

## **The Family In a Multicultural Society: Undergoing Crisis or Change?**

[From Caleb Rosado. 1990. *Women, Church, God: A Socio-Biblical Study*.  
Loma Linda University Press]

[AUTHOR'S NOTE: Much of the confusion and misunderstanding with regard to the role of women in the church and in society, has to do with the failure of recognizing that the family, like any other institution in society, is influenced by changes taking place in society. The family, like individuals, does not operate in a social vacuum, but in a socio-cultural-historical environment, which changes with time. Unless one understands how society has changed, one will not be able to fully know what is happening to the family, for problems in the one-the family-are in large measure influenced by what is happening in the other-society.

In view of this, I am including in this appendix an article by John Scanzoni, "Family: Crisis or Change?", published in *The Christian Century* and reproduced here with permission from the publisher, with material that I have added, which provides a broader insight into the contents of this book. Because it is more sociological than biblical, it is being placed here in the appendix. But the substance of this appendix enables the reader to more fully understand what has been written in the chapters, by showing *how* and *why* the family and the role of women have changed and need to change both in the church and in society. The sections within quotations marks (" ") represent material from Scanzoni's article, the remainder as well as material in curved brackets ({ }) is Rosado's.]

On January 20, 1977, just four hours after he had been sworn in as the 39th President of the United States, Jimmy Carter asked to see, as his first official appoint a young man by the name of Max Cleland, whom he appointed as Head of Veterans Administration. Max was a triple amputee. Nine years earlier, with only one left to complete his tour of duty in Vietnam, Captain Cleland was asked by his commanding officer to set up a radio relay station on a distant hill. Taking several men and the necessary equipment, he got into a helicopter and moved over to the designated location. As the helicopter lifted after having dropped them off, Max noticed a grenade on the ground where he had touched down. Realizing that it might be his, as grenades sometimes fall off the web gear, he bent down to pick it up, when suddenly there was a blinding explosion.

When Max Cleland regained consciousness, he found that he couldn't move, for both of his legs were blown away at the knees; he couldn't reach out, for his right arm was blown away at the elbow, and he couldn't call out for help, for shrapnel had cut his throat.

Max Cleland wrote his story, from that moment of sudden tragedy in Vietnam, all the way to the pinnacle of political triumph under the Carter Administration, in a book he entitled:

*Strong At the Broken Places*.<sup>1</sup> It is a powerful title, and derives from a line of Ernest Hemingway: “Life breaks us all and afterward many are strong at the broken places.”<sup>2</sup>

Hemingway was right. Life does break us all. Especially is this true for the family in American society which has experienced a great deal of brokenness as a result of domestic conflict and social change throughout history. “From pulpit and newsmagazine alike comes the message that the American family is in crisis. Concerned clergy and laity are asking, ‘What can we do to solve its problems?’” How can we make the family strong at the broken places? The problem is not only having an impact on the family, but also on the wider society, our communities and our schools.

In order to place the problem of the American family in proper perspective, I first have to share with you a short anecdote. The story is told of a drunkard searching under a street lamp for his house key which he had dropped some distance away. A stranger happened by and asked why he didn’t look where it had been dropped. To which the drunkard replied, “Because the light is here.”

How one defines a problem determines the kind of questions which will be asked and the type of solutions given and actions taken. For problem definitions are based on assumptions about the causes of the problem and where these lie.

The drunkard defined the problem as one of not being able to see, thus his obsession with the light. Whereas the real question was, “Where did you loose the key?” Thus, the way a problem is defined determines not only what is done, but also what is not done, or apparently need not be done. One does not look under the street lamp, no matter how much light may be there, if that is not where the key was dropped.

Because preachers, and the press often ask the wrong questions about the family, they often offer solutions which do not bear on where the problem lies. Thus the problem of faulty solutions due to faulty definitions. “But to solve a problem, one must first ask the right

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<sup>1</sup>Max Cleland, *Strong At the Broken Places* (Lincoln, VI: Chosen Books Publishing Co., 1980).

<sup>2</sup>Cited by Cleland in "Introduction."

question. 'How many miles can I sail before my ships falls off the end of the world?' was a terrifying question to ancient seafarers, and one that puzzled people” during the Middle Ages until Columbus came on the scene, and began asking the right questions. “How far must I sail from my western coast before I arrive at my eastern coast?’ And the discoveries that followed made the old question about ‘falling off the earth’ irrelevant,” and have made possible 500 years later America's navigation of outer space.

“During the 14th century, millions of Europeans died from the 'black plague.' 'Why is God displeased with us?' they asked. The answer they got was 'our sin.' The authorities ordered 'that everything that could anger God, such as gambling, cursing, and drinking, must be stopped' (*A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century*, by Barbara W. Tuchman [Random House, 1978], p. 103).<sup>3</sup> But to ask why God was displeased was the wrong question. Five hundred years passed before Louis Pasteur asked the *right* question: 'What are the tiny organisms that carry the black plague?' That question led him to the right answer—an organism that traveled in the stomach of the flea and in the bloodstream of the rat. And that answer brought an end to the black plague.

“Similarly, to inquire 'Why is the family falling apart?' or 'What's wrong with the family?' is as pointless as asking 'How far till I fall off the ocean?' or 'Why is God sending us the plague?' The question to ask if we want to improve the quality of family life is this: '*Why are families changing?*'

#### **Four Areas of Family “Erosion”:**

It is a fact of human history that every generation idealizes the one preceding it, by magnifying the good things and minimizing the bad. Look at what we are doing now in the present revival of the 1950's and 1960's in the media, in politics and in the music.

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<sup>3</sup>References imbedded in the text are part of Scanzoni's article. References in the endnotes are part of Rosado's additional material.

This revisionist image-making is also prevalent in the way the family is today viewed in comparison with ages past. The family of the 1950's and 60's, as stereotyped in television by programs like *Ozzie and Harriet*, is portrayed by many today as the norm of family life, where father goes off to work and mother stays home as a homemaker. Yet anyone who lived through the 50's and 60's knows that *Ozzie and Harriet* was no more an example of the typical American family, then are the Huxtables and the Simpsons in the 80's and 90's in *The Cosby Show* and in *The Simpsons*.<sup>4</sup> Media has the uncanny ability of giving people a false sense of reality, so that if it appears on TV that must be the way it is. Yet it isn't. But because of such myths, often perpetuated through the media, there are four areas where family alarmists are crying "crisis"-- Divorce and marital stability, family violence, the unique needs of children, and sexuality.

