

OUR INTERNATIONAL

Call to be Family



Fall/Winter 1999

Volume 22 Number 3



International Lutheran Marriage Encounter

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ILME – 25 Years of “Loving Couple Gifts”

Dear Lovers,

In our local area, we have an annual tradition of an Epiphany party. Each couple is asked to bring a “loving couple gift.” Of course, each couple tries to make their gift look intriguing and desirable. Numbers are assigned and we have a drawing. When our number is drawn, we can choose a gift from the pile or a gift another couple has already chosen, if it looks more appealing. That couple then gets to choose all over again. The gifts change hands many times until, finally, the last gift is chosen from the pile. Then all the gifts are opened to reveal the surprises within. It is great fun.

Lutheran Marriage Encounter is God’s “loving couple gift” to us. We get to unwrap His gift on the Weekend and find wonderful surprises. Our coupleness is renewed and our whole outlook on life is refreshed. He wraps us in His love – and it shows – like the packages on the pile. The witness of our visibly renewed relationship can be used by

God to create curiosity in other couples. This provides us the opportunity to share Marriage Encounter with them when they ask. We are “loving couple gifts” to our world.

We know that God gifted us (Hal & Marilyn) with a new understanding of His love when we experienced our first Marriage Encounter weekend in December, 1976. By Sunday, our hearts were bursting with love. We returned home, eager to find ways to share it and to help make the Weekend possible for other couples like us – so God could give His “loving couple gift” again.

These “loving couple gifts” began when, in the 1960s, the Marriage Encounter weekend was brought here from Spain. Under the leadership of Fr. Chuck Gallagher, it spread throughout the United States. The gift was passed on again in 1975 when Don & Karen Kurtz, who after attending a Catholic Weekend, spearheaded the idea of beginning Lutheran Marriage Encounter. For the

past 25 years, it has been given and received many times over by couples who experienced a Weekend, were blessed by that experience, shared it with others, and thus kept ILME alive. The future of Lutheran Marriage Encounter depends upon each of us finding a way to share the gift – by telling others about it; by supporting Weekends and our ME communities; through monetary contributions; and through PRAYER.

Our marriage is a unique combination of two distinct personalities. On a Weekend, God reaches down and touches us where we are in our relationship. Therefore, the gift we receive is unique. The way each of us responds to our gift is also unique.

Our prayer is that God will lead each of us to find our own special and unique way of passing on His gift to others through Lutheran Marriage Encounter.

We love you,
Hal & Marilyn



“Our International Call to be Family” is published by International Lutheran Marriage Encounter. This newsletter does not set policy or determine practices for ILME. It is the community of couples sharing itself to increase awareness, stimulate discussion and insight. It is mailed bulk rate and is not forwardable. If you are planning to move, please send us your change of address as soon as possible. The newsletter is sent to all who wish to receive it, a donation of \$10.00 for the publication year (September through August) is requested. Names and addresses listed in this publication shall not be used for solicitation by any person or organization for personal or organizational gain or profit. We invite the readers to share information, thoughts and comments with the ILME community.

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**NAR
Executives
Report**

**“How
Awesome is
the Lord
Most High”**

Dear Lovers,

“How AWESOME is the Lord Most High.”

Both Dan & Judy and Pam & I had the wonderful privilege of traveling to the European Lutheran Marriage Encounter Board Meeting held July 31 – August 1st in Sweden. It was an AWESOME experience.

We had the wonderful privilege of seeing just how AWESOME our God really is. He is alive and changing the world in and through this ministry. We saw and experienced that, first hand, during our trip to Sweden and Finland. We met the European District Leadership and prayed with them and challenged them to “Dream Big Dreams for the Family.” They did that by setting a goal of hosting the first Lutheran Marriage Encounter Weekend in Germany in October 2000. Praise God!

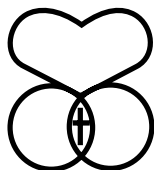
All of Lutheran Marriage Encounter needs your prayers. The fields are ripe for harvest with couples who want warm and loving marriages. We have a new weekend that is providing that. Join us in our journey of love.

Hugs,

Jim ♥ Pam Dan ♥ Judy

Jim & Pam Bush

Dan & Judy Teuscher



The Joy of Giving

It was Sunday afternoon of our original Weekend, November 1980. We sat in the Conference Room to hear the “Sermon on the Amount”! We were asked to prayerfully consider giving from our substance so that these wonderful Weekends could continue. We wanted to give more than we did, but at the time had a young family and tight finances. Still, our gift was given eagerly and happily. This was the best investment we could imagine.

Since that Weekend almost 19 years ago, we have presented many (60+) and for the past 10 years as third set couple have had the privilege of sharing the vision for a changed world through this ministry. It has been easy for us to ask couples to give generously, because we are passionate about this “Impossible Dream.” While it’s a joy to be the one to ask others for their support to keep the dream alive, it’s an even greater thrill to continue to give more ourselves as our financial circumstances have changed.

There are so many ways we can all continue to “give back” to this ministry that has so blessed us all. We know that many couples give huge amounts of time and energy, and many do continue to support the ministry financially years after their Weekend. Here’s a big thanks to those of you who responded to the letter campaign last year, when approximately \$12,725 was contributed.

But let us tell you a story of a group of leadership couples sitting around a conference table in Chicago in 1996, a group trying to reach out to the world, to create a new inviting video and other



materials. We needed to “find” \$15,000 to move forward with this daring plan, as it wasn’t in the budget. Listening in was a couple who had been blessed financially in a way that only two years before had seemed impossible – a couple with lots of shares in a company that had just gone public – a couple now owning highly appreciated stock (appreciated both economically and personally!) God spoke to them to lay out a challenge to the group – along the lines of those public broadcast matching funds appeals.

You could hear a pin drop in that room, and then an excited buzz as couples conferred privately with each other about how much they could give to this endeavor. One by one scraps of paper holding confidential pledges were carried to John & Irene Schmehl, the N.A.R. Finance Couple. The joy that filled the room was barely containable as the Schmehls soon announced that we had indeed raised the \$15,000 needed for the video project! (We hope you have seen the video and shared it many times with friends and relatives.) As Paul Harvey says,

“and now you know the rest of the story.”

