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# ACT

## Christian Family Movement

### New data on marriage sobering call to action

by Peter and Jane Buchbauer  
Presidents

In the wake of September 11 there is a renewed interest in religion and in family. This positive consequence could not have come at a better time, since both have been relegated to the corner in American society for too long. The effects of the devaluing of religion and family continue to be seen in recent studies and publications.

*The State of Our Unions*, a recent study published by the National Marriage Project, has some sobering statistics. Twenty-five percent

of unmarried women ages 25-39 are living with a partner. More than 50 per cent of all first marriages are preceded by cohabitation. Fifty percent of women consider unwed motherhood an option. Young adults favor cohabitation as a way of gathering vital information about a partner's character, fidelity and compatibility. The young adults surveyed viewed marriage as an intensely emotional relationship between a

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Evansville Bishop Gerald Gettelfinger visited with the service team during their Nov. 17 meeting. Left to right: Terry and Jean Smith, Bob and Anne Tomonto, Chuck Rogers, Bishop Gettelfinger, Lauri and John Prbyzys, Jane and Peter Buchbauer. Kneeling: Jan Rogers, and Jane Leingang.

—continued from page 1

man and a woman and not as an institution designed to hold a mother and father together in a family household. Nearly 70 per cent of Americans believe the main purpose of marriage is for something other than having children. The percentage of children who grow up in a fragile family has increased tremendously due to the increases in divorce, out of wedlock births and unmarried cohabitation.

*The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce* by **Judith Wallerstein** follows a study group of 131 children from 60 families in an affluent area of California. The study began in 1971 and has revisited these children on a periodic basis for over 25 years. The results are likewise sobering. Children of divorce were far more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol and far more likely to become sexually promiscuous. They were far less likely to complete a college education, far less likely to marry and far more likely to divorce. When contrasted to children from the same neighborhood that were raised in unhappy, but intact homes, the children raised in the intact setting, on the whole, fared much better than their counterparts whose parents divorced.

All of this must be a call to action for people of faith who value marriage and family life. While many people divorce under circumstances which no one can reasonably question—violence, abuse, serial infidelity—the fact is that all too many marriages in America end up in divorce because someone is “unfulfilled,” “bored,” or “wants to move on.” Particularly where children are involved, these reasons for divorce place individual pleasure or fulfillment over the obligation and responsibility to children. The shift from child-centeredness noted above weakens the societal pressure to keep families intact.

Clearly the facts observed above do not reflect a concept of marriage and family consistent with Christ’s teaching. **Pope John Paul II** in *Familiaris Consortio* tells us that in the plan of God every family has the mission to guard, reveal and communicate love through carrying out four tasks:

- to form an intimate community of persons, beginning with the communion of marriage and extending outward to all family relationships;
- to serve life by bringing children into the world and instilling values and traditions which will develop each person’s full potential;
- to participate in the development of society by becoming a community of social training and hospitality and by getting involved in works of charity and advocacy; and
- to share in the life and mission of the church by evangelization, worship, prayer, education of its members and service of its neighbors.

To what action does this call us—as a movement and as individuals? It is a difficult balancing act.

**We must become more proactive in encouraging marriage as a vocation.** Contrary to the young people surveyed, marriage is more than a relationship between husband and wife. It is a relationship between husband and wife together with God. Those who identify themselves as religious in surveys tend to be less likely than others to divorce.

**We need to talk positively about marriage and family life.** Yes, it is not always easy, but nothing worthwhile is. The blessings and benefits of a strong healthy marriage and intact family far outweigh the struggles and

sufferings which come with the formation of an intimate union of people who do not necessarily see everything the same way.

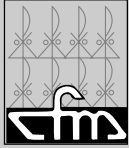
**We must seek to change community standards, which give equal weight to marital and non-marital unions.** How does your local media handle issues involving marriage and family. Do birth announcements identify the married couples? Are family issues relegated to a print wasteland where no one will come to view the information? Are marriage and family supported, defended and honored? We have to be counter-cultural about the importance of marriage and family. Marriage is not equal to cohabitation. In fact, we have to debunk the impression that people who cohabit have a greater chance of marital success. Contrary to popular opinion, persons who cohabit prior to marriage have a 50 per cent greater chance of divorcing.

**We need to educate children at an earlier age,** before the “values” of society take hold of our children. We need to educate them about marriage by example, by word and by deed. We need to be role models for our children.

