to their studies, often at the expense of time for studies necessary for clergy training in Hebrew, Greek, biblical exegesis, or theology. It was noted that some professors, who had graduated from seminary in the 1960s and 1970s, tended toward a deconstructionist, post-Christian, or Marxist perspective and diverged from traditional Christian beliefs and values. Issues of “political correctness” were seen as having replaced the teachings of the historic Christian faith.²³ Specific items of concern noted that: students had been chastised for calling God “Our Father”; five professors at United Methodist seminaries voted to remove from the Book of Discipline references to homosexual practices as incompatible with Christian teaching; a feminist professor was an active member of a Wiccan style goddess-centered women’s spiritual group; and traditionalists are “capriciously labeled fundamentalists.”²⁴

Other offices of the United Methodist Church were also criticized as failing to support the tenets of the faith. In 1995 the UMC Board for Church and Society was the largest church lobby in Washington, D.C, with forty staffers and an annual budget of \$2.5 million. The *Good News* magazine reported that the Board supported many “leftist” policies, including: unlimited welfare; praise for Castro’s Cuba; global

U.S. military withdrawal; affirmation of the sexual revolution; and homosexuality.²⁵ Concern was also expressed that the Board for Church and Society had granted permission for groups opposing a Washington demonstration of the Promise Keepers to headquarter in the United Methodist Building. These groups included NOW, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum, and the Feminist Majority.²⁶ Many laity and clergy were deeply concerned that the UMC had lost over two million members. The views and actions taken by officials often did not represent the views of members of local churches.

In 1999 George Ricker, a retired United Methodist clergy who was teaching at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, defended the modification of church doctrines. He contended that,

The confessing movement is concerned that the church is being too influenced by popular culture. They desire to take us back to our scriptural foundations. Our world has changed and sexual views have changed. The only sexual ethics we can take from the Bible is the law of love. The essence of the gospel is the love of God for Creation and especially humanity...I am resonating with those today who are exploring the shape of the gospel in a postmodern context.²⁷

A more biblically conservative Methodist minister dismissed Rev. Ricker as a “flaming liberal.”

Social Consequences and Cultural Wars

But where is the line to be drawn and on what basis?...Our ability to function rationally depends on taboos and social and legal constraints that maintain character and a sense of appropriateness...I suggest prudence, that we do not allow a slippery slope to take us unawares...We need serious discussion rather than the polemics and the heat we are now generating.¹

—Morton A. Kaplan

In 1993 Morton A. Kaplan analyzed the changing patterns of sexual and family relationships and cautioned against hasty and unexamined changes in family patterns. He posed the question, “Can we tolerate all forms of consensual sex?”² Kaplan argued that to extend normality to behaviors that may in the long run be destructive to individuals and society and may take generations to repair is neither prudent, just, nor practical. Careful study should be given to proposals that would change the fundamental patterns of family relationships. Personal and social effects of changes should be seriously weighed before extending the range of the permissible.³

Many behaviors that have genetic predispositions may not be socially desirable. Noting that behavior is more than

genetics, Kaplan posed the question, “Homosexuality, premartial and extramarital sex, childhood sexual experience, incest, and polygamy may have a genetic base but would there be no threat to society?”⁴

The Culture Wars Accelerate

In the 1990s the struggle to define American values reached new levels of intensity that sometimes overflowed into violence. At the 1992 GOP convention, conservative Patrick Buchanan outlined the culture wars in militaristic language. “There is a religious war going on in our country for the soul of America.”⁵ Michael Schwartz of the Washington-based Free Congress Foundation said, “There cannot be peace between cultural forces whose fundamental values are incompatible with one another.”⁶

Direct mail solicitations from opposing groups overflowed with shrill and inflammatory public denunciations.

- ♦ An American Civil Liberties Union newsletter documented: “...newly empowered extremist groups are fanning the flames of intolerance and bigotry, igniting fierce legal battles that aim to undermine constitutional rights.”⁷
- ♦ Planned Parenthood materials screamed, “The struggle we face with anti-choice fanatics is truly life-threatening—we cannot afford to lose this battle.”⁸
- ♦ People for The American Way mailed an appeal for support and action. “If you and I don’t challenge this grassroots movement—if we don’t make progress against intolerance—then the Christian Coalition will continue its assault on the fundamental freedoms at the heart of the American Way.”⁹

To counter the liberal cultural elites, alliances formed between religious and social groups that had traditionally been

at odds with each other. Religious conservatives from Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish faiths joined to support traditional values, while cultural elites in education, law, and the media led the progressive movement. George Marsden at the University of Notre Dame and author of *The Soul of the American University* contended that “academia is dominated by progressives, most of them indifferent or hostile to religious belief.”¹⁰ The conservative radio commentator Dennis Prager said,

I regard the demise of Christianity in America (as a) nightmare—and I say that as a believing, religious Jew...The battle is no longer Jew versus Christian, but Jew and Christian versus secular nihilism.¹¹

Defining Deviancy Down

During the 1990s, proponents of the sexual revolution accelerated their efforts to “normalize” sexual behaviors that had previously been considered deviant. The conservative commentator Gene Edward Veith noted, “To get that old thrill of transgression, the cultural elite keeps defining sexual deviancy down.”¹² In 1993 *Time* magazine reported on a group of twenty to thirty high school youths in a conservative, middle-class Los Angeles suburb of Lakewood who proudly bragged about a “competition in which they scored points each time they had a sexual conquest.”¹³ A founding member of the group boasted that he had “scored” sixty-three points. Eight boys were arrested on counts of rape and unlawful intercourse; but county prosecutors filed charges against only one of the boys for alleged sex with a ten year old.

At the turn of the millennium, a Kaiser Family Foundation study

showed that the amount of sex on TV has jumped 12 percentage points in only one year, with the amount of

sex on sitcoms—which used to be staples of the now defunct “family hour”—shooting up 28 percentage points over the last season.¹⁴

Innuendos gave way to explicit and extreme portrayals of sex. Homosexual behaviors, sadomasochism, and child sex were increasingly portrayed in mainstream TV programs and movies. The award-winning movie *Quills* presented the Marquis de Sade, the eighteenth century French nobleman, pornographer, and molester of women and children, as “a champion of free speech.” *Hannibal* promoted the theme of cannibalism, sexual desire, and sexual violence.¹⁵ Behaviors that were previously considered social taboos became “avant-garde.”

An Epidemic of Sexually Transmitted Diseases

The increasing prevalence of casual and non-monogamous sexual behaviors resulted in an epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Between 1987 and 1991 reported cases of syphilis reached the highest levels in 40 years when the number of cases reported annually reached over 100,000.¹⁶ In 1997 the sex education organization, SIECUS, issued a report stating that “the scope and impact of the STD epidemic are still underappreciated. And, to a large extent, the diseases are largely hidden from public discourse.”¹⁷ They noted that half of the top most frequently reported diseases in the United States were STDs and that the public and private costs were reaching 17 billion dollars annually. Each year 12 million Americans became infected with a STD and 3 million of those infected were teens.

The most frequently reported bacterial STD was chlamydia, a disease that few people were even aware of. In 1999 chlamydia infections were reported to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) at a rate of 254 cases per 100,000. An estimated 3 million new cases were estimated to occur annually in the United States. The disease, which can lead to severe health problems such as infertility, tubal pregnancies, and increased

risk of HIV infection, can be easily treated. Unfortunately, because it is often asymptomatic, many failed to treat and cure the disease.¹⁸

The human papilloma virus(HPV) was reported by the CDC to be the most common STD among young, sexually active people. Every year 5.5 million people became infected with one of the thirty types of HPV, and twenty million people in the United States were estimated to have the disease at any one time. Cervical cancer, penile cancer, and anal cancer were all attributed to HPV infection. One type of the virus, HPV-16, accounted for 50 percent of all cervical cancer cases.¹⁹

The acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), first identified as a separate disease in 1981, was the most serious of all STDs because it is incurable and almost always fatal. The syndrome is caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which weakens the immune system by attacking white blood cells. HIV entered the United States through homosexual contacts and spread rapidly. The HIV virus is transmitted through blood, semen, and breast milk. Initially the HIV infection produces no symptoms, so a person may carry the virus and spread it to others for years before becoming aware that he or she has the disease. One-third of those affected developed full-blown AIDS symptoms within five years of contact. Half of those infected developed AIDS within ten years and all developed AIDS within twenty years.²⁰

By 1998 AIDS was the fifth leading cause of death for people ages 25-44. New HIV infections were occurring at about 40,000 cases annually. HIV/AIDS disproportionately threatened minorities. In 1998 African-Americans were 8 times as likely as whites to have HIV and AIDS. Hispanics were more than 4 times as likely.²¹

By June of 2000 over 750,000 cases of AIDS had been reported to the Center for Disease Control, and more than 438,000 people had died of the disease. Over half (52 percent) of the infections were associated with the homosexual lifestyle.