It’s been our pleasure to give further gifts of stock to L.M.E. since that meeting, and each time we have done so with huge smiles on our faces. Have the past years blessed you financially? Won’t you share your blessings with this ministry? Obviously appreciated stock isn’t the only asset one can give – cash and checks, either to the overall budget or to the Dream Endowment Fund, would be most appreciated by the couples who will find a “weekend of discovery, a lifetime of love” in the future. But if you do have appreciated stock, call the Schmehls for information. Do not sell the stock to give the proceeds, as that would incur capital gains consequences. This sort of giving brings you joy while saving taxes (an enjoyable oxymoron!).

Other “creative” forms of giving include:

- naming Lutheran Marriage Encounter as a beneficiary to a life insurance policy (LME is in no hurry to receive such a bequest, but why wouldn’t we want to carry on our support beyond our lifetime?)
- setting up monthly contributions through your bank or via selected community shares plans associated with United Way
- involving your children in family “fundraisers” so they know they can help too

May God richly bless you in all you do, for Him and His ministries. We love you,

David & Jean Fell

CELEBRATE MARRIAGE



ILME 25th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

July 21-23, 2000 at Concordia University
St. Paul, Minnesota

Plan to celebrate the Gifts of Love in the next millennium!



- The gift of Kindness
- The gift of Caring
- The gift of Forgiveness
- The gift of Hope
- The gift of Commitment
- The gift of Humility
- The gift of Spirit.

INTERNATIONAL FAMILY CELEBRATION 2000 NEEDS YOU

- Wanted:** YOU and YOUR SPOUSE
- When:** July 21-23, 2000
- Where:** Concordia College, St. Paul, MN
- Why:** We need presenters and YOU ARE QUALIFIED!

The format we will be using is Panel Presentations. The theme of the presentations is "Gifts of Love." Each presentation will include 3-4 couples sharing on one gift of love. The gifts are caring, humility, forgiveness, and hope. The sharing is based on events in each person's day-to-day lives and will last a maximum of 3 minutes (this is not a typo, it really is only 3 minutes) per person. The Panel Presentation

will be followed by a 10&10 which will in turn be followed by small group sharing.

We need couples willing to be presenters and/or group facilitators. We also need one energetic couple willing to be the moderator for the four sessions (someone to ask the questions).

Age is not a factor. Nor is how long you have been married or if you have ever presented before. All it takes is some commitment and a story to tell. That's YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE!

For more information contact Larry and Coke Guilfoile at 651-257-6960 (email: lme2some@scc.net) or Bob and Cindy Heidelberger at 651-674-0838.

THE GIFTS OF LOVE -- 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

2000 INTERNATIONAL LUTHERAN MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER REGISTRATION FORM

CONCORDIA COLLEGE – ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA -- JULY 21-23, 2000

Please print your name(s) as you want them to appear on your name tags:

Husband - Last Name: _____ First Name: _____
 Wife - Last Name: _____ First Name: _____
 Address: _____ State/Prov.: _____
 Country: _____ Postal/Zip Code: _____
 Phone: _____ Wedding Date: _____
 E-Mail Address: _____

CHILDREN attending reunion (Include last name if different from above):

Name: _____ Sex: _____ Age: _____
 Name: _____ Sex: _____ Age: _____
 Name: _____ Sex: _____ Age: _____

See note a below. Special Needs (i.e. Diet, Access,) _____

On Campus:	On or Before 6/15/2000	After 6/15/2000	Amt. Submitted
Registration, Meals (6) & Lodging (per cpl)	\$300.00	\$350.00	\$ _____
Children registration (5yr old and up per child)	\$50.00	\$75.00	\$ _____
Child Care all ages (per child)	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$ _____

Hotel Option:

We have made arrangements with the Sheraton Midway for a block of rooms for ME Reunion Couples. The Hotel is a 5 min. walk from campus. The room rate will be \$72.00 per night. You will need to contact the Sheraton directly 1-800-535-2339. Ask for the LME conference rate.

Registration, Meals with Hotel Option (per cpl)	\$240.00	\$290.00	\$ _____
Children registration (5yr old and up per child)	\$50.00	\$75.00	\$ _____
Child Care all ages (per child)	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$ _____

Commuter Option

Registration and Meals only (per cpl)	\$240.00	\$290.00	\$ _____
Child Registration & Child Care (per child)	\$100.00	125.00	\$ _____

Auto and RV Parking - free. RV units need to be self contained. There are no hookups.

See note b. T-Shirt(s) Cost \$12 insert # ___S ___M ___Lg ___XL ___XXL \$ _____
 Polo Shirts \$20 # ___S ___M ___Lg ___XL ___XXL \$ _____

Add all previous items listed, **Total Amount Due** \$ _____
 Less enclosed deposit (\$100 minimum) \$ _____

See note c.

Make Check Payable to: Lutheran Marriage Encounter. Payment in U.S. Funds only.

Send Registration Form and all payments to:

Tom & Sheila Cochran
 1502 Jackson Ave. NE
 St. Michael, MN 55376
 U.S.A.
 612-497-3675 or CochranTL@aol.com

Yes! We will use the available Time-Payment Plan _____
 First 1/3 payment of total amount, due by Feb 1, 2000
 Second 1/3 payment due by April 1, 2000
 Final 1/3 payment due by June 1, 2000

IMPORTANT REGISTRATION NOTES AND GENERAL INFORMATION.

Note a. Special Needs Be sure to indicate with the registration form any special needs that you have. Every effort will be made to accommodate your needs.

Note b. Shirt Sales A limited number of shirts will be available for sale at the conference. In order to ensure that the right number and sizes are available, please indicate your purchase intentions by marking the quantity desired. These requests will be reserved until Saturday noon. T-shirts will be ___S, ___M, ___L, ___XL, ___XXL. This is merely an indication to help the committee order. There will be no extra polo shirts. If you are not returning this page, write the quantity and code letters after your names on the registration form. (We will not include that information on the name tags)!

Note c. Registration Information - Minimum Deposits Be sure to note that the first 75 couples to register with a \$200 deposit will hold an AIR CONDITIONED ROOM. There are about half as many air conditioned rooms (75) as we expect to need, so register early! The minimum deposit for all registrations is \$100. Upon receipt of your registration, you will be sent an acknowledgment by mail and general information about Concordia University and Minneapolis & St. Paul Area.

Note d. Lodging Information We have 175 rooms on campus, 75 of which are air conditioned. We have a block of rooms on hold at the Sheraton Midway Hotel. These rooms will be held until June 21st, 2000. Rooms have either double beds or 1 king size bed. Children stay free in parents room, also 2 couples can stay in 1 room at no additional charge.