**And most important, we must do all of this with love and compassion for those who do not find themselves within a marriage or intact family.** It is our duty as Christians to love and assist all people, especially those who hurt because of failed relationships. We must be positive about marriage and family, not negative about those who may not find themselves in an ideal situation. And if we commit to doing something in our relationships, in our families, in our parishes, in our communities, maybe we can make a difference for marriage and family life.

*If not us, who? If not now, when?*

*Peter and Jane Buchbauer, CFM Presidents, live in Winchester, Virginia. Their children are Joseph, 20; Peter, 18; Michael, 13; and Maria, 12.*



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Parent to Parent  
by Mary Lou Gorman

## The Importance of Saying "No"



Why is saying "no" to a child something a parent should do? There are some very good reasons. Saying "no" is probably the hardest thing a parent does when training a child. We love our children and we want to be good to them, but giving in to them at a grocery store every time we go is not a good idea. If a child begs for a treat when he's in a store and we give in, we are encouraging instant gratification which he can carry into his adult life. When we say "no" we are building his character and helping him develop the self-discipline to say "no" when he is offered drugs or feels like overspending on his credit card.

Children need to grow up making some sacrifices. Otherwise, their sense of wanting everything will be self-destructive. In life there

are limits to what we can and cannot have. A spoiled child will lose his sense of giving and helping as he grows older. When we say "no" to later hours, or "no" even if a friend can, or "no" because it costs too much, we are helping a child grow up to be a stronger person. Accepting a parent's decision, and recognizing its rationale, will help build self-discipline and prepare him to be a better parent himself.

Remember to explain why you say "no." The child does deserve an explanation. Then the matter should be dropped. Some discipline measure should be used if he continues to nag. Be firm and remember: You are saying "no" for his own good.

Lots of luck!

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Pope John Paul II: The crisis facing the family is one of the most important challenges facing the Church today.

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"One cannot give in to fashions and theories that, under the false appearance of modernity and progress, eventually turn against man and create so many victims, beginning with their own children, or the abandonment of the spouses themselves."

"One of the imperatives of our time is attention to the family, because one witnesses a generalized and radical crisis of this fundamental institution, given the serious threats facing it today." The Pontiff listed these threats briefly: "marriage breakups, the scourge of abortion, the contraceptive mentality, moral corruption, infidelities and domestic violence."

In order to address this crisis, the Holy Father offered two proposals. First, he urged a rediscovery of marriage as a sacrament in which, "in keeping with God's plan, man and woman realize their conjugal vocation and collaborate with him in creation."

Second, the Pope asked the Catholic Church to commit itself to a "solid preparation of those who prepare for marriage and the follow-up of Christian homes, which will make it possible to offer convincing examples of how a family should be and its irreplaceable role in society and the Church."

—Salvadoran Bishops' Conference November 23, 2001.

## La Leche League: The CFM Connection

Parents delight to see their children become independent; and when the impact and accomplishments of the children outshine those of the parents, the parents claim "bragging rights." Many members of CFM are aware that Marriage Encounter was introduced to the United States at a CFM convention, that the Foundation for International Cooperation is an offshoot of CFM, that numerous parish and community events and traditions all across the country were originally CFM actions, and that, quite recently, Covenant Experience was developed by CFM leaders to introduce couples to the CFM lifestyle.

Few, however, are aware that an organization that is revolutionizing American parenting and that reaches 300,000 people a month in 63 countries through more than 7,100 accredited leaders was quite literally "born" at a CFM picnic. The organization is La Leche League (LLL), named for Mary the Mother of God by her title of "Nuestra Senora de la Leche y Buen Parto," which translates "Our Lady of the Bountiful Milk and the Easy Birth."

Back in 1956, when breastfeeding was rare, two mothers breastfed their babies at a CFM picnic at St. Gertrude's, **Franklin Park, Ill.** Other CFM mothers were curious, and, in the true tradition of CFM, they observed that breastfeeding was extremely beneficial to the physical health of mother and baby, they judged that attitudes of the medical profession, of the formula manufacturers, and of society in general did not support breastfeeding, and they decided to go into action.

The book they wrote together in 1958, *The Womanly Art of*

*Breastfeeding*, now in its sixth edition, is published in nine languages and has sold over 2 million copies.

Each of the "founding mothers" brought a different combination of spiritual and practical gifts to the enterprise: public speaking and writing, administrative talent, encouragement, outspoken courage, analytical intelligence, personal warmth; but they all demonstrated commitment to their families, to one another and to the continuing guidance of the Holy Spirit. The seven, now aged 70 to 86, continue to be friends. They are **Mary Ann Cahill**, author of *Seven Voices, One Dream*, published by LLL this Fall, **Edwina Froehlich**, **Mary Ann Kerwin**, **Viola Lennon**, **Marian Thompson**, **Betty Wagner**, and **Mary White**.