"Take *divorce*, for instance. We like to think that in the 'good old days' there was little or no divorce--marriages were stable. But were they? It is true that there were relatively few *legal* divorces prior to the Civil War. Its also true that the frequency of divorce has been growing ever since.

"But historians are uncovering increasing evidence for the 'poor man's [or 'poor woman's'] divorce,' namely *desertion* (*Marital Incompatibility and Social Change in Early America*, by Herman R. Lantz [Sage, 1976]). Throughout colonial times and the 19th century expansion of the western frontier, it was exceedingly simple for men especially--but also for women--to slip away from their families undetected and never return. And it was almost impossible to trace them. There were no social security numbers, no FBI, no computers, no effective way to track down someone who left a family in Cincinnati and took off for Walla Walla. While the actual numbers of annual desertions are unknown, they are thought to be substantial. And since no one knew you once you arrived in Walla Walla, you could claim to be unmarried, and then remarry without anyone being able to trace your former family connections."

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<sup>4</sup>See the excellent special edition of *Newsweek* magazine, "The 21st Century Family," Winter/Spring 1990.

I have friends who live in the Yukon Territory, in Northwestern Canada, who told me that a good number of the residents there are divorced or deserters or single people who have moved there to get away from their past life. Because of such social conditions few people go by their last names; first names only.

“In this century, there have been many more legal divorces for a number of reasons, but one factor is that it's harder to 'drop out' and resurface without being detected. In short, when we look longingly to the past and say, 'My, wasn't it grand when marriages were stable,' we have to face the hard fact that they weren't as stable as we once thought.”

A second area of family “erosion” is *violence*. “We like to think also that our ancestors had harmonious and happy families, and that the violence characteristic of contemporary families didn't exist. However, social historians are becoming increasingly aware of just how much violence went on in pre-20th-century families (*A Heritage of Her Own: Toward a New Social History of American Women*, edited by N. F. Cott and E. H. Pleck [Simon & Schuster, 1979]. pp. 107-135). While a great deal of violence occurs today, there was probably more of it during earlier times because there was then greater community support for it. A 'good' husband routinely beat his wife to keep her in subjection; 'good' parents often beat their children in order to 'get the devil' or the 'sin-nature' out of them.

“In a study of 18th century family life, one historian tells us that walls were paper-thin and houses crowded. One source quotes a woman who said of her neighbors, 'We lived next door, where only a thin partition divided us and have often heard him beat his wife and heard her scream in consequence of the beating' (*ibid.*, p. 111). In short, family violence was not invented during the 1970's-it's been around for a long time.

“A third 'problem area' has to do with *children*. Certain observers argue that our ancestors cared more for children than do today's parents. Critics complain that modern mothers go to work and leave their kids with sitters or in nursery schools; and when they're home, parents plunk kids down in front of the TV. The charge is that parents don't 'relate' to

their children the way they used to. Observers also worry about the family's helplessness to protect young children from exposure to sex and violence.

“Here again historians are helping us sort fact from fiction. Take, for example, the idea of working mothers. Prior to the Industrial Revolution, most women were married to farmers or shopkeepers. They worked with their men from dawn to dusk and simply had no time for 'full-time motherhood' as it came to be defined in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (*Women and Men: Changing Roles, Relationships and Perceptions*, edited by L. A. Cater and A. F. Scott [Praeger, 1977], pp. 93-118).” The idea of a non-working mother, the “kept wife,” was a product of the leisure class, the wealthy class, where the husband was sufficiently well off so as to be able to support his wife. Thorsten Veblen, the 19th century sociologist who coined the term “conspicuous consumption,” also spoke of “conspicuous leisure” in his classic work, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. As Veblen describes it, being able to make enough or possess enough capital so that a man's wife did not have to work, was regarded in the late 19th century as a status symbol and a sign of wealth.<sup>5</sup>

“But who took care of the children while mothers and fathers—and all other able-bodied adults—struggled to survive economically? The truth is that no one gave the matter much thought. Any available adult, or older brother or sister, who happened to be around when the child needed something, did what had to be done for the child.

“But the idea that the child is a “special” person requiring extraordinary attention, nurture and care never entered their minds. Only in relatively recent times has there been concern about 'child development' and 'quality of children.' [At the turn of the twentieth century, children as young as six and seven years of age were employed in the textile industry 12 to 16 hours a day, for less than \$2.00 a week. All this is documented in Jacob A. Riis's book, *How the Other Half Lives* (1890). The writings of Charles Dickens, like *Oliver Twist*, document the same experience for children in Europe.] One historian describes the experiences of most children during that preindustrial era as a 'nightmare' (Cott and Plect, *op. cit.*, p. 118). Clearly,

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<sup>5</sup>Thorsten Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: The New American Library, 1953), p. 53.

many of today's children suffer a great deal. But along with that suffering is a societal concern to alleviate childhood suffering—a concern that did not exist years ago.

“And then there's the matter of the child's exposure to sex. Historians are discovering that because houses were small and crowded, adults could not conceal their sexual activities from children. There were no 'private bedrooms' {except among the affluent}, and children understood sexual details at a very early age from watching adults (*ibid.* ). They also watched farm animals have intercourse and give birth. But no one thought that such 'sexual exposure' would harm a tender child's innocence.

“A fourth 'problem area' has to do with sex itself. Many people—especially those under 30—seem to have the idea that sex came in with the space age: that people didn't have sexual 'highs' before then, that married people didn't really enjoy the sex they had with their own spouses, that unmarried people weren't having sex or that married people didn't have sex with persons to whom they weren't married—that somehow all of this sexual behavior is new. Our difficulty in understanding today's sexual patterns is that we compare them with the 19th century Victorian middle class and stop there. The prevailing idea during the 19th century was that women were *passionless*. As one writer puts it, women 'were [thought to be] less carnal and lustful than men' (*ibid.*, pp. 162-181).

“But historians tell us that prior to the 19th century, female sexuality had not been 'suppressed,' and it never occurred to anyone that women were less sexual beings than men. In fact, precisely the opposite was true. A 15th century 'witch-hunter's guide' warned that 'carnal lust in women is insatiable' (*ibid.*). After analyzing 18th century Massachusetts divorce court records, one historian concludes that the prevailing wisdom was that 'if women made advances they were irresistible' (*ibid.*, p. 125).