The rooms are \$72.00 per night. All room rates are subject to state and city taxes which are currently 13%. Sales tax on other services is 7% with the exception of alcohol which is 9%. Tax rates are subject to change without notice based on government action. Parking is free. Check in is currently 3 p.m. Room assignment before that time is subject to availability. Check out time is 12 Noon.

Note e. Transportation The area is well served with 15 airlines to (MSP), as well as Amtrack, and Bus to St. Paul. Airport Shuttle to the College or the Sheraton is currently \$14 per person round trip.

LÖRDAG 31 JULI 1999

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"Kriser är till för att lösas"

MADESJÖ

Människor lovar varandra evig trohet under bröllopet, men vi vet att det inte fungerar så.

Med de orden sammanfattar Carl-Eric Svensäter den internationella träff som äger rum i prästgården i Madesjö i helgen. Han och fru Ebba Svensäter är medlemmar i ett stort, internationellt samfund som heter Äktenskapsdialog. Det är ett samfund som grundades i Spanien på 1950-talet och bygger helt och hållet på den kristna synen på äktenskapet. Det gäller att hålla ihop när man väl har sagt ja till varandra.

– Kriser kommer alltid, men de är till för att lösas. Man ska inte bara lättvindigt säga tack och adjö, säger Carl-Eric Svensäter.

Sexualitet, pengar och död

I prästgården i Madesjö har 15 gifta par samlats. Tre av dem kommer från USA och övriga från de nordiska länderna. Paren som träffas i helgen gör det för att få tillfälle att diskutera och reflektera över äktenskapet och livet. Med utgångspunkt i olika teman sätter sig paren för sig själva och pratar.



Paren Tim och Pam Bush och Dan och Judy Teuscher har åkt från USA för att vara med under helgen i Madesjö.

– Vi presenterar olika teman som hur man lyssnar, sexualitet, pengar och död, berättar Carl-Eric Svensäter. Man kan ställa frågor: Vad händer om jag dör? Sedan får paren tillfälle att prata med varandra.

Det handlar inte om någon kristerapi, inga gruppsamtal eller redovisningar efter diskussionen. Syftet är att de gifta paren ska få tillfälle att kommunicera med varandra på ett nytt sätt.

– Visst pratar man med sin partner, men ofta är det mer att man frågar hur hon har haft det i dag. Jag är inte alls säker

på att människor på allvar talar om sådana här saker med varandra, säger Svensäter.

Helgens schema är fulltecknat och de olika diskussionerna kommer att avlösa varandra. Tanken är inte att paren ska vara färdigpratade när de på söndagkväll lämnar Madesjö.

– Det här är ett bra sätt att skapa en diskussionsgrund, säger Svensäter. Meningen är att paren ska kunna fortsätta när de kommer hem och på så sätt kunna fördjupa sin relation.

PELLE JOHANSSON

pell.johansson@barometern.se



Carl-Eric Svensäter, längst till höger, är värd för de 15 paren från USA och Norden.

NAR Execs Meet with European Region Execs in Sweden

NAR Executive Couples, Jim & Pam Bush and Dan & Judy Teuscher were privileged to attend the European Region Lutheran Marriage Encounter board meeting held at Madesjö, Sweden, in July 1999. They were joined by Dave & Ada Dorn and 15 leader couples from the European Region of ILME. The accompanying article appeared in the "Barometern" newspaper in Madesjö. In the article Carl Eric & Ebba Svensäter briefly shared the history and purpose of Marriage Encounter. They then described briefly what takes place on a typical Marriage Encounter Weekend and that when couples return home, they have tools to continue to enrich their couple relationship.

LUTHERAN MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER

MISSION STATEMENT

Lutheran Marriage Encounter is a ministry dedicated to assisting married couples to live fully intimate and responsible relationships by providing an Encounter Weekend experience as well as ongoing community support.

VISION STATEMENT

The Lutheran Church renewed and our world changed through strengthened couple relationships and stronger personal relationships with Christ.

MAXIMIZING WEEKEND REGISTRATIONS

This is the third in a series of articles about the vision and direction that we see God leading International Lutheran Marriage Encounter. The articles have followed a pattern of I-L-M-E. Invited by God to live a radical love style. Leading Through Relationships – a new tool to train new leadership in Lutheran Marriage Encounter, and now we focus on Maximizing our Weekend Registrations.

As many of you know we are now presenting the new revised and updated Marriage Encounter Weekend. The feedback we are getting from the participants and the communities where those weekends are held has been fantastic. The new weekend is working extremely well.

Pam & I have had the privilege of presenting two of the new Weekends so far. The couples we have seen on the Weekend are excited and wanting to join us in the journey to change the world for Christ's sake. That's the good news. Here's the bad: so far, 15 Weekends have been cancelled. Now you would think the reason for the cancelled weekends was that there were not enough presenting couples who could present the new Weekend. That's not so. Only two of those Weekends were cancelled due to not having enough presenting couples. The other 13 (thirteen) were cancelled due to low registrations. What happened?

Many of you who are reading this article have been deeply involved with recruiting couples to attend Lutheran Marriage Encounter Weekends. You are to be commended for your efforts and for your dialogue. You see that is the key - your dialogue. When a couple is committed to working on their relationship by using the



concepts of the Weekend, things happen, God opens doors so that we can share our relationship with couples who need to know there is a better way for marriages to be lived out.

At our North American Region Board meeting this February, we are going to focus on raising our vision and maximizing our Weekend registrations. We are going to ask each district leadership couple to bring with them their best inviting ideas and tools, so that we can share with you and all of the North American Region how to maximize our Weekend registrations.

Here is a door that God has opened for us during the past several months. We are personally going to present a nine (9) week "Celebrate Marriage Bible Study" in our home congregation. The class is starting January 9, 2000. We went into the planning process with the goal of having 25 couples attend this class. As of today, November 30, 1999, we have 26 couples. Praise God!

Our additional goal is to develop a marriage mentoring task force at our congregation. Additionally we are praying that of the 26 couples who will be attending our Bible Class, that a minimum of 15 of those will attend a Lutheran Marriage Encounter Weekend that is scheduled for April 2000. We plan on offering this class twice a year, once during the wintertime and the other in the fall. We are planning to use this class as an

outreach tool to our local community. We will open the enrollment to married couples in Blue Springs in the fall of 2001. There we will invite those community couples to not only join our class but also our congregation and also attend the Weekend.