Injecting drugs accounted for 25 percent of the infections, and heterosexual contact accounted for 10 percent of the infections. Children developed AIDS through breast milk from infected mothers.²²

AIDS took a toll among Catholic priests. By the beginning of this millennium, hundreds of Catholic priests had died of AIDS-related illnesses, and hundreds more were living with HIV. Priests were dying of AIDS at a rate four times that of the general population. In a nationwide confidential survey of 3,000 priests, two-thirds of the respondents said that sexuality was not adequately discussed in seminary. Many priests argued that the church's adherence to celibacy and the unwillingness of seminaries to educate about the reality of the sexual world and its temptations contributed to the problem of AIDS among the clergy. Church officials in the United States and in Rome declined to discuss the issue. Clergy in other denominations also had troubling sexual relationships and died of AIDS, but the Catholic Church's unique expectation for celibacy made the problem especially troublesome for it.²³

Changing Family Patterns

The sexual revolution began a social movement toward a "post-marriage" society. When reports of the 2000 Census were released, conservative commentators responded with alarm. Dr. James Dobson exclaimed,

the institution of the family is now in an unfettered free-fall... This God-ordained institution, which has prevailed in almost every culture on earth since the Garden of Eden, is unraveling right in front of our eyes.²⁴

Cal Thomas said, "Two generations of 'doing your own thing' have exploded the American nuclear family."²⁵ People were increasingly choosing to remain unmarried, to live together outside of marriage, and to raise children as singles.

Between 1960 and 2000 the percentage of household units that consisted of a single person living alone doubled from 13.3 percent to 26 percent.²⁶ People married later in life. Males particularly were postponing marriage. In 1960, 6 percent of males and 9 percent of females aged 30-34 had never married. By 1998 these percentages had risen to 29 percent for males and 21 percent for females.²⁷ Cohabiting outside of marriage increased tenfold from 439,000 couples to over 4 million couples.²⁸

As sex education developed in the schools, new sexual norms and expectations led to increasing sexual behavior. Unwed teenage pregnancy and childbirth became a too common consequence of the sexual revolution. The percentage of children born out of wedlock rose from 4 percent in 1960 to 33 percent in 2000.²⁹ Raising children alone places women in the role of social breeders, too often without sufficient emotional or financial support for even their own needs. The personal demands and stresses of parenthood often overwhelmed a single woman raising a child, particularly when the woman was still a child herself.

The development of no-fault divorce laws in the 1970s made it easy to end a marriage. Increasingly, people found it easier to leave a marriage than to work through even natural and normal problems of family disagreement. As more divorces occurred, the expectations and fears of marital failure increased. Divorce often leaves one partner feeling betrayed and the children feeling rejected and deserted.

Divorce and out-of-wedlock births too often resulted in children being raised without a father present in the household. Men were increasingly leaving or being left out of family relationships. In many families the roles of fatherhood were reduced to "weekend Dad," "check in the mail Dad," or "no Dad at all." Nurturing and emotional bonding of children with their fathers became problematic or nonexistent. By the late 1990s 40 percent of families with children had no father present.³⁰ In

his book *Fatherless in America: Confronting Our Most Urgent Social Problem*, David Blankenhorn contended that fatherhood is the most important role for men, because it promotes socially responsible behavior. Fatherhood protects and advantages children. Increasingly, children were growing up without the protection and advantage of a loving and caring father.

The ability of fathers to speak with authority and contribute to the discipline of their children was jeopardized by fathers living apart. In 90 percent of child custody cases following divorce, custody was given to the mother.³¹ A recently divorced and remarried father commented with anguish,

I have lost all ability to be an authority within my family. My biological children live with their mother, and I am only able to see them a few times a month. I don't want to spend the few hours I have with them being critical when I don't really know the problems they face. Their mother establishes their discipline. My four stepdaughters live with my wife and me, but they don't recognize me as someone who can tell them what to do because I'm not their "real dad."

Non-reproductive Sexuality as Genetic and Cultural Genocide

With the legalization of abortion in 1973, the natural consequences of sexual behaviors—pregnancy and babies—became disposable items, no longer valued with innate worth. By 2000 more than thirty-eight million legal abortions had been performed.³² Growing social values supported women in viewing abortion as the equivalent of convenient or cosmetic surgery. The wrenching emotional and physical consequences of abortion for women received little attention and were swept "under the rug" by the abortion industry. Abortions were performed on minors even without the awareness or consent of their parents.

Proponents of abortion and homosexuality advanced “nonreproductive sexuality” as equal to or superior to reproductive and family relationships. Although children have neither the experience nor the insight to evaluate this information, comprehensive sex education curriculums included discussions of abortion and homosexuality even in elementary materials. As children were taught to accept abortion and homosexuality as normal behavioral choices, the intergenerational transfer of genetic and cultural patterns in society became jeopardized.

The teaching of homosexuality as a viable and normal behavior to elementary children was a particular problem. Preadolescent children typically congregate in sex segregated groups, avoiding the opposite sex. To present same-sex attraction to children as a possible sign of a homosexual inclination jeopardized the ability of the young to move into a heterosexual family relationship. The promotion of homosexuality as a normative pattern encourages social disintegration as women intimately relate to women and men to men. A lack of understanding between the sexes develops, as each sex holds the other in unrealistic awe on the one hand, or loathing on the other.

Social Problems: Mistrust

Open-ended sexual relationships created interaction processes between members of the opposite sex, and even between members of the same sex, that became increasingly ambiguous and exploitative. Sex, no longer protected and preserved as a vehicle for family reproduction, became an often misunderstood commodity to be traded for popularity. “Commitment” and “love” too often became feigned to gain sexual advantages, undermining the norm of interpersonal integrity and the ability to interact freely and honestly with others. Instead of expectations of honest relationships, people were put “on guard,” lest innocent behaviors and comments were miscon-

strued as sexual invitations. Smiles, compliments, and friendly greetings became behaviors of suspicion, lest they be covers for hidden motives of personal advantage.

In the classes I taught in sociology and marriage and family, many students expressed fears of marriage and even fears of dating. Early sexual experiences that had turned sour left them with feelings of being used, exploited, and betrayed. Mistrust made it difficult for them to develop trusting relationships and move into a family environment. Sexual energies, which may previously have been sublimated to socially constructive purposes and activities, became focused on either personal pleasure or anxious feelings of confusion and mistrust.

From Families to Lifestyles

The modern post-industrial society, marked by a service and information economy, consumption, and a preoccupation with personal interests, was also marked by a post-production and a post kinship pattern of society.³³ In their article, "Here to Play: From Families to Lifestyles," family researchers Janet G. and Larry L. Hunt contended that a focus on consumerism rather than family units gave rise to lifestyle living rather than family living. They argued that the focus on personal feelings and inner needs threatened continued family relationships. In the post-industrial society people become socially linked as individual consumers rather than as family units. The differences in the two social patterns involve significant changes in how people live and the consequences of their life choices.

Family relationships, on the one hand, include a collective focus that involves relationships that are gendered, intergenerational, unconditional, irrevocable, and work oriented, with an investment in the future through the bearing and raising of children. Lifestyles, on the other hand, focus on individuals with an emphasis on "play." Lifestyle relationships are more often conditional, tentative, and age and gender specific, with an investment in the self at the present moment.³⁴

The Enthronement of Hedonism

The development of lifestyle living and the casual sexual and living patterns that accompanied the sexual revolution were accelerated by the increasing enthronement of the philosophy of hedonism in Western culture. This philosophy places pleasure as the supreme value and the highest wisdom and virtue. As Western culture grew increasingly hedonistic, with personal pleasure in the present as the primary goal, suffering for a greater cause became unpopular. The shift toward pleasure as a personal focus, without concern for the well-being of others, leaves society open to the dangers of disintegration and chaos as people lose a sense of concern for the social good.