“In short, prior to the 19th century women as well as men thought of themselves, and of each other as *passionate* sexual beings, and often their passion led them to deviate from existing community norms. Studies comparing marriage and birth records during colonial times show, for instance, that Elijah and Hannah married on January 1, and on June 1, Hannah gave

birth to an eight-pound, six-ounce baby girl! That kind of historical evidence has emerged often enough to suggest that rather than having enormous premature babies, ordinary people like Hannah and Elijah were having premarital sex (*Family Life and Illicit Love in Earlier Generations*, by P. Laslett [Cambridge University Press, 1977]).

“So when critics today say that premarital and extramarital sex are destroying the family, what they may have in mind is the 19th century middle class family, in which women were supposed to be passionless. But before the Victorian era, sex was much less suppressed, and yet families somehow persisted.

“Therefore, when we consider all four of these areas--divorce and marital stability, family violence, the unique needs of children, and sexuality--and then compare yesterday's with today's families, the contrast is not so striking as some would have us believe. To be sure, there have been and continue to be significant *changes* in the family. But the 'problems' that observers perceive are simply the surface manifestations--the *symptoms* of the underlying changes. Therefore, rather than focus primarily on symptoms--or family problems--it makes more sense to focus on the *changes* themselves. *Why* is the family changing?

“As we think of the four problem areas we have considered, one central theme emerges: a developing concern for the rights, privileges and well-being of the *individual* as over against the maintenance of *traditions*. That development is brilliantly illustrated in *Fiddler on the Roof*. Tevye, the village milkman, struggles with tradition versus freedom. 'On the one hand,' he says, 'parents should arrange their children's marriages.' But on the other hand, he sympathizes with the freedom sought by his daughters to choose their own husbands--to marry the men they love. He experiences enormous dissonance coping with the erosion of tradition; he sees the whole of family and society collapsing around him, culminating finally in the decision of his youngest daughter to marry a gentile rather than a Jew.”



### **The Impact of a Changing Society on the Family:**

Why is the family changing? And what are the symptoms that inevitably accompany these changes? A close examination of the matter gives rise to the discovery that the changes in the family result from the changes which have taken place in the structure of society. We need to realize that the family, like other institutions in a given society, is a product of that larger society, constantly shaped and influenced by the cultural values and structural form of the same. This society is not a static entity, but an ever-changing one. As society changes so also do the various institutions, including the family. Problems in the family cannot be understood without first understanding the changes taking place in society. This is because we today live in a society different from that of generations past. It is important, therefore, to know not only the way society has changed, but also how these changes have influenced the family so that we can understand where we are today in comparison with generations past, and the different challenges the family now faces (see chart on Stages of Societal/Family Change).<sup>6</sup>

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#### **STAGES OF SOCIETAL/FAMILY CHANGE**

<b>SOCIETY:</b>	<b>Agrarian</b>	<b>Industrial</b>	<b>Information</b>
<b>ECONOMY:</b>	<b>Primary Sector</b>	<b>Secondary Sec.</b>	<b>Tertiary Sec.</b>
<b>FORM:</b>	<b>Tribe</b>	<b>Town</b>	<b>Technopolis</b>
<b>STRUCTURE:</b>	<b>Patriarchal</b>	<b>Patriarchal</b>	<b>Egalitarian</b>
<b>WORLDVIEW:</b>	<b>Familial</b>	<b>National</b>	<b>Global</b>
<b>MACHISMO:</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Destructive</b>
<b>SOCIAL POWER:</b>	<b>Family</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Individual</b>
<b>FAMILY SIZE:</b>	<b>Extended</b>	<b>Large</b>	<b>Nuclear</b>
<b>CHILDREN:</b>	<b>Necessity</b>	<b>Liability</b>	<b>Luxury</b>
<b>OPTIONS:</b>	<b>Either/Or</b>	<b>Several</b>	<b>Multiple</b>
<b>LIFESTYLE:</b>	<b>Ritual</b>	<b>Reformation</b>	<b>Revolution</b>
<b>TRADITION:</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Individuals</b>

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<sup>6</sup>For a similar analysis of society as it relates to the mission of the church, see Caleb Rosado, "The Nature of Society and the Challenge to the Mission of the Church," *International Review of Mission*, Vol. LXXVII No. 305, January 1988, pp. 22-37.

This chart does not lay claim to being the only way of suggesting how the family has changed, nor does it imply that these are the only changes which have taken place. It merely reflects a sociological perspective. An anthropologist or a social historian might present facts differently. But the following areas of change are suggested as representative of major changes which have occurred in society and in the family. Movement across the stages does not necessarily mean that the former way of existence has ceased. Life may be carried on by different sectors of the population in all three stages, even though one tends to be the predominant way of life. Often, in fact, the former stage or stages are safe-guarded and their disappearance becomes a means of contention, as people fear they are losing their way of existence.

**Society:** An *agrarian society* pretty much dominated human history until the nineteenth century, when the economic base shifted from agriculture to industry, first in Europe then in the United States, as a result of the Industrial Revolution. The primary result of this shift was that for the first time society, as we know it, came into existence. Prior to this time, because of the economic base, the villages and communities were isolated enough and sufficiently independent of each other to prevent a collective way of life from developing with a sense of unity.

With industrialization, hordes of people were brought together from different walks of life and of different ethnic origins, and were forced to interact with each other, and form some collective sense of existence. The result was the birth of society--that organized group of individuals who share a common way of life. It was also at this time that sociology, as the science whose object of study is society, came into existence, in an effort to provide explanations for the changes taking place.

The *industrial society* held sway until 1956 and 1957, when the *information society* had its beginnings. Two factors brought about the change. The year 1956 was the period in American history when white-collar workers outnumbered blue-collar workers for the first time. "The following year--1957--marked the beginning of the globalization of the information revolution,"

declares John Naisbitt, with the launching of the Sputnik satellite by the Russians. Naisbitt declares that, “the real importance of Sputnik is *not* that it began the space age, but that it introduced the era of global satellite communications.”<sup>7</sup>

We have now shifted from a labor intensive economy to a knowledge intensive one, dominated by the computer and the communications satellite.

**Economy:** The economy of any society usually contains three basic sectors in which people find themselves occupationally. Depending on the society, one type of sector tends to be the dominant one, in the sense that it forms the basis for the economy.

The economic base of the agrarian society was located in the *primary sector*, which involved the gathering or extracting of raw materials. Virtually the entire population in this sector was engaged in hunting, herding or harvesting. The family was both the unit of production and of consumption, as people gathered or produced what they ate. Communities were small, as people usually worked in and around the place where they lived.