We are praying that God would give us the opportunity to have a minimum of 15 couples per Bible Class to register for our local Lutheran Marriage Encounter Weekends during the year 2000. Just think if over the next two years, we can encounter over sixty couples. Those 60 couples will in turn invite their friends and families. And this happened because we taught a Marriage Bible Class. You can do the same thing in your congregation.

So where do we go from here? The first thing we do is to work on our relationship. Pull out that notebook, pick a tough question, risk writing a love letter, and share yourselves fully with your spouse. *If* all of us do that, we will have our Weekend Registrations maximized. Then we can say that we have more couples on current weekends than ever before.

The result of maximizing our Weekends is more love in the world, stronger marriages and families, communities that are exploding with joy and God's Love and a deeper and closer relationship with our AWESOME God. That is where we would be.

May God's love and His Blessing be with you during this holiday season.

In His AWESOME Name,
 Jim & Pam Bush
 NAR Lay Contact Couple
 Dan & Judy Teuscher
 NAR Clergy Contact Couple

One couple's verdict on the old vs. the new: "The Weekend Still Works!"

by *Don & Jeannette Boltz*

In 1975, we had been married 13 years and were trying to live our hectic lives with our four children and maintain something near what we wanted for our family. Days were filled with chauffeuring, meetings, homework, and the chores we thought we needed to get through every hour, every day, every week.

I, Jeannette, had felt for a long time that I was alone in so much of the work of running our family. Don and I rarely talked about the mundane parts of our daily routines. I longed to find a woman friend who felt the same way I did, so we could just commiserate,

I, Don, thought that work should stay at work and that Jeannette should handle the home front. I believed that if I worked hard, brought home the paycheck to pay our house payment and put food, which Jeannette had to buy, on the table then I fulfilled my part of the bargain. After all, that's the model of marriage I grew up with. Besides, it seemed like that's what everyone else was doing.

One evening we were bowling... I noticed one couple spending time with each other.

I coached our daughter's softball team; my son and I were in the Y Indian Guides; I played softball with the guys at work; I bowled in a men's league and in a mixed league with Jeannette. It was a pretty full agenda.

One evening we were bowling with our church bowling league. While I, Jeannette, was going through the motions of being humiliated in front of our friends by my terrible bowling, I noticed one couple spending time with each other. No one did much of that. Most of us went to our gender-specific groupings each week for conversation and laughs,

This couple, older than we were, talked together and seemed to care what each had to say. They acted like they were on a date. I was really jealous.

I went to the wife and said, "What is this?" She seemed to know what I was talking about, which amazed me! She simply said, "Oh, it's just Marriage Encounter." I was glued to her. "What's that? What are you talking about?" She had some fun reeling me in like a fish she knew she couldn't lose.

When we went home that night, I told Don about this weird Marriage Encounter thing. He said, "No way." I said, "I think we have an opportunity better than anything I've ever heard about. I saw that couple and I want what they have."

When Jeannette told me about Marriage Encounter, I said "No way. Why should we waste a weekend when we could be water skiing or doing something fun?"

Don has always cared about our relationship. He saw my need and relented. So, off we went to Marriage Encounter, not knowing whether we had signed on for some horrible encounter thing of the 70s or something great. I was so desperate I was willing to risk and believe Don was too.



Our weekend experience was something we will never forget. I found my real best friend. It changed our lives forever.

I, Don, found more fun just being with my best friend and lover. I didn't have to have my time filled with things to do. We couldn't wait to get home to our children, family and friends. *We wanted to change the world.*

We believed in what we had learned. We began to present talks on Weekends. We asked friends to go on Weekends. We knew it made a difference in people's lives.

But I began to worry about parts of the Weekend that were difficult for our friends. I don't mean it was difficult in that people were asked to look inside themselves and grow and they didn't want to. I mean that it was frightening for some who "Encountered Self" and left with harsh feelings about themselves. Or they were so overwhelmed with the team couples presenting their accomplishments on Sunday morning, that most couples weren't grasping the point. The presenting couples had lived a spectrum of life that those attending the Weekend had never heard about.

We loved the Weekend and knew what it had meant to our lives, but after some years we moved to Utah because of work and then no longer had a connection with Marriage Encounter.

Many Years Later...

In August 1998, 23 years later, we made another Weekend. We went because we saw our daughter Karen and her husband Ralph working through their lives at a level of commitment that we wanted to rekindle in our own lives.

Part of the reason I, Jeannette,

wanted to go on another Weekend was to please them. Part of it was that I hoped we could regain something lost. But I also knew that great possibilities lay ahead. I was curious because I knew the Weekend had been changed.

I, Don, went to our anniversary Weekend because I wanted to be with my best friend and talk about our relationship. We had allowed many "things" into our lives again and I wanted to "pull some weeds" and "plant some new seeds." I wanted more for our relationship than we had.

I was afraid that we already know too much about the Weekend to benefit...

I, Jeannette, went to our anniversary Weekend afraid that it wouldn't work. I was afraid that we already know too much about the Weekend to benefit from the presentations. I was also afraid of my own resistance. I went to the Weekend thinking I would somehow fail.

Instead I found some wonderful surprises! First of all: THE WEEKEND STILL WORKS! It's almost like magic to see what happens to us on a weekend.

Next, I was impressed with the changes. The new presentations really help us to see who we are in a way that can truly enhance our relationship. I can look at me through some glasses that were not available before. I don't have to try to figure out what mask I wear, I don't have to look at all that is wrong and feel hopeless. I can just be who I am and know that Dan



Many thanks to Matrimony Magazine for this article about this couple's response to the "new outline" weekend. Don & Jaennette Bolz live in Pollack Pines, CA. and originally went on a weekend in 1975.

loves me. Where we are *today* is what matters.

With the new "Encounter with Self" presentation, couples will be less apt to struggle with identifying who they are. It is easier to see that regardless of who we are, we are lovable.

On Sunday, I was able to relate better to what the couples were talking about and sharing. With the old presentations, the couples talked about relationship with God and the Church and I didn't see the connection between what they were saying and what I was experiencing on our first Weekend.

When we dialogued on the questions at the end of the presentations, we focused on our relationship. The new presentations seemed to make more sense and be more relevant to where we were in our experience of the Weekend.

In comparing the two Weekend formats, we say: Out with the old, in with the new!

An Adventure of a Lifetime

by David & Jean Fell

Have we had the adventure of a lifetime!? Yes, definitely. (Although we look forward to many more adventures before we tuck ourselves up in our rockers on the front porch.)