In an analysis of contemporary pleasure principles, James I. Packer, Professor of Systematic Theology at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia, observed:

It is supremely ironic that, after two millennia of Christian culture, the West should now be plunging back into a self-defeating hedonism that is horribly similar to the barbaric pagan lifestyle of the first century, while decrying the Christian religion as basically antihuman because it does not set up pleasing oneself as life's highest value.³⁵

There is a major problem here, for hedonism runs radically contrary to the Christian scale of values...Biblical Christianity does not teach that any pleasure or good feelings, or any form of present ease and contentment, should be sought as life's highest goal. What it teaches, rather, is that glorifying God by our worship and service is the true human goal.³⁶

Sex in America: A Comprehensive Survey

By the 1990s the American culture was saturated by sexual portrayals and innuendoes. Sex was everywhere, in music, movies, TV, magazines, and newspapers. Soap operas and talk shows indulged imaginations with sexual indiscretions.

Headlines ran statistics, too often based on biased studies. The old statistics adage was apropos: "Vast conclusions from half vast data." The prevalence of sexual activity among young teens, marital unfaithfulness, and other sexual behaviors were extolled ad nauseam. The constant barrage of sexual "information" presented through the media resulted in feelings of sexual inadequacy. Concerns that "everyone else is having more fun than I am" troubled young and old alike.³⁷

Nobody knew for sure what the actual sexual behaviors of Americans were. Responsible research on sexual practices was essentially nonexistent. The Kinsey Reports of the late 1940s and early 1950s were based on samples of convenience rather than scientifically developed random samples. Kinsey had drawn samples of respondents from prisons, mental hospitals, boardinghouses, college fraternities, and even hitchhikers. Responses to the magazine surveys run by *Playboy*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Redbook* did not represent the behaviors of many Americans. Even the landmark study in 1966, *Human Sexual Response*, researched by Drs. Masters and Johnson, was, by their own admission, prejudiced.³⁸

In 1987, in response to the AIDS crisis, Edward Laumann led a team of researchers at the University of Chicago in the development of a scientific survey of sexual behavior in the United States. The findings, which were published in 1994 in a thick scientific report entitled *The Social Organization of Sexuality*, were based on 90 minute face-to-face interviews with a random sample of 3,432 people ages 18 to 59. The findings ran counter to many preconceived conclusions about sexual behaviors. Laumann noted, "Whether the numbers are reassuring or alarming depends on where you sit."³⁹ The data showed that:⁴⁰

- 80 percent of respondents had only one partner or none in the year previous to the survey.
- Only 3 percent reported 5 or more partners in the previous year.

- ♦ 17 percent of men and 3 percent of women had sex with 21 or more partners since age 18.
- ♦ married couples were having the most sex and the most satisfying sex with 40 percent saying they had sex twice a week, compared with 25 percent for singles.
- ♦ marital faithfulness was generally the response, with 75 percent of men and 85 percent of women saying they had never been unfaithful to their spouse.
- ♦ Only 2.7 percent of men and 1.3 percent of women reported homosexual sex in the previous year, numbers far lower than the oft-repeated 10 percent.
- ♦ a third of the respondents reported having sex only a few times a year or none at all.

Sexual behaviors were found to be related to religious affiliation. Pattern variations were seen in different religious groups. Jews had the most sex partners, 34 percent had ten or more. Conservative Protestant women were most likely to achieve orgasm every time (32 percent), and Catholics were the group with the greatest frequency of intercourse. Father Andrew Greeley, the sociologist-priest who wrote racy romances, said, "I think the church will be surprised at how often Catholics have sex and how much they enjoy it."⁴¹

The excesses of the sexual revolution were apparently not the experiences of the vast majority of Americans. In the early 1990s the portrayals of general promiscuity that were presented in the mainstream cultural media were representative of only a small portion of the American population. However, the dominance of sexual promiscuity in TV soap operas, talk shows, movies, popular music, and magazines ridiculed and demeaned responsible sexual behaviors, putting religious expressions of purity, abstinence, and responsible sexuality on the defensive.

Loss of Family Decisions to State Control

A troubling consequence of the breakdown of sexual and family relationships included the transfer of interpersonal dialogue and decision-making about family affairs out of the realm of personal control and church guidance and into the domain of state and federal agencies and court systems. When moral problems were ignored or covered up by the church or glib admonitions of forgiveness took precedence over true repentance and reconciliation, it became essential and inevitable that the state would intervene. Adversarial behaviors replaced reconciling behaviors.

The increase in divorce, for example, involved troubling spinoffs that related to child care. Questions of child custody and child support became legal documents that defined necessary and expected behaviors. Custody fights over child care too often became acrimonious and fraught with anxiety. In contested cases of custody, the parent who lost custody of the child or children was relegated to a limited and secondary parental role. Parents who love their children and time spent with them can understand the feelings of grief, anxiety, and anger that would accompany removal from their children's primary realm of influence.

Mothers received custody over children in 90 percent of settlements. Fathers who disagreed with child custody arrangements often failed to pay financial support. In the 1980s two laws were passed to address this problem. The *Child Support Enforcement Amendment*, passed in 1984, and the *Family Support Act*, passed in 1988, required "states to deduct delinquent support from father's paychecks...and mandated periodic reviews of award levels to keep up with the rate of inflation."⁴² The problem of child support payment continued as a problem, however. In 1995, courts awarded child support payments in 54 percent of divorces that involved children; however, only 24 percent received full payment and 11 percent received no payment at all.⁴³

Another troubling spinoff of divorce and child custody cases occurred when one parent, in violation of court orders, violated conditions of visitation or attempted to remove a child or children from having contact with the other parent. Parental kidnapping became an all too often occurrence. In 1988 the *National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children* (NISMART) estimated that 354,100 family abductions take place every year. Most children were returned within two days to a week; however, "163,200 involved concealment, interstate transportation of the child, or evidence the abductor intended to alter custodial privileges permanently."⁴⁴

States passed laws criminalizing the taking of a child in violation of state ordered custody arrangements. In 1980 two federal laws were passed to address the problem. The *Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act* (PKPA) made parental child abduction a federal offense. PKPA authorized federal warrants for unlawful flight to avoid prosecution in abduction cases and required authorities of every state to enforce custody decisions of other states. To seek the return of abducted children who had been taken into another country, the United States and several other countries signed a treaty called *Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction*, commonly called the *Hague Convention*.⁴⁵

Different reasons motivate parental kidnapping. Children may be used as pawns to punish an ex-spouse, denying them visitation rights, or parents may fear that the child or children are in danger of abuse and seek to protect them. Whatever the reason, children often suffered adverse consequences. They may have been told that their other parent didn't love them or that they were dead.

Church responsibility for family nurture and family training becomes difficult when relationships become filled with acrimony that requires intervention by state agency decisions or law enforcement mandates. A top priority in every religious program should be moral education for caring and family relationships

and reconciliation of differences. Jesus knew that discipline and control in social relationships were a priority. In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught:

You have heard that it was said to the men of old, "You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment. But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and whoever says, "You fool!" shall be liable to the hell of fire.

So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Make friends quickly with your accuser, while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard and you be put in prison. (Matthew 5:21-25)

Challenge to the Churches

...family change has led to substantial modification in the teachings and policies of the churches, and the ways in which the churches responded to family change have had ramifications for the moral authority of the churches.¹

—Arland Thornton

The changes occurring in sexual behaviors and family relationships during the last half of the twentieth century were interwoven with changes occurring in the larger society. Postwar affluence; the baby boom; the pill; movements toward secularization, hedonism, and individualism; increased education; increased social mobility; the legalization of no-fault divorce and abortion; the portrayal of extramarital and premarital sex in TV, movies, and music; changing roles for women and the movement of women from the primary role of homemakers to work outside the family; delayed marriage; increases in single person households and single parenting; and the movement toward the normalization of the homosexual lifestyle challenged Western churches to modify traditional religious patterns of sexual and family behaviors.