The industrial society came into being when the economic base shifted to the *secondary sector*, the turning of raw materials into manufactured goods, such as clothing, furniture and automobiles in workshops and factories. Life now shifted to the cities, people no longer worked in and around their homes, and rarely did they consume what they produced, for now they were working for money with which to buy what they needed. With the majority of people in “blue-collar” occupations, labor unions came into existence to defend the rights of laborers.

As the economy expanded, the need for professional services grew. Eventually the economic base shifted to the *tertiary sector*, which involves the providing of services such as banking, health-care, education, clerical, janitorial, etc., and the processing of information in the new information society. The number of persons in the primary and secondary sectors dwindle, due to mechanization and competition from foreign markets. Today 2% of the population in the

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<sup>7</sup>John Naisbitt, *Megatrends: Ten New Directions Transforming Our Lives* (New York: Warner Books, 1982), p. 12.

U.S. is involved in farming, and less than 29% in manufacturing. Unions lose their membership and influence, as the work force is now predominantly “white-collar” and more diversified, with greater autonomy. The emphasis is now on consumption rather than production, and the rising standard of living encourages a materialistic view of life. The economic needs of the family, as well as the opportunity for career and personal development, enable women to enter the work force in even larger numbers. Predictably, these dramatic social changes do not take place without altering patterns of family development and its values.

**Form:** With the shifts in society have also come corresponding shifts in the social form or organized pattern the society takes. In the agrarian society the family--the *tribe* --with its extended kinships and close-knit sense of community, dominated the structural form around which society was organized. "Tribal societies are compact and enclosed."<sup>8</sup>

In the shift to industrialization, the small *town*, where everyone knew each other, became the dominant form of social organization. But now in the information society, the sprawling *technopolis* with its massive network of communications and human interrelations dominates society.

Whereas in the tribal form the population was a few hundred, and in the town several thousand, in the technopolis the numbers are in the millions. The ever-increasing size of these large urban centers is converting them into what urbanologists call a "megalopolis"--a continuous stretch of cities and towns and their interconnecting hinterland to form one huge urban mass. These new urban centers might well carry new names like, Boswash (Boston to Washington), Chi-Pit (Chicago to Pittsburg) and San-San (San Francisco to San Diego).

However, there is a new trend in urban development called "neotraditionalism," a return to traditional values and a sense of community with the rebirth of the small town in America.<sup>9</sup> This sense of community and small-town atmosphere was pretty much lost with the

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<sup>8</sup>Harvey Cox, *The Secular City*, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup>Lisa Christopher, "Can county return to small-town life?" *Sunday News*, Lancaster, PA, February 25, 1990; Amy Saltzman, "The Quest For Community," *U.S. News & World Report*, April 9, 1990, pp. 75,76.

growth of suburbia and shopping malls in the 60's, 70's and 80's. One of the reasons for the development of suburbia after World War II, was due to "white flight" from the cities as a result of the movement of Blacks to the northern from the South, and the arrival of Puerto Ricans and Mexicans seeking economic opportunity in the 1950s and 60s. With the wave of Asians in the 1980s from Southeast Asia, and the ever-increasing numbers of Latinos, America's cities are becoming increasingly multicultural. The question that we have to confront this new movement in urban development is, "Is an underlying reason for the rise of neo-traditionalism a reaction to the ever-increasing numbers of Blacks, Latinos and Asians that have taken over the cities and are now spilling into the suburbs and countryside?"<sup>10</sup>

Such social upheaval and change, as we are experiencing today in a shift from agrarian and industrial societies to the new information and multicultural society, is most disturbing to many people who would like to keep things as they were. It is most natural for people to hang on to those values from the past which give them a sense of security in the present. And communal life with one's own group provides just that. As Scott Standish, the chief of advance planning for Lancaster County, PA, declared in an article, "With urbanization and suburban sprawl, everything is blended together, and we have lost our identity."<sup>11</sup> His solution is to "direct growth where we think it is most appropriate without destroying the unique characteristics of the area."<sup>12</sup> The question is: Does that "directed growth" include a multicultural development which fosters a unity in ethnic diversity? This query does not question a return to those enduring values of the past with which to guide our future, such as the values of community and being neighbor, with warmth, caring and compassion. But the face of the American family has changed, it has a little more color now and speaks with a slight accent and the spread on our family table is a little more varied and spicy. And we are all the better for it.

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<sup>10</sup>See Caleb Rosado, "Building Values Along With New Town," in Letters to the Editor, *Sunday News*, Lancaster, PA, March 11, 1990.

<sup>11</sup>*Sunday News*, Feb. 25, 1990.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*

Yes, let's build our new communities that foster a sense of communal life, and will teach our children the values of what it means to be neighbor, with love and compassion. But in the process let us not forget the one value that has made America the great nation that it is today-- the value of *inclusiveness*. This is the value which says, "Because we are all God's children and worship the same Divine Parent, that makes us brothers and sisters. Welcome to the family; welcome to the neighborhood!"

**Structure:** The structural organization of the family in the agrarian society was dominated by a *patriarchal* social structure in which the father or the patriarch was the sole ruler and singular authority. Upon his death the authority was past to the eldest son, the primogeniture. Women knew and for the most part kept their place in society.

During the industrial society a *patriarchal* form of organization still dominated the family structure, though changes were beginning to take place. In the information society, with the rise of the women's movement and concern for the individual, an *egalitarian* form of family structure is starting to influence the family, as men and women more and more view each other as equal partners in an experience of mutuality. However, the old patriarchal forms of family organization still persist in many communities and ethnic groups, especially among Hispanics and Southern Europeans.

**Worldview:** In an agrarian society the parameters within which people viewed reality did not extend much beyond the tribe, the family, the small commune. The family was the center of everything, with the various members knowing well their place and role they had to discharge. It was a close-knit community, homogeneous community with a *familial* worldview, where everyone knew where they stood.

In the industrial society the worldview was *national*. There was a sense of strong nationalism, building up the nation, developing a sense of peoplehood. But there was also a strong ethnocentrism, where an emerging people and nation viewed their culture and way of life as central to everything they did.

In the new information society, the shift in view is now *global*. As a result of multinational corporations, the computer and the communications satellite, an international market economy and political network have given rise to a global perspective which now transcends national boundaries. One example will suffice. The ever-present threat of nuclear war transcends national ideologies and places everyone on this planet in the same potentially sinking ship, with no life boats. In such a situation, the “every-man-for-himself” attitude of nationalism, now gives way to a “we are the world” and a “united we stand, divided we fall” chorus of concern. In the information age, the slogan is “think globally while acting locally.”