Way back in the “colonial” days (British, not American!), David was born in Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia (then Malaya). His father worked in the rubber and tin industry there. He had moved there as a young man, and in fact was part of the civilian militia when Singapore surrendered to the Japanese. After time in Changi Prison (see the movie, King Rat), and in Thailand (see the movie, Bridge on the River Kwai), Dad Fell was liberated by the Americans (good omen) and finally returned to Malaysia in 1946. Very new fiancée Mum Fell arrived in 1947, and David arrived in 1948! Although David left the area when he was 9 to attend boarding school in England, he continued to visit for major holidays until his parents returned to England in 1964. All our married life has been spent wondering how to get him back there, this time with the whole family.



They masterminded a wonderful reception with 12 other encountered couples, some leaders, some presenters, and some “Sunday night couples,”...

Finally in May (after four years of accumulating frequent flier mileage) we were off to Singapore and Malaysia, with daughters Heather (25) and Anna (22) in tow, for a two-week visit.

What did we find?

An amazingly clean, busy,

friendly city of Singapore. No, we were not sniffed by security dogs for drugs (or chewing gum!). We found the “old homestead” still there, not far from our hotel. The entire island-state measures only about 25 x 10 miles. To discourage traffic jams, taxes are high on cars and taxis, buses, and underground rail are plentiful and inexpensive. We didn’t have much time for much cultural exploration – no museums, few historical sites, temples or mosques. However, we did attend Singapore’s beautiful Anglican Cathedral (where Mum and Dad were married) and were delighted to find a full house and a dozen services every Sunday. We were also able to arrange a wonderful visit with an encountered couple in Singapore, Tom & Ceci Chia, with whom we had corresponded by email. We know that we are part of a movement that truly is worldwide.

The Chias shared the following information with us about Worldwide Marriage Encounter in Singapore:

Since WWME came to Singapore in April, 1979, close to 4,000 couples have experienced the M.E. Weekend.

Weekends are held every month (on the first Friday of the month) in English and about 3-4 times a year in Mandarin, with about 150-170 couples participating annually.

There are 30-40 presenting couples

Singapore just started holding weekends under the new outline in July 1999.

Tom & Ceci have been active for 16 years, including 4 as national leaders. They present Weekends,



workshop, and are now in the “Promotions” group (sounds similar to our Awareness & Publicity folks).

While in Singapore we also visited Sentosa Island, a pleasure island full of activities such as an aquarium, water park, butterfly house, and cultural exhibits. We had “high tea” at the very grand Raffles Hotel, and took a harbor boat tour. We found worshipping Christians evident, even though they are very much a minority in Singapore (about 4-5%), compared to the Muslim Malays, Buddhist Chinese, and Hindu Indians. As Caucasians we were well in the minority at the cathedral, and rejoiced at the rainbow of worshippers all around us. We were welcomed to enjoy tea and “breakfast” after the service: some Western foods but mostly very spicy noodles!

After three days in Singapore we rented a car and ventured north into the country of Malaysia. We traveled about 1,000 miles, with David doing an excellent job driving — on the left side of the road, of course. We passed miles of rubber and palm oil plantations, dozens of monkeys on the side of the road, and fruit and cooked food stalls everywhere. Two days in the Genting Highlands cooled us down: at 5,000+ feet it was a great break from the typical 90 degrees,



90% humidity days!

And of course, a highlight was meeting yet another couple with whom we had corresponded: Peter & Helena Cheng. They masterminded a WONDERFUL reception with 12 other encountered couples, some leaders, some presenters, and some “Sunday night couples,” as they refer to non-presenting encountered



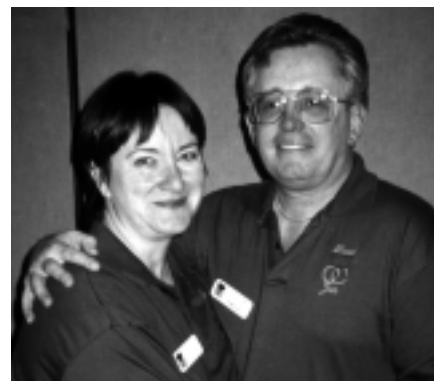
couples. Betty and Irwan, WWME national leaders in Indonesia, were also visiting. We were truly an international gathering that night! Jean was the only “exotic” visitor, being from Baltimore! No sauerkraut or chicken there: our potlucks are tame compared to what we enjoyed that night - was it HOT! We all shared our M.E. blessings and inviting struggles. Some couples were fascinated to find there were Protestant expressions of WWME.

There was no question - we felt completely loved and welcomed. David had cautioned us all when we first met couples: “Remember, as a culture these people are much more

reserved. They might not be into hugs.” Was he wrong! All evening we heard exciting stories about couples’ lives being blessed, including couples of mixed marriages (Christian with non-Christian). Even more than in the West, Marriage Encounter has an invaluable role to play in Christian outreach. In fact, the Singapore leaders told us that barely a Weekend goes by without someone asking to be baptized.

The Chengs have just renewed their term as lay leaders for Malaysia. After witnessing first-hand the love and joy of these encountered communities, it is our joy to pray for the continuing success of WWME in Singapore and Malaysia and around the world, which gets smaller every day! We invite you to join us in that prayer.

David and Jean Fell recently completed their term as District I Lay Contact Couple. They were encountered in November 1980 and have served since then as presenting couple on over 60 weekends.



Reaching out through the Interfaith Marriage Foundation

By *Jim & Laura Cross*

The members of the Worldwide Marriage Encounter Interfaith Board took a giant step forward at its July meeting, by approving the formation of the Interfaith Marriage Foundation, Inc. This newly formed, not-for-profit foundation will be able to seek financial grants, bequests, and charitable donations to further the combined efforts of the twelve independent faith expressions licensed to present Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekends.

We believe that there are a number of corporations and charitable foundations which share our values of stable marriages and family life. The Interfaith Marriage Foundation will provide a conduit for these funding sources to promote these noble ideals through the Interfaith Marriage Foundation of World Wide Marriage Encounter. Together, we have a much better chance of reaching out and touching the lives of many more couples, than when we work alone. We can change the world. The possibilities this new Foundation will provide are truly exciting! The Interfaith Marriage Foundation is an outgrowth of the work of the Interfaith Board through its "Awareness and Publicity Committee". The Board determined the need to have a foundation which could seek grants, bequests, and donations to further our efforts to encounter the world. Several faith expressions had been discussing the development of independent foundations. The efficiency and cost savings of a joint foundation was determined to be an effective approach to the

twelve expressions' individual and joint foundation needs.