Religious accommodations to changing behaviors were facilitated because religious leaders and members of congregations also interacted within the larger society and experienced changes in their own personal and family situations. The changing behavior patterns provoked intense debates within religious organizations. Strain and ambivalence occurred as churches tried to support traditional values and behaviors while also giving spiritual help and guidance to people who had moved away from traditional patterns. Individuals who looked to the church as a source of unchanging values became alienated from their churches and church leaders when changes were perceived as abandonment of fundamental principles.²

Baby Boomers Search for Faith

The dynamic changes occurring in the 1960s and 1970s created a time of searching for baby boomers who had been raised with new opportunities and questions about “passed down traditions.” In record numbers they dropped out of the churches in which they had been raised to begin a spiritual journey in search of “the truth.” Changing churches became part of the process as boomers searched for spiritual support and meaning for their lifestyles. Some dropped out completely from organized religions, while others explored New Age and Eastern religions.³

In the 1980s and 1990s, however, a quiet revolution took place as boomers matured, married, and started families. Feelings that their children should receive spiritual and religious training, family responsibilities and the challenges of midlife crises gave them a need for personal moorings. They flocked back to church in search of a spiritual home, but not necessarily to the church or denomination in which they had been raised. The unique spiritual variations that had developed within and between denominations were challenged as couples who were raised in the Baptist faith joined the Methodist church or those who were raised as Jewish or Protestants

turned Catholic. The returnees were often less tied to traditions of the denomination and less dependable than the loyal membership to maintain the fundamental values historically supported by the denomination.⁴

Boomers were in the seeking mode, searching for churches that met their perceived needs. Churches, many of which had lost members, rushed to meet the opportunities of membership offered by the returning boomers. Religion became a marketplace seeking to meet the needs of consumers, often employing commercial techniques of advertisement to bring in new “customers.” Ministers attended seminars on church growth that stressed orientation to customer needs. Dress at worship became more informal and music became livelier. Special programs were developed to provide support for singles, single parents, and divorced and blended families.⁵

In the realignment of loyalties, mainline Protestant churches and Jewish organizations which had changed from support of fundamental values to accommodate modern and secular values felt the greatest membership losses. Mainline churches had failed to educate their own children into a compelling Christian message. Between 1965 and 1989 six mainline denominations (Evangelical Lutheran, United Methodist, United Church of Christ, Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Disciples of Christ) reported a combined membership loss of 6.2 million members, representing between 8 percent (Evangelical Lutheran) to 45 percent (Disciples of Christ) of their overall church membership. Liberalism provided an unstable foundation for personal and family growth in spiritual realities.⁶

The churches that increased in membership were spiritually evangelical, in contrast to the secular liberalism of mainline denominations. Many of the boomers had been caught in the destructive consequences of open-ended sexual behaviors, and many had experienced in their own lives the pain of divorce. In opposition to the “feel good about yourself—anything is OK”

mentality that had led them to destructive experiences, the returning boomers sought moral and religious boundaries to provide supportive structure for their lives, their marriages, and their children. The thriving churches were those that supported loyal family relationships and held fast to moral and spiritual fundamentals. The Catholic church and Southern Baptists increased their membership between 1965 and 1989 by 23 percent and 38 percent respectively. The Assemblies of God increased by 121 percent, and the Mormon church, with its strong emphasis on family, increased by 133 percent.⁷

Uniqueness of the Family Realm

It is essential that churches and religious organizations relate to families in their holistic uniqueness and provide guidelines and instruction to parishioners in carrying their spiritual and loving relationships into this realm. The family realm is different from relationships in other organizations and settings. Organizational and non-family relationships tend to be more transitory and segmented than family experiences. Researchers in the Department of Family Sciences of Brigham Young University identified seven characteristics that distinguish the “ideal” family realm from other human experiences.⁸

1. Family relationships are generational and permanent.

- Non-family relationships are used to achieve specific goals of personal interest for limited time periods.

2. Family relationships involve persons as “whole” persons, relating to family members for better and worse with respect for the unique qualities of the individuals.

- Non-family relationships usually include people in a role relationship, carefully structured to avoid contradictions.

3. Family relationships require nurture and caregiving in an atmosphere that is multidimensional. Many processes occur

simultaneously, often becoming irrational and disordered in sequence. Family members must be able to juggle many actions and feelings simultaneously.

- Organizational and friendship activities are focused, sequential, ordered, and temporary.

4. Families develop emotional intensity that includes not only feelings of love, but also feelings of concern, worry, and anger.

- Feelings toward organizational colleagues, neighbors, and friends are less intense and holistic.

5. Family relationships focus on qualitative measures of “being” in an ongoing process of care and nurture.

- Organizations focus on quantitative goals of achievement, profits, performance ratings and rankings.

6. Family relationships focus on altruistic values that include a sense of sacred responsibility and duty to other family members.

- Relationships in the organizational marketplaces tend to be contractual agreements for mutual advantage.

7. Governance in families is based on processes of caring, nurturing, persuading, directing, and redirecting to foster the growth and development of the members.

- This differs from non-family relationships where people can be hired and fired, managed and manipulated, and treated as commodities.

Part of the Solution or Part of the Problem?

Churches may be both a solution and a problem for family relationships. In my dissertation study on the effects of organizational involvements on family life, the church was reported as being the social organization most supportive of family. The following comments outline this sense of support.⁹

"The church is our major family source of weekly togetherness. It is our extended family and we all find a satisfaction in attending and interacting, worshiping and being nourished there."

"The church has been the most positive organization in our family. It is the one activity that we all attend together."

"The church provides friends with the same beliefs, values, and standards for parents and children. It provides teachings that help strengthen family ties, and it has become an important means to keep undesirable elements outside of our family from disrupting our life."

Not all responses were positive, however, as the following response explains.

"Involvement in church provides some common experiences, but often the activities threaten to divide us. Not all are helpful. For myself the church has far too many committee meetings outside the home."

Religious organizations can become part of the problem in family separation. Family members are sometimes, perhaps even often, looked upon and "used" by churches as commodities to expand and increase the organizational program, with little thought or concern about how the involvements may affect relationships within the family unit. Organizations, even religious ones, may become "greedy" in their search for allegiance and commitment.¹⁰ Sexual and family relationships may represent a threat to the building up of the organizational domain.

Churches are often, even generally, organized to separate family members, having specific interest groups, age groups, and men's and women's fellowship groups that meet separately.

Fellowship or involvement groups that include only one member of a family may develop interpersonal and emotional feeling ties that compete with or undermine the ability of members to relate within the family unit.

Ideally, the separated fellowship groups provide education and support that enable the participants to return to their family realm with increased love, respect, support, and understanding for family relationships. However, people have a limited amount of time and emotional libido. Time commitments and loving emotional energies directed in one area may not carry over into relationships at home.

When Pastors Face Divorce

The church has major questions to grapple with in considering the ways in which church policies and practices affect and influence sexual and marital failings, especially as they involve pastors. At the end of the millennium, a Hartford Seminary study found that pastors were divorcing in approximately the same numbers as lay people.¹¹

The Rev. David Ferguson, who counseled over 3,000 troubled clergy marriages, said, "Among the pastors we've counseled, 80 percent believe their ministry has negatively affected their families, 70 percent have no close friends in their congregations, 37 percent have been involved in an inappropriate sexual way with someone in their churches..."¹² Ferguson cautioned, "It undermines people's concept of God and what faith is when they see a clergy marriage fail or see a clergy member compromised sexually." Congregations become stressed and divisions in the church regarding appropriate response may lead to congregational splits.

The demands of a highly visible public life often leave clergy little time for family intimacies. Busy schedules and the demands of parishioners for time and attention create multiple stresses for both pastors and their families. Spouses and children of pastors may suffer loneliness and frustrations similar to someone in public office.