Mary Ann Cahill was recently quoted by Catholic News Service: "The message of CFM was to reach out, to ask, who is my neighbor. We were trying to observe how we could make this a better world, apply the standards of our faith."

According to Edwina Froehlich, the fledgling organization "had a hard time choosing a name because the newspapers didn't want us to use the word 'breast-feeding.'" Then someone saw a postcard from Florida with a picture of the statue of Our Lady. "We felt that if we named ourselves after Our Lady of La Leche then she could be a sponsor for our fledgling organization."

Like CFM, LLL was once considered radical but now is recognized and respected. For more information about LLL, phone 800-LA-LECHE (800-525-3243) or visit the Web site at [www.lalecheleague.org](http://www.lalecheleague.org).

## Service Team Meets in Evansville

The national CFM service team met at The Catholic Center, diocesan administrative offices for the Diocese of Evansville, Ind., the weekend of Nov. 16-18 to inspect the new national office which is housed there. During the meeting the service team members stayed with local CFM families. They took the occasion to host an open house in the new office and have a potluck with members of the four parishes who have CFM chapters.

The service team meets in the fall each year to review implementation of plans which have been set at the summer board meeting and discuss special projects. This year's meeting covered such topics as the upcoming CFM conference in Miami, improving communication with members, revision of our mission statement, and CFM's response to the recent report on marriage in the U.S. by the National Marriage Project: "The State of Our Unions."



Anita Spaulding, CFM Office Assistant Sheila Spaulding and Sam Spaulding enjoy some conversation at the potluck during the service team visit to Evansville.

## Creative Groups

### *Sunday Family CFM* by Robin Hafey

St. Thomas More Parish of Glendale, Ariz. has had a "Family Group" for the past three years. The group sets Sundays aside for family time, alternating CFM meetings with unstructured fun. On CFM afternoons, we meet at 2 p.m. with parents indoors or in one part of the house and children outside or another part of the house. Each couple takes a turn preparing a meeting for the kids. Currently, the teens are using the *In Search of Jesus* CFM book, a program focused on growing in a relationship with Jesus, and the younger kids, assisted by some of the older ones, have been watching *Veggie Tales* videos and discussing Bible stories. After the meetings everyone shares a potluck supper or a picnic in the park before heading home at around 5 p.m.

This has been a wonderful opportunity for families, couples and children. Many of the families do not have extended family nearby, so there's some great community building going on, with all ages enjoying the fun.

### *To Split or Not to Split* by Margie Murchan

Our CFM group in San Jose, Calif., at 16 families, was becoming too large to stay together and too reluctant to split apart. *Solution:* The group, which includes both young and older couples, sometimes meets together to discuss a topic of interest to all, and sometimes meets in two smaller groups in different rooms of the same home. One group uses *Love Still Happens in Families* and the other discusses *Second Wind*. At the social time, both groups can share insights and experiences together.

## Book Review:

### *A Treasure Chest of Traditions for Catholic Families* by Monica McConkey Arma Dei, 2001, \$24.

Reviewed by Jane Leingang

This homespun sourcebook contains a wealth of ideas for parents and teachers who are looking for ways to pass on the faith to children. Based on the liturgical year, it gives numerous suggestions for celebrating Church seasons and feasts in the context of family life. Traditional ideas such as the Advent wreath and Easter eggs make appearances with enhancements to infuse them with greater meaning. McConkey retells older European traditions such as the St. Nicholas story while also making suggestions for new traditions and games. Simple ideas for observing the Advent and Lenten seasons are included. For example, the section on Lent includes a recipe for pretzels along with the story that they were first created by monks as a lenten reward for children who learned their prayers. The form of a pretzel is meant to represent arms folded in prayer.

The lives of the saints, prayer, scripture, doctrine, and Catholic traditions are all covered in this handy book. Some of the ideas are applications of traditional crafts to the religious context. A paper weaving heart craft that I was familiar with from childhood appears here in a section celebrating the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Others are totally new.

The section on "Cathletics" is particularly imaginative since it gives numerous games which can be devised to help children remember

the basic tenets of faith. "Jello Box Jeopardy" and "Bible Bingo" are two which caught my eye.

One area of the book which seems particularly worthwhile is a chapter dealing with celebrating the sacredness of ordinary life. "Every day is filled with burning bushes: it's just that some are more obvious than others." The first day of school, the first reception of the sacraments, the birth of a sibling, the death of a loved one, and moving are all occasions of grace which get attention. These times in the life of a family can be remembered and observed in ways which reinforce Christian values and virtues.