Incorporated on July 27, 1999, the not-for-profit corporation is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. The Board consists of one voting member appointed by each of the Worldwide Marriage Encounter licensed expressions and one individual of the Interfaith facilitator couple. The voting members of the Board elected Rev. M. Gerald Robey (Methodist) as President, William J. McQuiston (Presbyterian) as Vice President, Rev. Dan Teuscher (Lutheran) as Treasurer, and Nancy Hunt (Episcopalian Facilitator Couple) as the Secretary. The Foundation will be housed in the Worldwide Marriage Encounter offices in San Bernardino, California.

Donations may be designated for an individual expression, such as Roman Catholic, Methodist, Episcopal, etc. or the joint activities of all expressions, such as the Interfaith Awareness and Publicity (A & P) campaigns. Each expression will retain control of its funds donated for its use, but funds undesignated or designated for use by all expressions can be pooled for joint use for the benefit of Worldwide Marriage Encounter as a whole. The Budget/Audit Committee chaired by the Rev. Dan Teuscher will oversee appropriation of the funds.

An application for tax-exemption has been filed with the Internal Revenue Service. Donations received by the Foundation prior to its receiving recognition of tax-exemption will be deemed a tax-exempt donation upon receipt of the tax-exempt

determination from the Internal Revenue Service. Upon receipt of this recognition, the Fund Acquisition Committee, chaired by John J. Wilt, II (Seventh Day Adventist), will seek grants to implement the programs of the Interfaith Board. Meanwhile, the Investment Committee, chaired by the Rev. John Duncan (Episcopal), will develop guidelines for investment and management of the Foundation's assets.

Donations may be sent to the Interfaith Marriage Foundation, c/o World Wide Marriage Encounter, Attn.: Sharon Brooks, at 2210 E. Highland Ave. Suite 106, San Bernardino, CA 92404. Checks should be made to the order of the Interfaith Marriage Foundation, Inc. with designation of the account, if any, to be credited.

The ability of our programs to acquire grants will be greatly enhanced, since most charitable organizations are more willing to grant funds to multi-faith organizations rather than to specific denominations. The ability to invest larger amounts of money, reduction of administrative costs, and the greater likelihood of grant acquisitions all point to this being an "idea whose time has come." If you have questions, please call us.

We Love you,

Jim & Laura Cross,
(405.842.0756)

Encounter - United Methodist,
Executive Lay Couple

Jerry & Donna Robey,
(815.232.8218)

Encounter - United Methodist,
Executive Clergy Couple

The Fifth Nordic Deeper Weekend

There was much in the air when the fifth Nordic Deeper was about to begin in Hirtshals, Northern Denmark on 12th November. The small Danish community had been working hard to create the nice, Danish atmosphere for us to experience. The couples arrived in small groups from five countries, six couples from Iceland, three from Norway, three from Sweden, two from Finland and one couple from Denmark.

We had a nice summer hotel. It's elderly lady owner served us with heart and enthusiasm. The atmosphere was warm and open hearted from beginning to end. Although we had language difficulties, we very rapidly became one family, when we opened our hearts for others to experience. The sharing, either in broken English or native speech, was honest, touching and deep.



Hannu & Maija Nyman, Anna Liisa & Matti Viitanen and the Nordic Deeper Couples.

It was a joy to receive friendship from different countries in the form of numerous prayer and extra letters! Thank you, folks, all around the World! The Nordic Deeper really made countries closer to each other. We shall rejoice specially from many clergy couples

we had on the Deeper! We owe great thanks to the Danish community, small in size, having warm and serving hearts! Let us pray, folks, success for them in their work for the Danish families!

Matti & Anna Liisa Viitanen

Y2K and the Dream...

As this year comes to an end, all we seem to hear about is Y2K! Here is some- thing more for you to focus on. Besides Y2K we now have: Y2LME, Y2I, Y2LT, Y2BPC, Y2AC, Y2AW, and Y2PD4LME. How do these tie into our marriage and the next year?

First, even though we may be discouraged, and at times disappointed, we need to say Yes to Lutheran Marriage Encounter (Y2LME). Second we need to continue to say Yes to Inviting (Y2I), because God provides the couples for the weekend through our inviting. Third is Yes to Loving Tasks (Y2LT), even though we may feel unqualified, God will help us. Fourth we need to say Yes to Being

Prayer Couples (Y2BPC) on weekends. Fifth, grow with your spouse by saying Yes to Attending Community (Y2AC), with other encountered couples. Sixth, treat yourselves by saying Yes to Anniversary Weekend (Y2AW), and grow in your love for each other by experiencing the new talks for the weekend. Seventh is the main one, and that is Yes to Pray Daily for Lutheran Marriage Encounter (Y2PD4LME). If we are praying daily for Lutheran Marriage Encounter, a solid foundation will be formed for building the dream of Marriage Encounter. By saying Yes to (Y2) the above acronyms, the opportunity is provided for other couples to be encountered and the family of Lutheran Marriage

Encounter to grow.

Sometimes many of us feel like a rubber band that is stretched tight, perhaps you may feel that way and can only say yes to part of these items. If so, we encourage you to consider the ones that you can do that will help remove the stretched feelings from others. Our prayer is for God to continue to bless all the couples that have been encountered and we thank God daily for the prayers and support that you provide for everyone.

We wish everyone a blessed New Year!!

In Christ's Love,
Richard & Bev Foels
Central Illinois
Lay Contact Couple

Four words that build relationships *I like it when. . .*

Otto and Barbara Tollefson

We can avoid damaging relationships by being careful how we communicate. Four little words can make a big difference. “*I like it when*”* can turn a negative, accusing, or demeaning statement into a positive affirmation.

“*I like it when. . .*” can be used in conversations about our families and friends, jobs and profession, money and possessions, romance and sex, hobbies, recreation, free-time, church and children.

- Instead of saying: “I can’t stand it when you bring office work home on the weekends.” I could say: “I like it when you spend time with me and the children on weekends instead of working.”
- Instead of saying: “You never think of calling to tell me you are going to be late for dinner.” I could say: “I like it when you call to tell me you are going to be late for dinner.”
- Instead of saying: “Why do you always invite your mother over when I have other plans for us?” I could say: “I like it when you

ask me about my plans before you invite your mother over.”