Ferguson contends that it is important that congregations and denominations develop marriage maintenance support programs for clergy couples and families. Regular family nights should be scheduled and protected to allow pastors time to relate to their spouse and children. Ferguson, who is the founder of the Center for Marriage and Family Intimacy ministry in Austin, Texas, sponsors marriage enrichment conferences for pastors and their spouses.¹³

The Celibacy Debate, Pedophilia, and Homosexuality

The dual system of sexuality within the Roman Catholic Church has created many problems in the development of a consistent understanding of sexuality. While congregants of the faith are called to faithful married family relationships, church leaders for centuries have been called to celibacy. However, seminary training for the priesthood has not adequately addressed the realities of leading a sexually celibate life in a sexually saturated society. Some critics have argued that celibacy attracts people with troubled sexuality.¹⁴

The problem of priestly pedophilia surfaced in 1985 with the case of Gilbert Gaulte, a Louisiana priest.¹⁵ At that time Father Thomas Doyle, a priest and canonical lawyer, co-wrote a report urging the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to keep centralized records on sexual abuse cases by priests. Doyle noted, however, that the bishops and the Vatican resisted attempts to gather information on sexual misconduct.¹⁶

After more cases of pedophile priests developed across the country, the U.S. bishops issued policy recommendations in the early 1990s called *Restoring Trust*. However, both the church hierarchy and church structure allowed accused priests to continue in their role as priests by moving them to different parishes, failing to address the egregious incongruity of the behavior.¹⁷

In February of 2002 the pedophile priest scandal boiled over in Boston, the nation's fourth largest archdiocese with more than 2 million Catholics. Father John Geoghan, accused

of molesting more than 130 children over a 30-year period, was sentenced to serve a 9-10 year prison sentence. It was revealed by Cardinal Bernard Law that 70 priests, out of close to 700, had been accused of sexual abuse of children. The archdiocese was required to pay \$45 million to alleged victims who had come forward.¹⁸ However, an even larger settlement had been made in the mid-1990s, when Sylvia Demarest, a Texas lawyer, won a \$119 million jury award in Dallas on behalf of formerly abused altar boys.¹⁹

The troubling question arising from the exposures of priestly pedophilia deals with the extent to which the developing homosexual challenge to traditional family patterns has been supported and encouraged through these behaviors. How many young boys have been drawn into the homosexual lifestyle by early experiences of sexual behaviors with priests? This concern becomes doubly troublesome in the realization that priests were dying of AIDS at a rate four times more prevalent than the general population.²⁰

The ideal of celibacy was challenged at the end of the millennium, when liberal Catholic theologians gathered in Denver, Colorado to discuss homosexuality, calling for homosexual priests to come out of the closet. "Bishop Gumbleton told the audience of gay and lesbian Catholics that he longed for the day when gay priests would be able to live openly as gay men."²¹

The issues, concerns, and contradictions related to celibacy, pedophilia, and homosexuality within the priesthood raise troubling questions that need to be addressed with integrity at all levels of the church. The foundations of trust are destroyed when millions of dollars of church resources are used to "pay off" victims who were abused by trusted spiritual leaders.

Jewish Tensions Grow

In a letter written to his newborn daughter in 1973, the Orthodox Rabbi Daniel Lapin notes, "There has always been a tension within the Jewish people between those who embrace

God's laws as benevolent and those who vigorously reject them as oppressive."²² In his letter Rabbi Lapin expressed deep concern over modern liberal Jewish support for abortion and the distribution of contraceptives even "to schoolchildren as if it were candy." He grieved that "organizations such as Planned Parenthood...have such disproportionate Jewish membership that they all but shut down for Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement."²³

The struggles within Judaism in regard to appropriate moral behaviors became as intense as those within Protestant and Catholic congregations. Orthodox Jews, who held firmly to scriptural foundations, were estimated by the American Jewish Identity Survey to represent about 420,000 out of 5.3 million adults in the U.S. who identify as Jewish.²⁴ Liberal perspectives on social and moral issues were taken by the Union of American Hebrew Organizations, representing 1.5 million Reform Jews, and the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, representing about 1.5 million Conservative Jews.²⁵

Jewish women were at the forefront of those who challenged traditional biblical sexual patterns. The Jewish sociologist Judith Stacey celebrated increasing diversity and available choices in family patterns. In a written response to sociologist David Popenoe, who outlined the decline of the American family as cause for alarm, Stacey argued that the traditional family was accompanied by inequity and coercion, particularly for women. She questioned whether lifelong commitment could be compatible with a truly egalitarian marriage. Stacey contended that "Family sociologists should take the lead in burying the ideology of 'the family' and in rebuilding a social environment in which diverse family forms can sustain themselves with dignity and mutual respect."²⁶

Judith Plaskow, a pioneer in the field of feminist theology, challenged traditional Jewish sexual patterns in four lectures that were delivered for the Sherman Lectures 2000 series. She argued that Jewish attitudes toward sexuality needed to be

rethought because contemporary behavior patterns were far distant from traditional values and norms. Plaskow said,

Feminists, abuse survivors, and lesbians, bisexuals, and gay men have raised broad questions about how sexuality is constructed within Judaism, and how sexual norms and family structures intersect with and constitute power relationships within the Jewish community and the larger society.²⁷

Many people who were Jewish by ethnicity have converted to Christianity, creating additional religious tensions. Different estimates of the number of converts are offered by various groups. Spokesmen for Jewish Ministries and Ariel Ministries estimate a total of 100,000. Susan Pearlman of Jews for Jesus says 60,000-75,000 have converted, while Jews for Judaism claims a higher estimate, saying that 300,000 have converted.²⁸

Three Jewish converts to Christianity, Rev. Louis P. Sheldon, Jay Sekulow, and Marvin Olasky, organized strong groups fighting for traditional moral and religious values. Sheldon converted to Christianity as a teen, attended Princeton Theological Seminary, and held Presbyterian pastorates in North Carolina and California. In 1980 he formed the Traditional Values Coalition to defend biblical principles in regard to abortion, homosexuality, and other religious moral issues. Both Sheldon and the Traditional Values Coalition were strongly supported by spokespersons of fundamental religious values, and 45,000 churches affiliated with the coalition.²⁹

Jay Sekulow, chief counsel for the American Center for Law and Justice, appeared before the Supreme Court numerous times in defense of religious freedom. He successfully argued the Lambs Chapel case before the Supreme Court, which “states that religious groups cannot be discriminated against in the use of public facilities made available to other groups.”³⁰

Marvin Olasky, a professor of journalism at the University of Texas in Austin, grew up in Judaism but converted to Christianity, becoming an elder of the Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Austin. Olasky was the father of “compassionate conservatism,” authoring a book by this name to which George W. Bush wrote a foreword. This concept became the theme of Bush’s 2000 presidential campaign. Olasky is editor of *World*, a national weekly news magazine written from a biblical perspective with a circulation of over 335,000.³¹

Religion became a top priority issue in the 2000 presidential campaign. Wishing to distance himself from the moral anxiety created by the sexual indiscretion of Bill Clinton while still in office and wishing to trump the Republicans on moral and religious values, Democratic presidential candidate Al Gore chose Senator Joe Lieberman, a devout Orthodox Jew, as his running mate. Lieberman had openly condemned Clinton’s behavior, writing in his book *In Praise of Public Life*, “The Clinton-Lewinsky saga is the most vivid example we have of the virus of lost standards.”³² Lieberman was the first Jew on a major party ticket, and his friendly enthusiasm and unwavering faith in God received respectful deference from many voters and from the generally antireligious press. However, the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith sharply criticized Lieberman. When Lieberman cited George Washington’s concern that it was not possible to maintain morality without religion, Abraham Foxman of the Anti-Defamation League called the remark “inappropriate” and “unsettling.” He was concerned that the orthodox values held by Lieberman be attributed as appropriate religious views.³³

Reclaiming the Sexual Foundation of the Faith

Welcome to God's beautiful world, my little one. I cannot believe...how quickly I have fallen in love with you...

Suddenly I feel bound to the future in a way I have never felt before...

...newborn children are far more than merely God's way of assuring posterity. They are God's way of bringing about spiritual growth in adult humans and tying us to the future...

...what is more indispensable in preserving families than the laws constraining sexuality?¹

— Daniel Lapin

The sexual revolution turned on its head the traditional Judeo/Christian value system of self-restraint, self-discipline, self-denial, and self-sacrifice in service to God and to others. Sensual self-indulgence became the cultural norm that increasingly dominated the affluent American society. The materialistic consumer culture encouraged hedonistic personal indulgence of desires. Sex became the predominant symbol of consumer indulgence. As a powerful selling tool, sex was used and abused in the service of profit.² Madonna, the sexual diva, pop singer, and actress was even placed before Madonna, the

Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus Christ, in the *Encarta World English Dictionary*, a joint effort of St. Martin's Press and Microsoft, that included in its definitions trendy terms including "yadda yadda yadda" (boring, trite, superficial, unending talk).³

In his article "Selling Desire," Christopher Decker argued that the religious values of personal and sexual constraint became the counterculture.