Some ideas may not appeal. In particular, two ideas for an All Saints' Day Party seem a bit over the top. "Halo Toss" calls for tossing a large styrofoam halo over sitting parents' heads which creates a somewhat startling image in my mind. "Sin Pin Bowling" which assigns one of the seven deadly sins to each pin also strike me as odd. There are, however, enough valuable suggestions here to recommend this book to anyone who is entrusted with passing on the Catholic faith to children.

*A Treasure Chest of Traditions for Catholic Families* by Monica McConkey, Arma Dei, 299 pages, spiral bound, \$19.95 plus \$4 shipping, ArmaDei@aol.com.



## Taking the Time to Make a Difference

by Paul R. Leingang

### Continue baking and continue taking

It's a good story. In a new book, *Jewish Spirituality: A Brief Introduction for Christians*, **Rabbi Lawrence Kushner** re-tells an ancient story about the richest man in town and the poorest man in town.

The richest man was sleeping through the weekly worship service, as he usually did. He woke up, however, just long enough to hear the chanting of some verses from *Leviticus*, in which God instructs the people to put 12 loaves of bread on a table in the ancient wilderness tabernacle. After he heard the verses, he again fell asleep. When he awoke again at the end of the service, the wealthy man was convinced that God had come to him in his sleep to ask him personally for 12 loaves of bread.

So he baked the bread and brought it to the synagogue. With no one looking, he put the loaves into the ark with the Scripture scrolls, and went away. Then the poorest man in town arrives. He's the synagogue caretaker, and before he begins his cleaning chores, he pours out his troubles to God: He is poor, his family is starving, only a miracle will save them. As he walks around the room to tidy it up, he discovers the bread. He rushes home with it to bring it to his family.

It's a good story, but it gets even better. The richest man comes back, because he has begun to wonder whether God really wanted

his bread. He enters the synagogue, opens the ark and discovers that the loaves are gone. Pleased that God has accepted his gift, the richest man promises to be back the next week, with another 12 loaves "and with raisins in them, too!" And once again, the next week, the richest man delivers and the poorest man returns to find another miracle. And so it goes for 20 years – until one day the rabbi stayed

*The rabbi scolded  
the rich man  
for thinking that God  
would eat bread and  
he scolded  
the poor man  
for thinking that God  
would bake bread. ...  
BUT...*

longer than usual and witnessed the amazing events. The rabbi scolded the rich man for thinking that God would eat bread, and he scolded the poor man for thinking that God would bake bread. Both men were sad, and asked if they should end their weekly practice. "No," counseled the rabbi. "Each of you, look at your hands. Yours," he said to the rich man, "are the hands

of God giving food to the poor. And yours," he said to the poor man, "are the hands of God, receiving gifts from the rich." He told them to continue baking and continue taking. "Your hands are the hands of God."



Take the time to reflect on the hands of God – the ones that bake and the ones that take – in your own family experience. If you have children, talk with them about the separate values of giving and receiving. Which is more difficult? What are the ways today that families and individuals give gifts to God? What gifts do families and individuals receive today from God?



The Christian Family Movement encourages its members to "observe, judge and act." One action I am prompted to take is to seek out more ancient stories from people of faith. Take the time to listen to the stories of your parents. Record them. Pass them along to the next generation. In the early months of this new year, take the time to give a gift to God. And find a way to accept a gift in return.

*Jewish Spirituality: A Brief Introduction for Christians* by Rabbi Lawrence Kushner, \$12.95, Paperback, 103 pages, Jewish Lights Publishing, Woodstock, Vermont. [www.jewishlights.com](http://www.jewishlights.com).

*Paul is director of communications for the Diocese of Evansville, Ind.; and editor of the Message, the diocesan newspaper. His weekly column Taking the Time to Make a Difference is syndicated in a number of diocesan newspapers. Paul and Jane Leingang are executive directors of CFM.*

# How Embracing the Virtues of Loyalty, Generosity, Justice and Courage Can Strengthen Your Relationship

## Book Review:

### *Beyond the Myth of Marital Happiness*

by Blaine Fowers  
Jossey-Bass, 2001, \$25.

by Lauri Prbyzys

What is your vision for your marriage? We Americans cherish an ideal of marriage that will heroically overcome all the stress and alienation we endure in modern life. Yet couples are divorcing in distressing numbers. We may be setting ourselves up for disappointment by expecting too much, or not enough, from marriage.

