

McGILL UNIVERSITY

PRE-MARITAL EDUCATION : A STUDY OF FIVE
PROGRAMS IN THE MONTREAL AREA

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ABSTRACT

PRE-MARITAL EDUCATION: A STUDY OF FIVE
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The primary aim of this study was to assess whether pre-marital education programs in the Montreal area were relevant to the needs of today's couples. The secondary aim was to examine what effect the philosophies, held by the organizations running the courses, had on the content of the courses. The five pre-marital education courses, studied in the Spring of 1975, were run by English-speaking religious (the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian and Jewish faiths) and secular organizations (the Mental Hygiene Institute). The relevancy of these courses was judged by comparing them to six other pre-marital education courses (outside of Montreal) in the literature and to seven books on modern theoretical concepts of marriage. Knowledge of the Montreal courses was obtained from written material, from discussions with those running the courses and from personal attendance at the courses.

The comparison study of the Montreal courses and the literature courses showed that, although many of the goals were similar, (e.g. all wished to promote good communication) there was disagreement over how the goals should be reached. The literature courses all used the small

group discussion method throughout, with some factual information being utilised to stimulate learning about communication. Three of the Montreal courses used the small group discussion method. The remaining two courses concentrated almost entirely on giving out factual information. The majority of the books on modern theoretical concepts of marriage felt couples should have marriages, based on trust and good communication, which allowed room for couples to grow as individuals. These ideas were contained in the material presented to the three courses, using small group discussions. The two courses using lecturers, did not use this material.

The study concluded that the Presbyterian and Mental Hygiene Institute courses were relevant, the Anglican course was fairly relevant, and the Roman Catholic and Jewish courses were irrelevant to the needs of today's couples. The most structured courses were run by the organizations having the most rigid underlying philosophies on marriage. However, there was insufficient evidence to conclude that the philosophies, held by the organizations running the course, affected the content of the courses.

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K.L.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Most people would agree that the institution of marriage is not only changing but is breaking down with increasing frequency. Divorce statistics are soaring¹ and all around us so-called experts are bombarding us with their opinions on marriage breakdown, remarriage and alternatives to traditional marriage patterns. Social Work agencies and all those in the helping professions are aware of the increasing numbers of people seeking help with marital and family problems. It is indeed surprising that so little attention has been paid to the question of how to prevent young couples from getting into the destructive relationship patterns which inevitably lead to marriage breakdown. The writer's research showed that in North America, apart from a few innovative secular organizations, it has been religious groups who have led the way in attempting to educate people about marriage, prior to their wedding day. Few researchers have studied pre-marital education programs and few social workers have been involved in the religious programs or have been willing to set up their own programs. It would seem only logical that more expertise and resources should be devoted to marriage courses for couples intending to be married. The writer's own per-

¹Statistics Canada, Canada Year Book (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1974).

sonal involvement with marriage counselling and with pre-marital education courses has made her aware both of the complexities of marital disharmony and the potential of pre-marital education programs. It would be hoped that this study will be of some value to those attempting to set up effective pre-marital education programs in the future. The pre-marital education programs will be referred to as marriage courses in this study.

The marriage programs that do exist in North America have many problems to face. The fact is that no one really knows, for sure, how best to prepare couples for married life. Some experts feel couples should be given information in a lecture format, whereas others maintain that couples should be taught communication techniques by participating in small group discussions. Another controversy which faces the religious organizations sponsoring marriage courses is whether or not marriage groups should be allowed or encouraged to discuss behaviour, which would conflict with the beliefs of the religions. In Montreal it is difficult to attract couples to the secular marriage courses. The religious courses do tend to have much larger numbers of couples coming forward for their programs. This is due to the fact that many couples are told that they must take a marriage course if they want to have a church ceremony. Despite this pressure brought to bear on many couples, the vast majority of couples do not receive any information about marital relationships, prior to getting married. It is puzzling why so few couples see the need for marriage courses that do already exist.

The purpose of this research paper, bearing in mind the increase

in marital breakdown and the obvious need for effective marriage courses, is to examine a selected number of marriage courses in Montreal. The research questions are (1) Does the content of the Montreal courses seem relevant to the needs of today's couples? The relevancy will be judged by comparing the Montreal courses studied with literature on marriage courses outside of Montreal and with literature on the theoretical concepts of marriage. For the purpose of this study, the assumption was made that the content of the literature reviewed, on marriage and on marriage courses, was relevant to the needs of today's couples. (2) How do the philosophies of the organisations sponsoring the courses appear to have affected the content of the courses?