- Instead of saying: “You’re more interested in Sunday football games than you are in me.” I could say: “I like it when you are able to spend time with me on Sunday afternoons.”
- Instead of saying: “Why do you always spend money without asking me?” I could say: “I like it when you let me have a part in the decisions about spending our money.”
- Instead of saying: “All you ever think about is your own sexual needs.” I could say: “I like it when you take time to romance and caress me.”

Make it a habit

Post it! You can begin to break the habit of making destructive statements by posting the phrase “*I like it when. . .*” where you can see it repeatedly during the day. Good places might be on your bathroom mirror, the dashboard of your car, your monitor, or by the phone.

Practice it! Consciously practice using it often until it becomes a habit

in communicating appreciation as well as making positive affirmations in sensitive areas.

Have a couple practice session

Set aside an hour with your spouse to practice using this phrase.

Make a list of the areas mentioned above. A more complete list is “Areas for Reaching Out to Each Other” on page 32 in the new Weekend Workbook. Add your own.

Separate to write. Each one completes two or three sentences beginning with “*I like it when.*” At least one of the statements in each area should be appreciation for what is already being done consistently. The spouse will know which is which!

Read your list to each other without comment, alternating between husband and wife. For example, the husband reads his three “*I like it when*” statements on money, then the wife reads her three on the same topic.

Listen with your heart. Make no comments. Do not formulate explanations or prepare rebuttals.

Using it for your daily 10/10

You can end the above practice session with your daily 10/10 by separating to write on “How did I feel hearing your ‘*I like it when*’ statements?”

It could serve as a series of dialogue questions, prefacing each area or statement with, “How did I feel telling you that I like it when you / we. . . .” Or, “How do I feel hearing you say that you like it when I / we. . . .” Be creative.

Use it for a circle or community event

The first part of this article can be used as a short presentation.

Pass out sheets of paper with the areas listed, with space for three written sentences in each area.



Follow the steps of separating to write the statements, reading the statements to each other, followed by a 10/10.

An open sharing question could be, "What did I experience using the 'I like it when' phrase?"

Use it in the family

The practice session can also be used with parents and children.

Depending on the age of your children, you may wish to select fewer areas.

Let it be a time to teach and model how we listen with the heart to each other.

Instead of a 10/10 you could end with the open sharing question, giving each family member a chance to express feelings.

These four little words will work hard for you in building strong, healthy relationships instead of causing conflict.

*As suggested by Lowell O. and Carol Erdahl in their book, *Be Good to Each Other: An Open Letter on Marriage*. Out-of-print

Otto & Barbara Tollefson are the District V Clergy Executive couple. They have written and published a wonderfully inspiring book entitled *Seed Falling on Good Soil - Sixty stories from Brazil to Inspire Faith and Confidence*. Contact them for more information.

ME Has Been An "Awesome Blessing"

Hello, We are Bruce & Mary Ann Breslin, new Lay Contact for District I. Our area is North Central Ohio. We were encountered in Butler, PA, Valentine's Day Weekend 1986. We celebrated our 20th wedding anniversary May 1999. Marriage Encounter has been an awesome blessing to us in our marriage. It has and still provides us with tools and strength to keep from becoming a statistic for 2nd marriages. For me (Mary Ann) our weekend showed me we are not just a couple, but a couple with Christ in a holy union of love. I felt truly embraced by Him on our weekend, and still feel that reassuring touch often in our lives. I also discovered the heart is much like the brain, that there is much more room to love others than what is used. My heart has been so full of joy that it felt like it was overflowing, like I feel after Thanksgiving dinner. This spirit encourages us to invite, participate, and maintain a Marriage Encounter way of life.

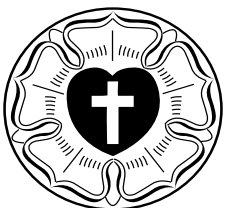
I (Bruce) look at Marriage Encounter like all the other gifts



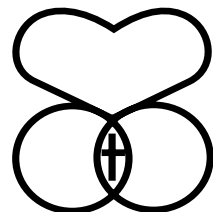
God has blessed our lives with, its something He wants us to share with each other and with others. Like sharing everything else, the more you give the more you get. By being involved in Marriage Encounter we have received an abundance of blessings in our marriage. Living the Marriage Encounter way of life allows us to be good stewards of the gift of Marriage Encounter. It has also helped me to realize God's presence and love in our marriage on a daily basis. I feel blessed for having this gift shared with me and blessed for the opportunity to share it with others.

YOUR GIFTS TO THE ENDOWMENT-DREAM FUND WILL HELP KEEP ILME ALIVE

*There are many ways to give: Life Insurance, Real Estate, Securities,
Memorial Gifts, Wills, IRAs, Personal property.*



For details contact: Endowment Dream Fund
Lutheran Marriage Encounter
P.O. Box 510-335
St. Louis, MO 63151
314-846-2490



Some Highlights from 1999's World Marriage Day

COUPLE MARRIED THE LONGEST

From the town of Milton, Washington, near Mount Rainier we have been blessed with Jessie & George Shepard, married in 1918 and are now 98 and 99 years old, respectively. They have shared eighty years together. They are still High School sweethearts. They were nominated for Couple Married the Longest by Joe & Helen Hesketh of Bellevue, Washington.

WORLD MARRIAGE DAY 1999 CELEBRATIONS

Detroit, Michigan

Paul & Gerda Clark and their community share their "God blessed event". Their "World Marriage Day Prayer Celebration & Family Style Dinner" was attended by 398 people! The event's guest speakers, Steve & Cindy Wright from Family Life Radio, WUFL AM 1030, shared the "Secrets Hallmark® Never Told You". To add to the afternoon of prayer and song and food the Michigan community petitioned Governor of Michigan, John Engler to issue an Executive Declaration in Observance of World Marriage Day.

Cranston, Rhode Island

Bonnie & Don Schiavone and the Cranston Area community had a great World Marriage Day Celebration where they honored 26 couples married over 60 years. Their reception and prayer service was attended by the 26 couples, 350 friends and family and about 50 Marriage Encounter couples. The Cranston Area Couple Married the



Longest was Joseph & Irene Coutu, married for 76 years. The event was covered by three TV stations, radio, and several newspapers.