Chastity is the counterculture value in a consumer society. Chastity is the practice of restraint, not just any restraint, but the restraint of desire... The chaste person...bears witness that a fully human existence consists not in a hedonistic pursuit of pleasure, but in a higher calling to a life of...loving and serving others.⁴

Sexual desire is a powerful force, a force that can not only sell products but can also overwhelm a life and destroy relationships when not carefully channeled. All primary enduring societies have developed moral guidelines in regard to appropriate sexual behaviors. Sexual behaviors are revered and protected by religious doctrines as sacred and cherished relationships, because sexual behaviors create new life. Strict moral guidelines were developed to protect the reproduction and nurture of the future generation. Ideal moral sexuality joins people in nurturing, loving, and enduring family relationships.

The Importance of Traditional Family Patterns

The majority of Americans continues to find their greatest sources of nurture, support, and meaning within their family experiences.⁵ As couples enter marriage, they want their vows of marriage to last a lifetime. Protection of family relationships has traditionally been a primary foundation of religious doctrine and teaching because it is within the continuing family relationships that the unconditional love of God is experienced and demonstrated. Within the ideal family, as outlined

by Jewish and Christian Scriptures, the integrity and worth of each individual are nourished. Commitment to the well-being of others leads to a sense of emotional fulfillment.

A primary function of the “Godly” family is to produce children, raise them, and connect them socially and morally with other family members and with the society at large.⁶ Marriages play an irreplaceable role in support for children and intergenerational continuity. The nuclear and extended family relationships create a social unit that persists through space and time. People are linked to hundreds of other people through the generations past, present, and future. Through the love and raising of children, people develop an emotional and personal attachment and concern for the quality of society and the quality of the future because the future society provides the home for their children and grandchildren

Family provides many other basic functions for individuals and for society. A sense of identity, meaning, purpose, and relatedness are provided by family events and celebrations. The family provides a foundation of emotional and physical support throughout a person’s life. The sexes and ages are integrated in loving concern through “richer or poorer,” “better or worse,” “in sickness and in health.”

Historically and socially, both freedom and morality were tied intimately into the family. The traditional morality of interpersonal behavior outlined love, respect, integrity, and loyalty between husband and wife, and parent and child. An important part of individual freedom included the opportunity to develop and preserve ideas and values by passing them on to the future through the autonomous, continuing relationship with children and extended family.⁷ Through the family, parents have the opportunity to pass on their best ideas and values. Through this process a diversity of ideas is nurtured and passed on to the next generation, providing the checks and balances that protect society from extreme and destructive positions.

The Family and Modern Industrial Democracy

The nuclear family based on the marital relationship has been the predominant family form in the development of the modern industrial system and the predominant family form in Western society. Marriage relationships in Western society support democracy and the worth of the individual by asserting the right of individuals to choose their own spouse and their own place of residence. The competitive achievement orientation of industrial society places the individual under considerable pressure to perform. The nuclear family with its emphasis on emotionality restores the balance to the individual.

Industrialization has also influenced changes in family patterns. Many of the functions that were previously performed by the family were assumed by other social organizations. Industry, schools, churches and synagogues, hospitals, clinics, youth service organizations, entertainment establishments, and restaurants all provide services that were once performed primarily by the family.

In 1965 Eugene Litwak contended that the coexistence of both bureaucratic organizations and strong family relationships is essential for the maintenance of an industrial society. He argued that bureaucratic organizations, while providing efficient, objective, transitory, and specialized services, contribute only a part to the accomplishment of goals. The family and kinship units are essential in providing the personal, emotional, diffuse, and permanent support and guidance necessary for personal development.⁸

In his analysis of four family forms, Litwak outlined the "modified extended family" as the most functional family form in a modern industrial society. The modified extended family, consisting of several independent nuclear families within the extended family system, exchanges economic, emotional, and interactional support services. He noted that the "dissolving family" structures become overly dependent on formal organizations; "isolated nuclear family" structures offer insufficient emotional

support; and dependence only on the “extended family” fails to provide the advantages offered by formal organizations.⁹

Litwak proposed the theory of shared functions where organizations provide specialized, minimal standards of personal support and social values while family groups specialize in non-uniform and private and personal emotional aspects of support. Schools, for instance, provide educational functions, but “without proper family support throughout the educational process, the child will do poorly in school or drop out of school.”¹⁰ In regard to religious education, religious organizations provide teaching and guidance and family support, but the family provides the spiritual nurture and day-to-day support for religious expression through loving behaviors and prayers at bedtime and mealtime and times of need.

In 1984 sociologists Brigitte Berger and Peter Berger analyzed the importance of the nuclear family in their book *The War Over the Family*. They contended that the nuclear family made modernization possible by protecting individuals against dislocations and transformations in the larger society. They argued that the nuclear family is essential for democracy by protecting pluralism within family units, while maintaining a minimum of shared values through societal participation. They predicted that if the nuclear family collapses, modernity cannot be maintained, and we will lapse to a premodern stage.¹¹

Promise Keepers: Mobilizing Men Toward Family

Industrialization played a major role in the reorganization of family relationships. Gary Oliver, a Promise Keepers board member, contended that following the Industrial Revolution

men left their homes and farms to work in factories and offices. Through much of our history, child rearing was shared by men and women. With industrialization, child rearing became a “feminine thing.” Boys no longer had their father’s physical presence as a model and a source for their ideals and identity.¹²

Men became both physically and emotionally absent from family activities. Oliver argued, "I think this process caused men to lose touch with what it meant to be a husband, a father, a friend—and a person."¹³

As men worked to bring in the paycheck, women were left to uphold the moral values of society. Women became the "driving force behind church activities, Sunday-school programs, and getting the family to church in the first place."¹⁴ Gentleness and compassion, although biblically outlined as human qualities, became identified as feminine qualities. Cultural perceptions of "the real man" were directed toward the strong, silent, and emotionless image types such as John Wayne and Arnold Schwarzenegger

Promise Keepers was organized in 1990, when Bill McCartney resigned as coach of the University of Colorado football team to develop a fellowship group for men that encouraged prayer, spiritual renewal, sexual purity, and marriage and family support. Contending that the breakdown of family and social relationships was an outgrowth of the failure of men to shoulder their religious and family responsibilities, McCartney took a public stand for the necessity of a Christian men's movement.¹⁵

McCartney shared his own story of how he had allowed his work to come ahead of fulfilling his roles as a husband and father. As an ex-football coach, McCartney gave "being a Christian" a quality of strength and gave men someone with whom they could identify. The Promise Keepers became a national phenomenon. Rallies were held in cities across the country. Churches would send busloads of men to conference sites across the country. By the summer of 1994, 234,000 men had attended regional conferences.

Because Promise Keepers was for men only, many women were suspicious of the program, concerned that Christian men were organizing to "keep women in their place." Promise Keeper's president, Randy Phillips said that he understood the

concern women might have about the program, especially those who had suffered male abuse. However, Phillips said that women were the beneficiaries of the program. “We’re not asking men to go back with an iron fist. We’re asking them to go back on their knees with a spirit of service and respect for their wives and families.”¹⁶

Focus on Biblical Sexual Morality

The Colorado Statement on Biblical Sexual Morality was presented in May 2000 when Focus on the Family organized the Council on Biblical Sexual Ethics to develop a statement on sexual behavior based on the Bible. Concern was summarized by Peter Brandt, a spokesperson for Focus on the Family, who said, “To a great extent the church has lost its moral moorings on sexual behavior.”¹⁷ The Colorado document contended that God defines sexual behaviors and sexual purity to protect and enhance human happiness. Affirming that marital sexuality should be an “act of love and grace,” sexual behaviors within the heterosexual, monogamous covenantal marriage are outlined as the foundation for sexual morality. The document acknowledged that while God calls some to a life of marriage, others are called to lifetime celibacy. The document notes that although sexual “sins” can be forgiven through repentance and faith in Christ’s atonement, “physical and emotional scars caused by sexual sin cannot always be erased in this life.”¹⁸

Recommendations from the Council on Families in America

The rapidly changing norms that occurred in regard to sexual behaviors and family patterns in the last half of the twentieth century endangered personal and social relationships. In 1996 The Council on Families in America, an organization of academic, professional and religious leaders, expressed alarm that “the steady displacement of a marriage culture by a culture of divorce and unwed parenthood has created terrible hardships

for children.”¹⁹ Noting that no one sector of society was responsible for the decline of marriage and family relationships, they outlined strategies for community, economic, social, health, education, media, legislative, and religious organizations to make marriage stronger.