The writer is fully aware that she could have attempted to assess the outcome of the Montreal courses by obtaining the views of the couples who participated. However, as can be seen from the research questions, it was decided not to study the consumers' attitudes but to assess the Montreal courses by comparing them to information obtained from the literature. There were two reasons for this decision. Firstly, there was a study done on participants' views in 1975 and duplication of this study would have been inappropriate at this time.² Secondly, it was felt that it would be impossible to accurately measure the long-term effects of the marriage courses.

This study does not concern itself with the controversy over the need for marriage education. The writer knows that some people feel

²"Marriage Preparation: A Descriptive and Evaluative Study," (Master's dissertation, School of Social Work, McGill University, Montreal, 1975).

children learn all they need to know about relationships in their own families and that consequently adults do not need to be taught anything about marriage. This study also does not concern itself with the problem of when marriage education should be given. Some feel marriage courses should be available in schools, whereas others feel couples will not be motivated to learn about marriage until they have lived together for several months. These people see post-marital education as the answer.³ In the Montreal courses studied, there was no attempt made to find out how many of the couples attending were already co-habiting.

It was felt that it would be impossible, due to time, language barriers, accessibility and the vastness of the city, to discover and contact all groups in Montreal involved in marriage programs. The study was therefore limited to an examination of five formal marriage courses run by the Anglican, Presybterian, Roman Catholic and Jewish faiths and the Mental Hygiene Institute in Montreal. All these marriage courses took place in the English-speaking community in the Spring of 1975. It should be noted that the writer is not aware that any other secular or religious organizations were involved in giving formal English-speaking marriage courses on a regular basis in 1975.

The five marriage courses studied were sponsored by organizations who had run marriage courses in the past. The Roman Catholics have run regular marriage courses since 1946, the Mental Hygiene Institute has run its courses since 1956, and the Jewish Institute for Brides and Grooms has operated since 1964. The Anglicans and Presbyterians are

³Dr. Charles A. Guldner, "The Post-Marital - An Alternative to Pre-Marital Counseling," The Family Coordinator 20 (April 1971): 115.

late comers to the field of marriage education, with the Anglican Church becoming involved in the late 1960's and the Presbyterians becoming involved in 1973. It can be clearly seen that the history of marriage courses in Montreal is, apart from the involvement of the Mental Hygiene Institute, the history of the gradual involvement of the Jewish and Christian faiths in this field. It is interesting to speculate on why this would be. A likely answer would seem to be that the religious organizations have had the financial resources, access to engaged couples and a strong desire to strengthen marriage and family life, by teaching about the secular and religious aspects of marriage. It should also not be forgotten that religious groups have traditionally led the way in perceiving and meeting new community and individual needs.

It was not possible to obtain detailed information on all five courses. The Roman Catholic, Anglican and Jewish courses had lecture-type formats and it was therefore possible to attend every session and to record accurately the information given to the couples. It was not possible to attend the Presbyterian or Mental Hygiene Institute courses, as this would have interfered with the group dynamics and the effectiveness of the courses. Consequently, knowledge of these two courses was based almost entirely on conversations held with the organizers of the courses, who also happened to be the group leaders. This will be discussed more fully in the Methodology section. It should be noted that the writer has no way of knowing how her personal biases affected what she perceived was being taught in the courses.

Attempts to find literature on other marriage courses was very time-consuming and frustrating. An extensive search revealed that

little published material was available. It was decided that only courses given in the 1970's would be reviewed. This left six articles to be studied.

There were so many publications dealing with marital happiness and marital breakdown that it was difficult to decide which books to review. The books selected reflect not only what was available (in the McGill Social Work library and in the writer's personal collection) but also reflect the writer's own personal preference as to what theoretical opinions should be considered. For example, many religious and anti-women's liberation books on marriage do exist. However, it was felt that such books did not merit inclusion in the marriage book review. Books written before 1970 were not considered for review.

Some literature on the philosophies of the organizations, giving the courses, was the official literature of the organizations. Naturally this literature outlined the official beliefs of the organizations. Other literature on the philosophies was chosen on a purely subjective basis as being representative of what was being written about the various faiths' attitudes towards marriage.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

As previously noted, in the discussion of the goals of this study, this research paper attempts to assess the relevancy of five marriage courses in Montreal by comparing them with marriage courses outside of Montreal and with modern theoretical concepts on marital relationships. This paper is also concerned with the underlying philosophies of the organizations sponsoring the courses and the effect of these philosophies on the content of the courses. In order to clarify the methodology involved, each area of study shall be discussed separately.