**Machismo:** Machismo is a greatly misunderstood concept in many circles, especially in view of the changes for greater equality taking place in society. In essence *it is an exaggerated orientation towards life where males see their role in society as being one of protector, provider and predator*. The need for this mode of living around which all areas of life are organized is best understood as a way of responding to the socio-economic situation wherein people find themselves. Depending on the type of society in which an individual or group find their existence, machismo can be a dominant force in that society or a less imposing one.

Thus, because of Catholicism's strong communal ties and group integration within a patriarchal society, resulting in a centralized authoritative system, machismo tends to be most prevalent in those countries where the Roman Catholic religion dominates the social life, such as Italy, France, Portugal, Spain and all of Latin America. By way of contrast, Protestant societies, with their strong sense of individualism and independence, have not experienced machismo to the same exaggerated degree as have these Mediterranean societies and their former colonies in the New World.

These two differing worldviews--communitarian versus individualistic--represent two distinct though not dissimilar orientations towards life which still differentiate Catholics from Protestants.<sup>13</sup> According to Andrew Greeley, it is here where the fundamental difference

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<sup>13</sup>Andrew Greeley, "Protestant and Catholic: Is the Analogical Imagination Extinct?" *American Sociological Review*, 1989, Vol. 54 (August:485-502).

between Catholicism and Protestantism is to be found, and not in doctrinal beliefs and ethical issues.<sup>14</sup> Both life-organizing perspectives gave rise to two different views of structuring towns: the "plaza" model centered between the church and the state house, with community life taking place in the center, versus the "main street" model where the various aspects of life were independent of each. It also impacted human relations, the one based on communal life and social integration as opposed to independent individualism. This resulted in a different view of God—one immanent, involved in the socio-political life of the community; the other transcendent, removed from the community and found only in the private, personal sphere.<sup>15</sup> Machismo comes out of a communitarian approach to life, where the concern is with the preservation of the community (see graphic).

### **MACHISMO AND SOCIETAL ORGANIZATION**

	<b>CATHOLICISM</b>	<b>PROTESTANTISM</b>
<b>WORLDVIEW:</b>	<b>Communitarian</b>	<b>Individualist</b>
<b>LAYOUT OF TOWNS:</b>	<b>"Plaza Model"</b>	<b>"Main Street" Model</b>
<b>HUMAN RELATIONS:</b>	<b>Social Integration</b>	<b>Independence</b>
<b>VIEW OF GOD:</b>	<b>Immanent</b>	<b>Transcendent</b>

***Machismo arises out of a communitarian way of life***

In an agrarian society, for example, one with little to no infrastructure--such as police protection, health-care system and a system of governance--machismo had a *positive* function, in

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<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 486. Max Weber and Emile Durkheim—two of the founding fathers of sociology—held that these two different approaches to life and group relations impact the economic development of societies and the individual's relationship to the same, respectively. Weber held that the Protestant focus on individual achievement led to economic success, while the communitarian ethic of Catholicism tended to impede education and economic achievement (*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Scribners, 1958). For Durkheim, the relationship between communal integration and a low incidence of suicide in Catholic countries stood out in sharp contrast to the individualism and high rate of suicide prevalent in Protestant countries (*Suicide* (New York: The Free Press, 1951).

<sup>15</sup>It is not a coincidence that both communism and liberation theology tend to flourish most in Roman Catholic societies, for both orientations promote a communal way of life and belief system. It is important to note that First Century Christianity was also communitarian in nature (see Acts 4 & 5).



that the reputation of a man to protect and provide for his family extended beyond the family to the community at large. This reputation gave his family a sense of security, in what was otherwise an unprotected environment, and elicited a sense of respect from the community for what belonged to the man. “Hey, you better watch it. That's the daughter of Don Rodriguez, and you don't want to mess with him.” To be able to stand up, no matter what the social position of the man was, and defend what was his was an admirable trait that no man could afford to be without in an agrarian society, and which women desired to see in their men.

The negative side to this machismo was a “double standard” that tolerated a certain amount of sexual indiscretions towards women, in that it allowed a man the “privilege” of pursuing sexual improprieties as a form of social reward for the responsibility of providing for his family. It is this aspect of machismo that is usually the focus of much of the criticism of this form of social orientation. The real macho, of course, was the man who not only had the respect of the community, but of his family as well. This was the man who not only was the provider and protector of his family, but also the “priest”—the spiritual guardian—who limited his pursuits to the moral development of his family and of the community.

With a shift to the industrial society with its built-in infrastructure and movement to the city in pursuit of economic gain, the role of the male changed. The need to protect the family in this environment was no longer as crucial a demand of the male as it was in an agrarian/rural context. Because of economic needs which moved the wife to find employment outside the home, or in some cases was the only one to find a job, the role of provider took on new meaning. In this kind of social context, machismo, with its exaggerated role of the male, takes on a *negative* or dysfunctional aspect, which tends to tear down instead of build up the family.

In the information society, with its fine--spun network of communication and interchange, the role of the various members of the family changes even more. The availability of services to all members of the family, bring about a needed change of attitude towards the role that each member is to play in the well-being, maintenance and development of the family. In this social context a sense of equality and mutuality tends to be more of the norm. The

continued expression of machismo in this context tends to be *destructive* to survival of the family as family, for it forces the various members of the family to be subservient to one of its members, the father. When the man of the house continues to make unrealistic demands of his family, thereby limiting their social, educational, career, spiritual and other forms of development, and enforces these demands with physical aggression or pathetic pronouncements such as, "I am the head of this house, therefore I am to be obeyed!", the destruction of the family has set in and the sapping away of the vitality of the individual members has begun, resulting in an increase of divorce.

This often happens because a change of society does not always result in a change of mindset. Thus men may find themselves living in a new social environment, but operating under an old mental frame of reference. This is especially true of people that come to an urban context from a rural environment, as is the case for many first-generation Hispanics, Italians and others from strong patriarchal/rural societies, with a traditional cultural heritage.

This does not mean that the husband and father no longer has a role of provider, protector and priest to play out in the family, for he does. But changes in society bring about a new orientation towards life resulting in changes in the attitudes, understanding and significance of the role of being male, husband and father in today's family. The greatest service that a father--a true macho--can provide for his family is the total development of every member to their fullest capabilities, in a supportive, caring and nurturing environment.