Religious leaders and organizations were urged by the Council on Families in America to:²⁰

- ♦ Reclaim moral ground from the culture of divorce and remarriage... Recover the viewpoint that sees marriage as an institution of covenantal permanence, as the proper context for raising children, and as a relationship of mutual sharing and comfort between husband and wife...
- ♦ Establish new educational and pastoral programs in seminaries, and in congregations designed to promote commitment to marriage, prepare young people for the parental vocation and uphold the ideal of marital permanence...
- ♦ Establish and strengthen premarital counseling and marital enrichment programs. Strive to establish in your congregation, a culture of marriage and support for marriage...
- ♦ Reach out...to the children of divorce and nonmarriage, offering them care and concrete assistance, while demonstrating by example the value of the marital commitment...

Community Efforts Toward Saving Marriages

In a society where the idea of marital permanence had been weakened, a reversal of the spiraling rates of marital breakups requires community-wide efforts. Marriage is not only a religious institution, but also a civil one. Both transdenominational and state and regional efforts are required to effect change in behaviors. Mike McManus, who developed the Marriage Savers initiative within local congregations, also took

leadership in developing a *Community Marriage Policy*. In this policy, local clergy join to form a united front, agreeing

that no one will be married in a church or synagogue without significant marriage preparation—typically four months of premarital counseling and classes which use both biblical and psychological insights.²¹

Using the strategy of the *Community Marriage Policy*, northwest Arkansas saw a 6 percent drop in divorces in one year, Kansas City, Kansas, saw divorce drop by 35 percent in two years, and El Paso, Texas experienced a 65 percent drop in divorce. Moving to the state level, Arkansas Governor, Mike Huckabee, declared a “marital emergency” and proposed that all Arkansas communities implement *Community Marriage Policies*. Statewide efforts were also implemented in Louisiana by the Louisiana Family Forum and in Oklahoma, where governor Frank Keating called for a reduction of the divorce rate by one-third in ten years.²²

The *Marriage Savers* program proposed congregational training in the development of marriage skills and the training of Mentor Couples. But even without specific programs, churches are encouraged to address the realities of marriage aiming at key understandings:²³

1. Christians should be realistic in talking about the nature of real-life marriage experience so that couples will be better prepared for difficulty and less reluctant to seek help.
2. Christians should be more proactive in teaching both the married and not-yet-married the proven skills that build and maintain relationships.
3. Above all, Christians should take the initiative in dealing with the root causes of divorce. The aftermath of a divorce is the wrong time for the church to express disapproval.

The groups and organizations in which families and family members become involved influence relationships within the family. Churches, synagogues, and other religious organizations have been the major social organizations that have provided family involvement and family support. There is a reciprocal relationship between religion and the family. While the family is the fundamental unit supporting the institution of religion, religious socialization is an important factor influencing images of family roles. The life cycles of family relationships are celebrated through religious ceremonies marking birth, baptism, puberty, marriage, and death.

In her survey book analyzing religion in society, Barbara Hargrove noted the close relationship between family and religion.²⁴

Common assumptions and practices locate the family and religion in close proximity to one another in the society, each supporting the other in a number of ways, including the establishment of personal identity and moral development of the individual.

If the family is having trouble fulfilling such functions, the possibility must be considered that religion is weak in support of that institution.

Restoring the Faith

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

—1 Peter 2:9

If your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light: but if your eye is not sound, your whole body will be full of darkness, If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

—Matthew 6:22

The Judeo/Christian faith has borne witness that life is more than a meaningless moment of lust and indulgence, but rather a calling to seek and find the eternal fulfillment of love in relationship to God and others. The “Love Chapter” of Christian literature (1 Corinthians 13) calls for personal discipline and commitment to the well-being of interpersonal relationships rather than the fleeting feelings and urges of the new morality that require little personal change. Abiding love includes being there for the other through difficult times.

Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude.

Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a)

The Scriptures of the faith call its followers to be light in their culture for moral integrity, even when this involves controversy and requires taking an unpopular countercultural stand. Historically, the church has held a moral beacon that directed people away from behaviors that were destructive to themselves, to their families, and to their communities.

In the last half of the twentieth century, the Judeo/Christian American culture was under intense attack by radical forces exemplified by the sex love of the New Morality, situation ethics of secular humanism, self-aggrandizement of the new Satanism, and service to material abundance and profit. To avoid losing social and cultural power and to avoid facing the cultural ridicule directed by the secular media toward “moral fundamentalists,” many churches recast the message of “repentance from sin” to a message of “forgiveness for sin.” The Grace of God was in many cases reduced to smirking indulgence of sin by an indulgent father. The biblical demands for confession, repentance, renewal, and witness were often softened and compromised.

Biblical Morality Becomes the Counterculture

With the rapid and widespread development of movies, television, the music industry, and journalism, moral socialization was essentially removed from the authority of the church. A few hours a week of religious instruction became overwhelmed by the saturation of moral values espoused by the profit-making industries whose major goal was to attract atten-

tion to sell a product. Images of indulgent sexual behaviors replaced images of the ideals of disciplined sexuality in service to spiritual values. Sex, a powerful emotion and motivator, was used in the service of hedonistic indulgence rather than being protected as the physical and spiritual foundation for the building of family and community where moral and spiritual truths of God could be experienced, nurtured, and passed on to the next generation.

Increasing sexual indulgence and gratification resulted in widespread premarital and extramarital sexual relations, adultery, sexual harassment and abuse, divorce, abortion, homosexuality, pedophilia, and sexually transmitted diseases, even within the church. As the dominant culture moved away from traditional biblical morality, Judeo/Christian moral values became the counterculture in an indulgent society.

Questioning Political Activism

As the culture moved away from biblical morality, conservative/evangelical/fundamentalist Christians remained active and adamant in their crusades to restore and reclaim the political moral foundations. At the close of the millennium, however, some leaders of the Religious Right began to question whether it was still possible to challenge the culture toward a return to traditional Judeo/Christian moral values.

The conservative syndicated columnist, Cal Thomas, with co-author Edward Dobson published a book entitled *Blinded By Might: Can the Religious Right Save America?* They questioned whether Christians should continue to engage in political activism in support of their moral traditions. "Should those who are set apart to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ descend to a lower kingdom so that they resemble the sounding brass and tinkling cymbal of the legions now competing for temporal power?"¹

Responding to this concern, Bruce L. Shelley, professor emeritus of church history at Denver Seminary, contended, "This is America. I am not sure we can ever give up politics in

America...a 'biblical strand' (runs) through American culture. It originates in biblical religion and is carried primarily by Jewish and Christian religious communities." He raised a foreboding question, however. "Dobson and Thomas contend that our language of right and wrong, honor and duty has become a dead language, 'like Latin—quaint, curious, and forgotten.' What if that is true?"²

In February of 1999 Paul Weyrich, a founding father of the Moral Majority and Christian Coalition, wrote a letter to religious followers.

The ideology of Political Correctness, which openly calls for the destruction of our traditional culture, has so gripped the body politic, has so gripped our institutions, that it is even affecting the church.

It has completely taken over the academic community. It is now pervasive in the entertainment industry, and it threatens to control every aspect of our lives...

Cultural Marxism is succeeding in its war against our culture

Therefore, what seems to me a legitimate strategy for me to follow is to look at ways to separate ourselves from the institutions that have been captured by the ideology of Political Correctness...³

Dr. James Dobson (not related to Edward Dobson of *Blinded By Might*), founder of Focus on the Family and a strong Christian supporter of political witness, adamantly challenged these views.

We hear this talk everywhere—suggesting that conservatives quit trying to influence local and national governments...

Cal and Ed extended their definitions of what is political to include the great moral issues of the day...

According to the authors, the clergy and any organized expression of the laity should, by inference, avoid the sanctity of human life, the redefinition of marriage, pornography, gambling, safe-sex ideology, and the assault on religious liberty.