Five marriage courses in Montreal which were held in the Spring of 1975 were selected for study.¹ Information on these courses was obtained from written material, from discussions with people involved in running the courses and from personal attendance at some of the courses. The Jewish, Roman Catholic and Anglican organizations all had brochures available, which briefly outlined the content of the courses. In addition, the Jews had a written history of their Institute for Brides

¹"Jewish Institute for Brides and Grooms," Montreal, Quebec, May 1975; "Roman Catholic Marriage Course," sponsored by the Christian Family Education Centre, Montreal, Quebec, March 1975; "Presbyterian Marriage Course," sponsored by Presbyterian Church of St. Laurent, Montreal, Quebec, April 1975; "Anglican Marriage Course," sponsored by the Church of St. Augustine, Pointe Claire, Quebec, April 1975; "Mental Hygiene Institute Marriage Course," sponsored by Mental Hygiene Institute, Montreal, Quebec, April 1975.

and Grooms,² and the Roman Catholics had a written evaluation on their marriage courses.³ Copies of all the material mentioned were obtained.

Meetings took place with the organizers of the Roman Catholic, Presbyterian and Mental Hygiene Institute courses in February 1975.⁴ The organizers of the Jewish and Anglican courses were not available until the opening sessions of their Spring 1975 courses.⁵ At all these meetings the goals, methodology, content and underlying philosophies of the courses were discussed in detail. Extensive notes were taken. In addition, it was possible to attend a day-long symposium on the Roman Catholic marriage course, which gave the writer the opportunity to observe laymen and religious leaders debating over what the goals of their marriage course should be.⁶

There was the opportunity to attend the Roman Catholic, Anglican and Jewish courses. Unfortunately, it was not possible to attend all

²Mrs. G. Schwei, "The Jewish Institute for Brides and Grooms," pamphlet prepared for Jewish Marriage Course, May 1975.

³Mrs. Barbara Thuringer and Fr. Phil Hart, "Evaluation of the Marriage Course, sponsored by the Christian Family Education Centre," task force report, March 1975.

⁴Mrs. Barbara Thuringer, interview at Christian Family Education Centre, Montreal, Quebec, February 1975; Rev. Thomas Gemmell, interview at St. Laurent Presbyterian Church, Montreal, Quebec, February 1975; Mrs. Lettie Cox, interview at Mental Hygiene Institute, Montreal, Quebec, February 1975.

⁵Mrs. G. Schwei, interview at Montreal, Quebec, May 1975; Rev. Alexander Morris, interview at Pointe Claire, Quebec, April 1975.

⁶Symposium on Marriage Preparation, Christian Family Education Centre, Montreal, Quebec, February 22nd 1975.

five Jewish sessions in the May 1975 course. Consequently, the writer arranged to attend three sessions in the May 1976 course, in order that all the material presented to the couples be covered.⁷ As the Jewish course followed the same format in 1975 and in 1976 it was felt that having to attend the course over a period of two years would not make the material collected inaccurate, for the purpose of the study. All the sessions in the Anglican and Roman Catholic courses were attended. The material presented, via the use of oral, visual and written techniques, was recorded by the use of tapes and notes. Although this study does not intend to focus on the opinions of the consumers (i.e. those couples attending the courses) it was obviously impossible to attend the courses without being aware of the couples' reactions to the material being presented. The Mental Hygiene Institute and Presbyterian courses were not attended which meant most of the information on these courses had to be obtained solely by discussion with the organizers. Some of the information in the courses that were observed was also given out in the courses that could not be observed. For example, the Chernick film on Sexuality and Communication was used and observed by the writer in the Roman Catholic course.⁸ It was also shown in the Presbyterian and Mental Hygiene courses. Except for the Jewish course, all courses reviewed family and matrimonial laws. The speaker in communication techniques at the Anglican course was also the group leader at the Mental Hygiene Institute course, where she devoted a great deal of her time to the dis-

⁷"Jewish Institute for Brides and Grooms, Montreal, Quebec, May 1976.

⁸Dr. B. Chernick, and Doctor A. Chernick, "Sexuality and Communication," film produced by Mobius for Ortho Pharmaceuticals, U.S.A., 1972.

cussion of communication.