This will be the new direction that males will have to take in the 1990's, for according to John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene, in their book *Megatrends 2000: Ten New Directions For the 1990's*, the 1990's promise to be the "decade of women in leadership." "Today about 74 percent of men work. But 79 percent of women with no children under eighteen work. So do 67 percent of women with children, almost as high a percentage as men. Half of women with

small children work, too.”<sup>16</sup> Though males were the prototypical worker during the industrial society, the new worker in the information is typically a woman.<sup>17</sup>

To function in the information society of the 1990's males will need to be resocialized from machismo to mutuality. This is because machismo, a byproduct of the agrarian society, is now an obsolete orientation towards life, with no functional value in the 1990's.

Religious groups, with a patriarchal view of God and social structure, who deny equality to women and refuse their ordination to the ministry, are operating with a *religious machismo—an appeal to God to legitimize and justify social inequities and male domination of the family*. [See chart Sexism and Ordination.] Such a stance is not only an affront to the gospel, but is also anachronistic, in the sense that while people are living in the information age, they often think with an agrarian mindset, all the while utilizing methodologies from the industrial age. To be relevant both church and society must be current in both *mindset* and *methodology*.

**Social Power:** The classical definition of power is that of Max Weber, who defines power as the ability to influence the behavior of others even against their wishes.<sup>18</sup> "Throughout history, power has been associated with institutions,"<sup>19</sup> first with *families*, then with the *state*, and today with the *individual*. In the past people were obeyed by virtue of their position in the family. In the development of nation-states, the state was the source of power. But if we are learning one thing from all the changes taking place in Europe and in South Africa today, it is the power of individuals--Mikhail Gorbachev, Lech Walesa, Nelson Mandela, for starters. Authority now rests with those who have the knowledge and the information. We are moving from a "capital-intensive" society to a "brain-intensive" one. In the information society, the old adage--"knowledge is power"--has taken on new meaning. Knowledge has become the rare commodity, the bargaining chip in an information economy.<sup>20</sup> Appeals to old

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<sup>16</sup>John Naisbitt & Patricia Aburdene, *Megatrends 2000: Ten New Directions For the 1990's* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1990), p. 217.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 220.

<sup>18</sup>Max Weber, *Economy and Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), p. 926.

<sup>19</sup>*Megatrends*, p. 309.

<sup>20</sup>Naisbitt, *Megatrends*, p. 15-17.

forms of authority no longer carries any weight. Yet, as Naisbitt and Aburdene declares, "This new primacy of individual power will only slowly be acknowledged."<sup>21</sup>

**Family Size:** Shifts in society have also brought about shifts in the size of the family. In the agrarian society the large *extended* family, with its extended kinships of children, parents, grandparents, and relatives as a close-knit community, served as the model of family size.

In the industrial society, the family was still quite *large*, but more limited to parents and children, and in many cases grandparents. The limitations placed on the family were now due to its economic needs as well as competition for living space in the towns and cities.

In the information society, the family is now *nuclear*, meaning just the parents or parent and children or child. Today the old sociological definition of the family, as a social unit of two or more persons living together who are related to each other by blood, marriage or adoption, no longer holds true. Divorce and remarriage, homosexual relationships and artificial insemination have permanently altered traditional family patterns. The result is not the destruction of the family, as many doomsayers believe--for the family will always be in existence, as no society is possible without the family--but its continual reshaping in the midst of an ever-changing society.

**Children:** In an agrarian society a large number of children was a *necessity* not only to run the farm, but also as an agrarian form of social security or investment for the future, when parents could no longer take care of themselves.

In the industrial society, with its competition for space, work opportunity and low wages, having a large family was a *liability*, even though older children could also share in the work-load and bring in an income to help with family expenses.

In the information society, children tend to be viewed as a *luxury*, with potential parents often asking themselves before taking on the responsibility of a family: "Can we afford to have

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<sup>21</sup> *Megatrends 2000*, p. 309.

children?” With both parents working, children mean an investment in time as well as finances. Thus, families tend to be quite small because of social and living demands.

**Options:** The matter of choices and available options increase as we move from an agrarian/rural society to an urban/technological one. Urbanization contributes to the freedom of choice. In an agrarian society the choices were small, essentially limited to an *either/or* type of choice. The small towns and cities of the industrial society gave one *several* choices, more than before. However, the present technopolises of the information society give one *multiple* choices, more than one can indulge.

As we move from an *either/or* society, to one of multiple options, freedom of choice increases. But so does the need for discipline, because one cannot exercise all the available options. And here is where the difficulty comes in. If our young people are not being prepared for the real world, they will experience a situation which in sociology is called, *anomie*--a state of normlessness, where the old guidelines are of no help and there is nothing to take their place to provide guidance in the new environment.

**Lifestyle:** The age of *ritual*, where things were done by rote, handed down from one generation to the next without much thought involved, is over. But so is *reformation*, concerned with improving things, without necessarily changing them. Today we are living by *revolution*--a complete overthrow of things, salvaging from the past only that which is functional to the needs of the present and has a usable future.

**Tradition:** The traditional way of viewing the family as an *institution* has changed to viewing the family as a group of *individuals*, as we move from an agrarian society to the information society.

In seeking to understand the change of focus from the family as an institution to the family as a group of individuals, “we discover that the changes result from the erosion of ancient traditions--*traditions that favored the family as an institution over its individual members*. During past eras, the institution had priority over the individual; and for the sake of the institution the individual was called upon to sacrifice. Even today some observers continue to perceive the

family as being larger than life—larger than people. They see the family as a pattern into which people are fitted.” The concern is with the family as an institution as over against its individual members. So when individuals do not fit the perceived pattern of what the family should be like, something must be wrong.

This focus on the institution at the expense of individuals has created serious problems for the family in society. Take, for example, the situation of *singles* in society. Since the focus of society is on families, what do you do with singles? The answer is nothing, for they are looked upon as some sort of aberration or deviance from the norm. Something must be wrong with them, especially if the single happens to be a woman. If it is a man, then the usual response is, “He sacrificed marriage in order to have a good career.” If it is a woman, however, the response is usually: “What a pity! Such a nice person. I wonder why she never got married?” As though the *question of choice* is never considered.

What do we do with the physically impaired, the handicapped and homosexuals, as well as those who have chosen alternate conjugal life styles or who have acquired AIDS? Since these do not fit the pattern of a normal family, children whose parents ought to be proud of, the result is rejection, neglect, or worse, indifference. This focus on the family as an institution has resulted in making people the servants of the family, instead of the family being the servant of people.