In his recent book *Beyond the Myth of Marital Happiness*, (www.josseybass.com, \$25.) psychologist Blaine Fowers invites married couples to “re-envision marriage as a wonderful opportunity to practice virtues of friendship, loyalty, generosity, and justice in the shared pursuit of our deepest ideals.” This is a call to renew marriage by reclaiming the value of shared vision and partnership, of covenant love and mission to transform society.

The latest studies (The National Marriage Project, <http://marriage.rutgers.edu>) show that most Americans want a soul-mate for life, but most say they have little hope of fulfilling that dream.

We come to understand marriage as an emotion-based, private affair between two people. Fowers traces at history of marriage in Western society to explore how we

came to expect marriage to be the Super-Relationship. It hasn't always been so. Unable to meet such high expectations, many people are giving up on marriage as an institution.

Are new sexual techniques and renewed romance the answer to struggling relationships? Is successful marriage just a matter of learning the latest communication skills? Without denying the importance of passion and communication, Fowers invites couples to look deeper at the possible sources of strength for marriage — as a vocation to make a difference in the world.

According to Fowers, the

“myth of marital happiness”—that good communication, emotional gratification, and intimacy result in a healthy relationship—has made marriages more fragile than ever before. Fowler invites couples to see their marriage as a noble calling that is bigger than both of them. Although marriage is very personal, Christian marriage is never a private matter. The world needs marriages and families to stay strong and healthy.

Here is a book on marriage which—while not explicitly religious — calls couples to a vision of partnership marriage based on virtue, that takes the partners beyond themselves as a couple. It is filled with suggestions for ways couples can more fully capture the beauty and goodness that are available in almost all marriages. Partners pursuing worthwhile goals to make a difference in the world — sounds like CFM!

## Marriage documentary to air on PBS

The documentary *Marriage: Is It Just a Piece of Paper?* will be shown on all 300 U.S. PBS stations on Valentine's Day, February 14, 2002. The program is narrated by **Cokie Roberts** and the script was written by **Barbara Dafoe Whitehead**.

It is based on research done by the Religion, Culture, and Family Project, especially **Don Browning's** book, *From Culture*

*Wars to Common Ground* and **John Witte's** *From Sacrament to Contract*. The documentary mixes the testimony of national experts with the voices of “real people.” The experts include **William Julius Wilson, Judith Wallerstein, William Doherty, William Galston, John Witte, Lisa Sowle Cahill, Patricia Ireland, Diane Sollee, Governor Frank Keating, and Senators Joseph Lieberman and Sam Brownback.**

SPOTLIGHT

The office recently heard from long-time friend of CFM **Father Ed Cantwell, Hudson, N.Y.** He writes "Many thanks for so many communications from places throughout the world." Father Cantwell underwent treatment for cancer in the past year.

Thanks to the encouragement of long time CFMers **John and Lauri Przybysz**, there's a new CFM group in **Baltimore, Md.** **Ruth Ann and Joe Wickless** are excited to report that their "family-style" small Christian Community has made the decision to join CFM as of October, 2001. They look forward to making contact with other CFM families, particularly those who have decided to include their children in some or all of their meetings (a challenge!).

E-mail them at [ruthann.wickless@verizon.net](mailto:ruthann.wickless@verizon.net).

Leaders **Iris and David Patten** at St. Anthony's CFM of **Nanuet, N.Y.** report that the group held a successful garage sale in September. The proceeds were donated to the local Birthright chapter.

**Gary and Kay Aitchison**, North American representatives to ICCFM, attended the Annual Conference of RETORNO which was held the weekend of Oct. 19-21 in **Cedar Falls, Iowa**. Gary and Kay Aitchison also attended the NACFLM Region IX Conference, 2001: A FAMILY ODYSSEY, October 27-28 in **Council Bluffs, Iowa**.

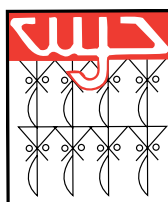
Leaders **Kathy and Tom Rothermich**, CFMers in St. Theodore Parish **Flint, Mo.**, wrote

with a novel idea for expansion. At Christmas time, they call parish newcomers to find out who will be home the night of their CFM meeting. After a potluck dinner, the group carols for the newcomers, leaving a decorated bag of small items contributed by members.

Webmaster **Andy Pozdol** encourages all section leaders to review the cfm web site "about us" page and verify that the information about their group is correct (or even exists).

We list parish and city and are happy to include local CFM web site if available. You can contact Andy at [Webmaster@cfm.org](mailto:Webmaster@cfm.org) with contact information and with reactions and suggestions for the web site.

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