Literature on other marriage courses outside of Montreal was obtained from the McGill School of Social Work library and from written contacts with the organizers of the Bader and Minnesota Programs.⁹ Literature on marriage courses, which took place prior to 1970, was not reviewed. Six articles on marriage courses, which took place in the 1970's, were reviewed. The review included the literature on the Bader and Minnesota programs and four other articles.¹⁰ The writer feels that these six articles give a good and fair picture of what is being attempted in marriage education, outside of Montreal. The Montreal courses and the literature on marriage courses were reviewed separately under the three headings of goals, methods and outcomes.

The literature on theoretical concepts of marriage was obtained from the McGill School of Social Work, other social workers and from the personal collection of the writer. The literature reviewed well represents

⁹Edward L. Bader, "Family Life Education Project," report on program conducted by the Department of Family and Community Medicine, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada, September 1974; Dr. Sherod Millen, Dr. Elam W. Nunally and Dr. Daniel W. Wackman, "The Minnesota Couples Communication Program," report from University of Minnesota Family Study Center, Minnesota, U.S.A., 1975.

¹⁰David J. Rolfe, "Preparing Groups of Engaged Couples for Marriage," paper presented to National Council on Family Relations, Toronto, Canada, October 19 1973; John E. Hinkle and Marvin Moore, "A Student Couples Program," The Family Coordinator 20 (April 1971): 153; Brenda Van Zoost, "Premarital Communication Skills with University Students," The Family Coordinator 22 (April 1973): 197; Susan E. Glendenning and A John Wilson III, "Experiments in Group Premarital Counseling," Social Casework 53 (November 1972): 550.

modern thinking about the marital relationship.¹¹

Knowledge about the philosophies of the organizations giving the courses was obtained by discussions with the course organizers (as previously noted) and by reviewing literature, obtained from the organizers of the course, on the values towards marriage held by the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian and Jewish faiths. In addition, several books on the Jewish faith were obtained from a faculty member of the McGill School of Social Work.

¹¹David R. Mace, Getting Ready for Marriage (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972); William J. Lederer and Dr. Donald D. Jackson, The Mirage of Marriage (New York: W.W. Norton and Co, 1972); Jessie Bernard, The Future of Marriage (New York: World Publishing Co., 1972); Nena O'Neill and George O'Neill, Open Marriage (New York: M. Evans and Co., 1972); Howard J. Clinebell and Charlotte H. Clinebell, The Intimate Marriage (New York: Harper and Row, 1970); Herbert A. Otto, ed., The Family in Search of a Future (New York: Meredith Corporation, 1970); Dr. George R. Bach and Peter Wyden, How to Fight Fair in Love and Marriage (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1968).

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON MARRIAGE

As previously noted, seven books on marriage were reviewed for this study. Mace, Lederer and Jackson (Jackson), Bernard, the O'Neills and the Clinebells all agreed that marriage has not adapted itself to the realities of today's complex, technological and rapidly changing society.¹ The O'Neills stated that the patriarchal marriage system of Judeo Christian tradition, which was based on an agrarian economy, where marriage structure matched marriage functions, was outmoded. They noted that "married bliss now seems a mirage in the distance, even more elusive, receding further and further beyond our grasp."² The O'Neills called the traditional marriage a trap, with rigid role requirements and with deeper emotional feelings, honest and open relations rarely shared by husband and wife. In this so-called "closed marriage"³ neither person could grow as an individual because the ideal was for the couple to fuse into a single entity with separate experiences not allowed. The O'Neills felt a new format was called for and were convinced that their concept of "open marriage"⁴ was the answer.

Jackson noted that marriage used to be an institution for the

¹Supra, chapter II, p. 11.

²O'Neill and O'Neill, p. 14.