As such, they provide convenient “cover” for pastors who don’t want to take the heat, and for laymen who don’t want to get involved...⁴

Since when did being outnumbered and underpowered justify silence in response to evil?

Crisis in Spiritual Leadership

In the midst of the assault on biblical morality, church leaders and religious followers often weakened. Rather than boldly confronting the secular values, and unwilling to take the aggressive stands required by a counterculture, many church leaders and religious followers acquiesced to pressures for changes in moral policy and practice.

The churches were vulnerable to change. Over the years of power dominance by the church, male dominance held sway. Religious organizations too often failed to counter the destructive elements of chauvinism within the secular culture. In many cases they may even have contributed to it through selective referencing of scriptures. The admonition from Paul’s letter to the Ephesians (chapter 5:21-25), which instructs wives to be subject to their husbands, was often emphasized, while little attention was given to the accompanying admonitions, “Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ... Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church.” The competitive “dog-eat-dog” spirit of the secular political and industrial culture was assumed as appropriate masculine qualities, even in the church, while the “fruits of the spirit” outlined as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23) were relegated as appropriate behaviors for women only.

Women and children too often were seen as pawns to be used for the “glory” of the male. To maintain power dominance, women were played against each other. Emotional and/or sexual mistresses were played against wives, keeping each in a status of anxious and unwholesome insecurity. “Religious” men who were “saints” within church and community organizations too often turned into tyrants at home, demanding respect but sharing little with their wives and children. Family relationships were often relegated to emotional crumbs at the end of a busy day.

The significant contributions of women within society, within the family, and within the church itself were often taken for granted or downplayed as secondary and not essential. The inequality of respect and social power for women created a backlash by women with growing demands for respectful consideration and involvement in society. As women left the primary role of family caregiver to take jobs and responsibilities outside the home, the problems related to family nurture, training, and emotional support increased.

As many members of the faith turned their eyes and looked away, the sacredness of personal and family relationships was too often sacrificed on the altar of the personal desires and personal pleasures of spiritual leaders. Women and children hungry for emotional affirmation were vulnerable targets. The sexual abuse of women and children by male pastors and priests, although violating the tenets of faith, was too often overlooked and covered up.

Religious leaders who used the institution of the faith for their own sexual satisfaction broke down the foundation of trust, building walls that prevented people from seeking and finding the spiritual blessings of God. When monies placed in offering plates with the expectation that they would honor the Faith were used instead to pay millions of dollars in payoffs for the sexual misconduct of religious leaders, the Faith became cruelly compromised.

Calls for Dialogue and Repentance

Although the Industrial Revolution ushered in a growing faith in science, religion continued to be strongly significant in the society of the United States in the last half of the twentieth century. Although religiously diverse, national surveys showed that close to 90 percent of adults claimed some religious preference, and 88 percent claimed belief in a higher power. Of U.S. adults, more than half claimed a Protestant faith, a quarter listed a Catholic faith, and 2 percent were Jews.⁵

In 1956 Reverend William Beahm, professor of Basic Doctrine at Bethany Seminary in Chicago, had admonished his students that it takes only one generation that fails to pass on its moral values to the following generation for advanced civilization to regress to a primitive morality.⁶ Although this concern had been expressed often from the pulpit, churches were loathe to discuss openly the many problems related to changes in sexual and family patterns. In many cases this may have reflected the puritan background of reticence to discuss personal matters that were not talked about in “polite” company. In other situations secrecy was practiced only to protect the reputation and status of the involved victims, the accused, and the institutions themselves.

Secrecy and silence, for whatever reasons, resulted in a perpetuation of unconscionable acts against children and parishioners who should have been able to trust those in authority, but who were instead betrayed. Traditional moral foundations of the Faith were too often weakened by behaviors of those who had been entrusted with the teaching and the promotion of the Faith. In many cases laws were ignored. How could the church preach morality and ethics on the one hand, while ignoring civil laws that applied directly to them?

Churches need to discuss openly these issues and construct carefully written and scripturally faithful policies stating unequivocally what are appropriate behaviors for parishioners, clergy, and staff. The consequences of failure to follow guidelines

should also be formulated and applied. These policies and guidelines should be made known and available to all parishioners, clergy, and staff.

A Complex Pleasure

In this life we have been blessed with an abundance of simple pleasures for our sensual enjoyment. Sunshine sparkling on water, brilliant flowers and sunsets, wind blowing through our hair, cool water on a hot day awaken our senses and excite our spirits. Sexual relationships, however, are not simple pleasures, but rather complex pleasures. Sexual relationships involve the life of another person in action and experience. Relating to another person in a sexual way is a holistic experience involving the physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional aspects of the person's life. Sexual behaviors affect how people feel about themselves and about others, the way they relate to the past and the future, the way they relate to family and friends. Above all, sexual behaviors can produce new life. Biblical faith affirms that life is a sacred gift from God to be treated with honor and respect.

Sexual relationships cannot be considered toys for personal hedonistic and temporary pleasures. Sexual relationships require interpersonal responsibility, not only between the participating parties but also for the sake of the larger community. Holistic behaviors require holistic responsibilities, not only to the sexual partner but also to the family, friends, and community in which the person is embedded.

Traditionally, sexually moral guidelines were developed to protect family and community relationships. Because family, friends and community are drawn into the destructive and painful consequences related to sexual behaviors, consensual sex cannot be appropriately limited to decisions between sexual participants. When casual sex results in sexually transmitted diseases that cause infertility, AIDS, or other debilitating diseases, more people are affected than the persons engaging in the sex act. When adultery results in broken vows and broken marriages, innocent children and spouses are deeply and cruelly hurt.

Responsible Renewal

The Judeo/Christian faiths are, above all, moral. God's Word revealed through the Hebrew prophets and through Jesus holds moral conviction. The foundation of Christianity affirms the Incarnation of the Word of God in Jesus the Christ. Christians believe that in Jesus "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). It is God's Word, revealed through Jesus, that is the Saving Light of the World.

A major collection of the teachings of Jesus was recorded in the "Sermon on the Mount" (Matthew, chapters 5, 6, and 7). In this sermon, Jesus not only affirmed the traditional Judeo moral commandments, but he enlarged them from moral behaviors to commandments for a moral heart. In his teachings Jesus defined a moral social order.

Blessed are those who hunger for righteousness.

Blessed are the merciful.

Blessed are the pure in heart.

Blessed are the peacemakers.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake...

You shall not kill... or even be angry with your brother.

You shall not commit adultery... or even lust.

Honor (also) your marriage.

Speak the truth clearly.

Give to those who beg from you.

Love your enemy.

Feed the hungry.

Heal the sick.

Do not lay up treasures on earth but treasures in heaven.

Jesus knew that to speak the Word of God in this world would incur enemies among those in power. Jesus demanded total allegiance. He told his followers that to follow him would require taking up a cross (Matthew 16:24). Jesus knew that the moral messages he preached were countercultural even then.

He told his followers, “I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (Matthew 10:16).

It is in this moral witness that Christ died. The Word revealed through Jesus shines light upon the darkness of immoral behavior. Too often the followers of Jesus find it easier to reduce his witness to a blood sacrifice for sins, leaving his body on the altar, while neglecting the moral demands his Word makes on their lives.

The writer of the Gospel of John addresses the eternal struggle brought into the world through the incarnation of the Word.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

For God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him...

And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil...

But he who does what is true comes to the light, that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been wrought in God. (John 3:16-21)

In the eighth century B.C. the prophet Hosea spoke to the unfaithfulness of God’s covenant people, calling them to repentance and renewal. The words of Hosea echo in our ears as we grieve over tragic failings of spiritual integrity. However, Hosea assured God’s covenant people that repentance and renewal are the will of God for all ages.

The more they increased, the more they sinned against me. I will change their glories into shame

They feed on the sin of my people; They are greedy for their inequity.

Chapter Twenty. Restoring the Faith

And it shall be like people, like priest. I will punish them for their ways and requite them for their deeds.

They shall eat, but not be satisfied; they shall play the harlot, but not multiply; Because they have forsaken the Lord to cherish harlotry. (Hosea 4:7-10)

Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of steadfast love. break up your fallow ground, for it is the time to seek the Lord, that he may come and rain salvation upon you. (Hosea 10:12)

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