Atlanta, Georgia

Charley & Ida-Marie Anton and their Atlanta Area WMD 1999 committee hosted their 14th Annual World Marriage Day Valentine Ball honoring married couples in their area as well as the national winners of the Husband and Wife of the Year Contest, Bob & Martha Carpenter. The semi-formal event, attended by 99 couples, was held at the Marriot North Central in Atlanta were "Overnight Dance Packages" were available. The evening included dinner, dancing, door prizes, a photographer available to capture the moment and the presentation of The Couple of the Year. Among those attending were Mayor Bill Campbell, Mayor of Atlanta and Member of Congress, Bob Barr. The event and related articles were covered by "The Georgia Bulletin" and the "Atlanta Journal Constitution."

New York, New York

Jim & Nancy Rizzi, were coordinators of the 14th Annual World Marriage in New York. The Worldwide Marriage Encounter community honored the New York City Area's Couple Married Longest, Adolph & Wilma Wagner. The Wagners have been married for 75 years; they knew each other as children growing up in Sullivan County, N.Y. Adolph is 93 and Wilma is 91.

Spokane, Washington

WMD Coordinators, Neil & Joanne Membrey, organized the celebration for their community. Fifty couples attended. Each couple wore name tags with the number of years they had been married. Each group of ten years, was honored starting with fifty years. The service included a renewal of vows followed by a reception and dance in the school hall. The Mayor of Spokane and his wife shared in the celebration. Neil & Joanne shared, "This was a family event and the children had a great time when we did the 'Hokey Pokey' and the limbo."

Columbus, Ohio

Mike & Sally Leahy directed the "5th Annual WMD Evening of Dinner and Dancing". The evening gave couples time to focus on each other. Door prizes in the form of gift baskets were provided by local WWME share groups. The event was attended by 55 couples, most of whom spent the evening "burning up the dance floor." Also in Columbus, the Family Life Office sponsored a workshop titled, "No Hard Feelings: Nurturing Love, Acceptance and Forgiveness in Marriage" with author and family psychologist, Dr. Dennis O'Grady, as the presenter.

WORLD MARRIAGE DAY 2000

NATIONAL CONTEST

World Marriage Day is looking for the Couple Married Longest in the U.S.A.

The winning couple will receive a dozen red roses, a commemorative plaque and recognition/ceremony/reception. Additional prizes possible upon availability of corporate donations.

To enter contest, fill out and submit CML entry form now (available on Worldwide Marriage encounter web page. There is a link on the ILME web page). Entries should be submitted no later than December 15, 1999. Send Entries to: Mark & Jany Hill WMD Couple Married Longest 227 N. Haldy Ave. Columbus, Ohio 43204-2659 e-mail: mjhill3fishes@ameritech.net Final decision made by World Marriage Day National Team

World Marriage Day is sponsored by Worldwide Marriage Encounter, Inc. Some communities have enjoyed having their own local contest.

Ideas & Suggestions for World Marriage Day 2000

The following are only a few of the ideas that have been enacted over the years. Remember, celebrating WMD is one of the rare opportunities we get to share with the world the wonderful gifts that God has brought into our lives. It is another way to spread the Gospel.

- Create and distribute a flyer with information about World Marriage Day through bulletins, church and school newsletters.
- Poll members' statements regarding why they personally believe in marriage. Don't forget to

include comments from single members, widowed members..

- Notify all of your local newspapers, radio stations, and television stations about WMD and encourage them to join in the celebration.
- Display wedding pictures of members in a highly visible area, like the church foyer.
- Share the different marriage customs by having couples from different ethnic backgrounds explain customs unique to their heritage.
 - Plan and promote an essay writing or poster contest about marriage. Recognize the winners at a special event with a special prize. Award prizes that local commercial businesses are willing to donate. Remember, when the children are involved, so are their parents.
- Organize a couple and/or family bowling, ice skating (for you northerners), swimming party (for you southerners), picnic, or some other event that will allow your community to come together. These events could proceed or follow a WMD celebration.
- Reserve pews in front of your church for couples married 25, 30, 35 or 40 years or more and give them a certificate, flowers, or some other remembrance. Invite them to receive communion as a couple. They may be part of the processional or recessional.
- Request your pastor to recognize married couples present by having all married couples stand, then start seating them in increments of five years, until the eldest married couple is left standing. After a round of applause, present that couple with

a certificate, flowers, or some sort of gift.

- Reverse the process to find the newest married couple in attendance.
- Hold a reception for all after services. Pictures of wedding ceremonies can decorate the room. Serve wedding cake and punch. Have the couple that has been married the longest cut the cake.
- Organize a special service to be followed by a "Sweetheart Dance". Serve wedding cake and display wedding pictures.
- Encourage your synod or district executive to write a letter promoting marriage and family for World Marriage Day. Reproduce the letter in bulletins. Or have it read during the service on WMD.
- Design a presentation about the blessing of marriage for your bible studies and other church sponsored educational programs. Present the topic sometime in the weeks leading up to WMD.
- Organize a prayer vigil for the continued growth of marriage and family relationships, in your congregation, your community, nationally and worldwide.

More suggestions for World Marriage events in your Area can be viewed and downloaded from the Worldwide Marriage Encounter web page. There is a link to that page on the ILME web page. There are ideas on various kinds of events you can plan and there is help on how to organize and publicize them.

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Any comments questions suggestions or volunteers to take a month for 2001 should contact:

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Call to be Family is now available on the Internet for all encountered couples.

1. Go to the ILME Home Page (www.ilme.org)
 2. Click on "Resources for Couples who have been on a ME weekend"
 3. Click on "ILME Postweekend material"
 4. Click on "Download some Documents, get dialogue helps"
- (User name: ILME Couples, password: 1010)
5. On the second page: go to "Misc stuff that didn't quite fit other categories," and you will see "Call to be Family"

After downloading, you will need the Adobe Acrobat Reader to open it. The Acrobat Reader can be downloaded from the Resource page or from www.adobe.com

A Book Review

LOVE, HONOR & FORGIVE
by Bill & Pam Farrel, available February 2000, published by InterVarsity Press.

"I'm sorry will you forgive me?" Sometimes those simple words that we teach children to say can be the most difficult we will ever utter. Whether the issue is trivial or vital, forgiveness can be a challenge to any couple. How do we forgive when we don't feel like it? Here is a down to earth look at forgiveness as we experience it - or don't - in our

marriages. The authors speak about what forgiveness is and isn't, finding the motivation to forgive when you're steaming mad, the toll bitterness takes, how to restore passion when there have been hurts. Each chapter concludes with a "Focus on the Hear" prayer and a specific "Step Toward Love" that spouses can take.

Lovingly submitted for your consideration by Dick & Jane Knecht, District IV Associate Editor Couple