³Ibid., p. 37. ⁴Ibid., p. 38.

physical survival and well-being of two people and their offspring but that now instead of physical survival we have primarily the struggle for psychological and emotional survival. It was felt that "Divorce, marital strife, desertion and emotional and physical illness are a few symptoms of this cultural lag in the institution of marriage."⁵ Jackson's attitude was that "we must modify our outmoded attitudes, beliefs and institutions to accommodate current social realities,"⁶ and that society had given people false assumptions about marriage, which doomed it to failure.⁷ The first myth was that people married because they loved each other. Jackson felt it was hard to define love and that people married because they thought they were in love. He contended that literature and tradition had given marriage false values of instant joy and that it was implied marriage would solve all problems. It was felt that many people married because they were lonely, fearful of their economic future and were hoping that marriage would give them a missing desired characteristic or provide a parent substitute. The second myth was that most married people loved each other. It was deemed essential that all couples faced up to the fact that all human beings performed unilateral and selfish acts in order that marriage should not be based on "myths, obsolete and meaningless traditions, and self-deceit."⁸ The third myth was that love was necessary for a satisfactory marriage, and Jackson described a workable marriage as having four major elements: tolerance, respect, honesty and the desire to stay together for mutual

⁵Lederer and Jackson, p. 37.

⁶Ibid., p. 38.

⁷Ibid., pp. 41-84.

⁸Ibid., p. 52.

advantage. The fourth myth was that there were inherent behavioural and attitudinal differences between female and male and that these differences caused marital problems. It was felt that society's attitudes determined which kind of role, attitude, and behaviour each sex would embrace and that therefore each couple could determine what roles they would have. The author opposed the view (myth number five) that children would automatically improve a potentially difficult or unfulfilled marriage, that loneliness will be cured by marriage (myth number six) and that if you have to tell your spouse to go to Hell then you have a poor marriage (myth number eight). It was stressed that conflict is inevitable and that couples must learn to resolve it.

The Clinebells discussed the need for people to relate and observed that "a good marriage offers the most favourable opportunity in our culture for fulfilling the will to relate."⁹ However, the Clinebells believed that few marriages were able to achieve sufficient intimacy to ward off this "relationship hunger."¹⁰ Their aim was to teach couples how to achieve mutual need satisfaction within the relationship.

Mace also agreed that myths about marriage were dangerous and his view was that couples needed to know about the complexities of the marital relationship prior to marriage. His opinion was that "if we drift into marriage, thinking of it as a free gift handed to us on a silver platter by a smiling providence and guaranteed of itself to bring us lasting bliss we are being utterly unrealistic."¹¹ He was angry that

⁹Clinebell and Clinebell, p. 17.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 12-10.

¹¹Mace, p. 20.

society allowed people to get married "on pink clouds of romantic sentiment,"¹² and that much more money was spent on the wedding day than on premarital counselling services.

Bernard's main concern was the negative effects traditional marriage has had on women. She noted that men have done well out of marriage. "There are few findings more consistent, less equivocal, more convincing than the sometimes spectacular and always impressive superiority on almost every index - demographic, psychological and social - of married over never married men. Despite all the jokes about marriage in which men indulge, all the complaints they lodge against it, it is one of the greatest boons of their sex."¹³ Her studies showed that more married women than men suffered from mental distress, anxiety or depression and Bernard blamed this on wives having their status lowered by marriage. Bernard felt that "dwindling into a wife takes time" and involved a "redefinition of the self and an active reshaping of the personality to conform to the wishes or needs of husbands."¹⁴ She described the "housewife syndrome," said it was "degrading, non growth-producing for the individual and mainly responsible for the unhappiness of wives."¹⁵

It can be clearly seen that the O'Neills, the Clinebells, Mace, Bernard and Jackson felt that traditional marriage was simply not working well and that couples, in order to be happy, had to find alternative forms of marriage. The changes suggested by these authors ranged from redefining the relationship within the present legal marriage structure

¹²Ibid, p.7.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 42.

¹³Bernard, p. 17.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 43-58.

to throwing out the present marriage structure completely. Bernard and Herbert¹⁶ (not previously discussed) explored alternatives to traditional marriage fully. Bernard observed that many couples lived in a childless state, without benefit of legal or religious approval, and also that serial marriages were a fact of life. It was suggested that commitment to marriage should be of only limited duration (five or ten years) and that couples should have the option to renew or not to renew the commitment.¹⁷ Margaret Mead felt that marriage should be in two steps. Firstly, there would be Individual Marriage, easy to get into and easy to dissolve. The next step, Parental Marriage, would be entered into by those wanting children and would be licenced. The licence would only be granted if the couple was considered to have a good relationship and the ability to raise children. Breaking up this Parental Marriage would be a slow process and great care would be taken for the protection of the children.¹⁸ Other alternatives discussed were the acceptance of extramarital relationships,¹⁹ childless legal marriages, group marriages, polygamy for those over sixty years of age, co-operative households, intimate networks of families and remaining single.²⁰ Women's liberation has challenged the assumption that women were failures if not married. Bernard quoted Judith Brown, who stated,

¹⁶Supra, Chapter II, p. 11.