### **The Sabbath Principle:**

Where does the solution lie to the dichotomous situation of institution versus individuals? The solution is to be found in the Sabbath Principle, a principle long neglected in society because many have rejected the Sabbath as a day of worship, while those who do observe the Sabbath, have failed to recognize this most important principle behind the day. The principle was first enunciated by Jesus Christ, when He declared: “The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27). The Sabbath Principle is the idea that *the institution exists for the purpose of serving the needs of individuals and not individuals the needs of the*

*institution.* Both the Sabbath and the family were established by God at creation, and were given for the purpose of serving human needs—spiritual development, human fellowship and the propagation of the human species. Throughout human history, however, the emphasis shifted from the purposes of these institutions—to meet human needs—to the institutions themselves. Thus, both institutions have often been used as arenas for oppression rather than liberation and human development. Jesus came to liberate both. It is from this principle where we get the Servant Model of leadership, that those in leadership are to serve their followers. Thus the institution is to serve its constituents and not the other way around. The successful companies, businesses and organizations are those that follow this principle.

“In the 17th century, John Milton {had an understanding of this principle when he} insisted that God did not create human beings for marriage; rather, God created marriage for human benefit. Therefore, said Milton, how much sense does it make to assert that a loving God forces people to suffer in an arrangement that God originally designed for their happiness? 'No so sense at all,' he concluded, arguing that the churches and government of his day should allow divorce on the grounds of what we now call 'mutual incompatibility.'<sup>22</sup>

“In fact, it took more than 200 years for Milton's ideas to permeate the thinking and behavior of ordinary people. It wasn't until the late 19th century that divorce became relatively common in America; and immediately, certain critics began to predict the extinction of family and society. Interestingly enough, many critics connected the rising divorce rate with feminism and its goal of suffrage (*Divorce in the Progressive Era*, by W. L. O'Neill [Yale University Press, 1967]). But, of course, feminism was and is much more than that: it is the right to be an autonomous person—one who acts out of self-determination and for self-actualization. Milton says that marriage should serve the person; the feminist argues that marriage has ill served women (as well as men) and that marriage must change to better serve the needs of women (as

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<sup>22</sup>For a fuller exposition of Milton's position see V. Norskov Olsen, *the New Testament Logia on Divorce: A Study of their Interpretation from Erasmus to Milton* (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1971).

well as men). The logical outcome of the argument is that if a particular marriage doesn't change, it becomes legitimate to leave rather than to endure it.”

**Problems Are Symptomatic of Changes:**

“As marriage has changed to accommodate individual rather than traditional interests, Milton's ideas have become increasingly acceptable. During prior decades, for instance, men married for sex, but they also wanted their family's life style to be a showcase proving to themselves and to the world that they were worthy providers. Women, on the other hand, married mostly for companionship and to have a provider. But since World War II, certain demands have been added to the marriage. Women want *satisfying* sex out of marriage, and they want intimacy-deep friendship. Some men are beginning to desire intimacy as well.” This need has always been present, but has now been made prominent with the shift to concerns with the individual.

“Furthermore, increasing numbers of women want their marriages to facilitate their occupational efforts in the same way that marriages have made it possible for men to pursue their occupations. Many women see occupational involvement as the only sure means to guarantee their autonomy. Given this enlarging range of significant demands placed upon marriage, its no puzzle that there are so many divorces. Perhaps we should ask why there aren't more. But plainly, divorce is a symptom of underlying changes. It is a painful symptom that no one welcomes.

“The basic reasoning that explains changes in divorce patterns also explains changes in patterns of family violence. Recent research has shown that next to the police, the family is the most violent institution in American society. Most murders are committed by people who know their victims personally, and a great proportion of these involve the killing of a family member. Besides guns, those who engage in family violence use an assortment of other weapons, including knives, boiling water, and just plain old fists. But since men are generally stronger than women, they almost never lose a fist fight. Hence, the term 'battered wife' has



entered the English language during the past decade. While the term is new, battered wives have been around for a long time.

“But why is the term so new, if the behavior is so ancient? The answer has to do with a change in traditions, with the individual coming to be valued as much as, or more than, the institution. While wife-beating has apparently always been common, it was in earlier times accepted as being a 'normal' part of family life. As long as most women believed that tradition, they never complained about their beatings, nor dared talk about them openly with other similarly abused women. But that tradition is being eroded. It is being replaced with the idea that protecting a woman's body is more important than holding a family together, that violence need not be tolerated for the sake of perpetuating a marriage.

“Today virtually every city in America has a shelter where battered women can go to flee their husbands. In many cases the husband pursues his wife and wants her back—not that he intends to stop beating her, but chiefly because he insists on holding his family together. Consequently, because women are rejecting the idea that family itself is more important than one's own physical well-being, the violence that has been hidden for centuries is finally being talked about, and emerging into public view. And that's the very sore 'problem' called 'family violence' of which we are becoming increasingly aware. But the emergence of the 'problem' is symptomatic of underlying changes—changes away from {an agrarian society to an information one, with its resulting change away from} traditions that made the family pre-eminent over the individual, and gave the man unquestioned authority over his wife—all in the name of family stability. And in place of those former traditions, the care of the woman's body and of her human dignity have come to be regarded as more significant than the institution itself.

“That same shift—from institutional pre-eminence to individual rights—also applies to sexuality. Just as family violence was tacitly accepted during former times, so was violation of community sexual standards—especially by men. While they had the privilege of discreetly looking for sex both before and after marriage, women were not supposed to have that privilege. That 'double standard,' along with the Victorian idea that women were passionless,

placed 20th century men at a substantial advantage over women. But why did men have these freedoms while women did not? There were many reasons, but the idea that 'nice virtuous women' were the foundation of the family and of society had much to do with women's sexual limitations. These limitations were defended in the name of the family as an institution.

“But throughout the past 25 years we've seen that tradition being replaced by the idea that women have the same sexual rights as men. Moreover, if sexual liberties are indeed a threat to the family, as some critics maintain, the current idea is that men are as responsible for the situation as women. Increasingly, women refuse to be the sole *moral guardians* of {the} family--insisting instead that if the family requires 'moral guardianship,' then men have to become co-partners with women in that enterprise.