¹⁷Bernard, pp. 207-275.

¹⁸Margaret Mead, "Marriage in Two Steps," in The Family in Search of a Future, ed. Herbert A. Otto (New York: Merdeith Corporation, 1970), p. 75.

¹⁹Edward C. Hobbs, "An Alternative from a Theological Perspective," in The Family in Search of a Future, p. 25.

²⁰Bernard, pp. 207-276.

"The Marriage Institution does not free women, it does not provide for emotional and intellectual growth and it offers no political resources."²¹ Some radical Women's Liberationists have indeed chosen to remain single. However, Bernard noted that most Women Liberationists were pro-marriage but not in its present form. Their ideas were having an effect on society's attitudes towards traditional and non-traditional forms of marriage.

The O'Neills, the Clinebells, Mace, and Jackson all believed that marriages can be improved within their present legal structure. They further believed that each marriage was a unique partnership and that each couple must decide, by negotiation, what kind of relationship they wanted, with no preconceived expectations imposed by society. In order for this relationship to be satisfactory, it was felt that there must be room for each person to grow as an individual as well as the opportunity for the couple to grow as a couple. Good Communication was considered the vehicle for establishing these kinds of relationships in order that debates over roles, sex and trust etc. could be resolved.

Mace summed up his attitude by saying, "What we need to do is to see marriage as a task, as a goal that is certainly difficult to obtain but not unattainable."²² He felt, "The roles of husband and wife have to be decided to meet their particular personal situation."²³ The

²¹Judith Brown, Toward a Female Liberation Movement, 1968, quoted in Jessie Bernard, The Future of Marriage (New York: World Publishing Co., 1972), p. 247.

²²Mace, p. 20.

²³Ibid., p. 35.

Clinebells focused on intimacy, which they defined as close moments of intense sharing and the ongoing quality of the relationship, which was present even in times of some distance and conflict. They were convinced that intimacy grew as couples learned to be emotionally present to each other and they divided intimacy into twelve different facets, sexual, emotional, intellectual, aesthetic, creative, recreational, work, crisis, conflict, commitment, spiritual and communication intimacy.²⁴ However, the Clinebells did not see intimacy as the traditional stifling togetherness, where the couples did everything together. They stressed that each marriage had to develop its unique pattern of intimacy, which allowed for the growth needs of the individual. The Clinebells said, "One of the marks of genuine intimacy is the respect for the needs of each partner for periods of aloneness," and "if marital partners are too dependent on each other for a sense of self-worth and even identity, there is a kind of compulsive togetherness which is not genuine intimacy."²⁵

The O'Neills defined their "open marriage" as an "honest and open relationship between two people, based on the equal freedom and identity of both partners. It involves a verbal, intellectual and emotional commitment to the right of each to grow as an individual within the marriage."²⁶ This meant that each partner had therefore the freedom to expand outside the marriage, to seek out new experiences and potential for growth. The O'Neills saw this freedom as aiding people's growth, not only as individuals but as a couple, "because each one is

²⁴Clinebell and Clinebell, pp. 23-40.

²⁵Ibid., p. 27.

²⁶O'Neill and O'Neill, p. 38.

growing through freedom toward selfhood, adding new experiences from the outside, and at the same time receiving the incremental benefit of his mate's outward experiences, the union develops constantly in an upward spiral." This process the O'Neills called Synergy.²⁷ Detailed guidelines for achieving this "open marriage" and avoiding a "closed one" were examined.²⁸

Jackson introduced the Systems Concept "Marriage is not just a rigid relationship between two rigid individuals. Marriage is a fluid relationship between two spouses and their two individual systems of behaviour. The totality of marriage is determined by how the spouses operate in relation to each other."²⁹ It was felt essential that relationships rules were worked out and a "quid pro quo" agreement arrived at, which was a "something for something" agreement."³⁰ Jackson noted each spouse, at the beginning of a marriage wanted the other spouse to change to accommodate them and that therefore there would be friction until this was resolved. He urged couples to see their differences as merely differences and not marks of inferiority. Jackson wrote that each spouse should perform the roles for which they were best suited, regardless of custom and tradition. He felt that, if workable marriages were to exist in the latter part of the twentieth century, the artificially determined roles of male and female (developed during the Middle Ages) had to be discarded and replaced. Jackson also felt that American values concerning marriage were rusty, broken

²⁷Ibid., p. 39. ²⁸Ibid., pp. 257-265.