“Perhaps the most troubling byproduct of this increasing sexual freedom is the steep rise in the numbers of unmarried adolescent mothers. More and more teen-age females are having intercourse at an increasingly younger age. Yet the males with whom they're having sex seem to feel little responsibility to protect their partners from pregnancy. These teen-age males seem to be the last bastion in the long history of the sexual exploitation of women. Adolescent women have accepted the idea that they have the right to enjoy sex. Unfortunately, they don't have {the moral undergirding which enables them to refrain from sex until marriage, nor} the sense of autonomy that would lead them to refuse sex if their own life-chances (as well as those of their as-yet-unborn children) are in danger of being damaged by male reluctance to use the simple means of contraception readily available.

“Among adults, a troubling byproduct of increasing sexual liberty is the discovery that sex does not equal intimacy. Gay Talese's . . . best seller *Thy Neighbor's Wife*, filled with page after page of extramarital affairs, including his own, missed the distinction completely. While in years gone by the kinds of marriages held together solely by the tradition that 'stability is the best policy' often lacked intimacy, relationships held together solely by sex may be equally devoid of intimacy. And yet, as part of the pursuit of individual rights that is changing the American family, intimacy is coming to be valued as highly as sex.

“The difficult of balancing differing interests also emerges in the last of the four 'problem areas.' Critics worry that while adults are busy pursuing their own rights, children get left in the backwash. There are, for example, the alleged negative effects on children of divorce and of working mothers. More recently, the question of children's own rights has come into sharper focus. What demands can children legitimately make on their parents? Some children in their 20s have gone to court to sue their parents, alleging that they were not raised properly, were mistreated as children, and as a result suffer from poor self-esteem. Recently we have read of the case of Walter Polovchak, the 12-year-old son of Russian immigrants who in 1980 refused to leave America when his parents decided to return to the Soviet Union. The U.S. government granted the boy temporary asylum, but some critics disagreed with that decision. As one put it, 'I think it's a bad precedent to let a 12-year-old boy tell his parents what he wants to do.'

“Clearly, the question of how to do right by today's children is an unsettled one. Nevertheless, it seems to me that the basic trend of changing relationships between adult men and women can simultaneously be enormously beneficial to the rights and well-being of children. The desire of growing numbers of women to seek autonomy through activities *outside* the household can be a great boon to children if, alongside this trend, there occurs a corresponding move to bring men *into* the household, to involve them as fully as women in child care and child nurture. Films such as *Kramer vs. Kramer* help to impress the public with the fact that some men want to be deeply involved in parenting; moreover, they can be just as good at it as women.

“The tradition that every male must be a successful achiever dies hard. Nevertheless, some men are coming to realize that for decades they've been cheated by being cut off from child nurture. It was thought that the family as an institution would suffer if men gave up their work roles for parenting roles. But once again we observe the force of individual rights changing the family. As men came to believe that they *personally* will be better off if they get more involved in child nurture, and that the children will be better off as well, we can expect greater number of men to begin pursuing those kinds of benefits. And if men actually do change

their parenting patterns, while women change their occupational behaviors, the positive consequences of that kind of parental symmetry could be profoundly beneficial for the family.

### **Towards a More Balanced View of the Family:**

“But,’ responds the critic, ‘with all this talk about individuals giving their rights and “doing their thing,” is there any place for the family as an institution? Is there any sense in which family traditions and family obligations remain important in today's world?’ Of course there is, and the trick is to balance the well-being of the institution with the well-being of the individuals that make it up.” Our concern is not in throwing out the baby with the bath water; we just want *clean bath water*.

“But how can that be done? Freud said many things that today we totally reject. But now and again, he made statements that remain simple yet timeless. One of these classic insights was his assertion that more than anything else, adults need to *work* and to *love* (*Themes of Work and Love in Adulthood*, by N. J. Smelser and E. Erickson [Harvard University Press]). And we might add that children need to *love* and they need to *learn to work*. Therefore, to identify the optimal conditions under which the family can be a prosperous and robust institution, and to establish the kinds of traditions that will best meet the needs of its members during the decades ahead, we need to consider Freud's insights. The ideal family institution is one that provides maximum opportunities for all its members to *love* and to *work* to the fullest extent possible.

“Traditional family structures have prohibited most women from enjoying meaningful *work* experiences.” This does not mean that women cannot have a meaningful work experience as homemakers. However, “their labors were generally limited to the home, even if their talents would have permitted them to enjoy the rewards of paid employment. And those same family structures have prohibited men from enjoying meaningful *love* experiences. They were too busy making money to learn to love and to share themselves, and to participate fully in the nurturing of family relationships. And who suffered from these limitations on both sexes? {The

whole family suffered!} Women suffered, not only because they lacked meaningful work, but also because they didn't get the kind of love from their men that they needed and deserved. Men suffered because they couldn't enjoy the release from financial anxiety that comes from having a co-provider in the household, and also because they were unable to receive and participate fully in the love their wives and children held out to them. And children suffered because they grew up {with lousy parental role models,} repeating the same dreadful patterns. Those patterns sprang from traditions in which the whole assumed more importance than its parts.” Thus, the “sins of the fathers” [parents in this case] are past from generation to generation.

The concern of the critics to go back to the family structures and traditions of another period, is a nostalgic throwback to a bygone agrarian age that no longer exists, nor are its forms functional in the present information society. Therefore, we must avoid the temptation to romanticize any one society and place it on a pedestal as the ideal and norm for all time. Each is functional to its time period, and is determined by the prevailing social and family needs.

“We are heading now toward new traditions that *balance* individual with institutional well-being. That balance will come about through the total involvement of all family members in meaningful work and intense love and caring.

“What can our churches do to help achieve that balance? First, they must resist the temptation to doomsaying: 'Never ask “Oh, why were things so much better in the old days?” It's not an intelligent question' (Eccl. 7:10, TEV). Second, they should encourage married persons to analyze their own marriages and consider whether they are governed either by traditionalism or by some form of individualism. In either case, couples should then ask themselves whether theirs is a satisfactory arrangement, or whether a richer marriage might be possible through a greater balance of the two poles. For those seeking greater balance, the challenge is to provide practical suggestions for involving all family members in meaningful work and love opportunities.

“It is also vital that the local church become a support group--a caring community--for persons struggling with these sorts of difficult but not insuperable tasks. Often churches are faulted for following instead of leading society. In this case, however, the church may be the one institution in our society uniquely suited to raise aspirations aimed at new family traditions, and to provide a framework for their attainment.” Such a compassionate and caring environment will enable the family to become *strong at the broken places!*