²⁹Lederer and Jackson, p. 90.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 285-317.

down and obsolete.

As previously noted, good communication was considered essential if sound preparation for marriage and the establishment of "intimate" "open" and "quid pro quo" relationships were to be successful. Trust was seen as one of the main ingredients in good communication. The O'Neills felt that, without trust, which could never be unilateral, their "open marriage" could not function. They stated, "Trust is the most important quality two partners can share in a marriage. It is absolutely essential to a dynamic growing relationship."³¹ Their belief was that "open trust" as opposed to "static trust" grew if couples were honest, open and accepting of each other's frailties. This was defined as creating a climate of belief in each other. The Clinebells' opinion was that intimacy grew in a climate of trust based on commitment to fidelity and continuity.³² Jackson agreed wholeheartedly with the O'Neill's feelings regarding the establishment and importance of trust. He also noted that trust was only possible when verbal and non-verbal behaviour was consistent and communicated clearly. It was emphasized that everyone changes over time and that couples must be realistic about this. Consequently, trust required "the constant exercise of intelligence, truthfulness and courage."³³

A great deal of space was devoted by Mace, Jackson, the Clinebells and the O'Neills to the factors they considered crucial to the development of good communication. Bach's³⁴ book, "How to Fight Fair in Love

³¹O'Neill and O'Neill, p. 224. ³²Clinebell and Clinebell, p. 26.

³³Lederer and Jackson, p. 113.

³⁴Supra, Chapter II, p. 11.

and Marriage", was also reviewed by the writer. It was discovered that all the authors' views on communication were very similar. All noted communication was both verbal and non-verbal. Self Awareness, timing, clarity, open listening, honesty, feedback (to ensure message sent was message received), focusing on the issue and understanding the context were considered essential. All agreed that sex was part of communication. Jackson added that, as all behaviour was communication, it was impossible not to communicate. Jackson defined every message as having a report aspect (what was actually said) a command aspect (which defined the nature of the relationship and attempted to influence this) and a context aspect (which was determined by the cultural implications of the situation of the communicant). If these three aspects were incongruent much confusion would be caused.³⁵ Jackson also discussed incomplete transactions, mind reading, manipulation through illness (the handy heart technique) and power (the pseudo-benevolent dictator), cross complaining and his Fallen Domino Theory,³⁶ (where one destructive element contaminated the entire spectrum of marital behaviour). Naturally the use of all these techniques was considered detrimental to good communication. Clinebell noted good communication could be avoided by the use of pseudo-intimacy, chronic busyness and marital games.³⁷

A most important part of communication was learning how to fight constructively. Mace summed up all the authors' attitudes on this by saying, "No close relationship can be achieved and maintained in any

³⁵Lederer and Jackson, pp. 98-105.

³⁶Ibid., pp. 205-244.

³⁷Clinebell and Clinebell, pp. 47-56.

other way than by resolving the conflict, which it inevitably produces.³⁸ The Clinebells added, "Intimacy grows when conflicts are faced and worked through in the painful but fulfilling process of gradual understanding and compromise of differences."³⁹ Bach, who used the expression "fighting for realistic romance"⁴⁰, devoted his entire book to productive and non-productive fighting techniques. His attitude was "When our trainees fight according to our flexible system of rules, they find that the natural tensions and frustrations of two people living together can be greatly reduced. Since they live with fewer lies and inhibitions and have discarded outmoded notions of etiquette these couples are free to grow emotionally, to become more productive and more creative as individuals in their own right and also as pairs."⁴¹

All the authors agreed with Bach's opinion that building up resentment and not levelling ("gunnysacking")⁴² was wrong, as it eventually led to irrational explosions or to emotional divorce, through dishonesty, evasions, and pseudo-accommodation. Bach explored the problem of anger being considered taboo in our society, noted that couples feared anger would cause breakups rather than more closeness. He felt strongly that aggression management can be learned and that it was indifference not hostility which led to love waning.⁴³ Jackson also introduced the concept of complementary relationships (where the spouse was in charge and the other obeyed, at the extreme) and sym-

³⁸Mace, p. 68. ³⁹Clinebell and Clinebell, p. 96.

⁴⁰Bach and Wyden, p. 211. ⁴¹Ibid., p. 17.

⁴²Ibid., p. 19. ⁴³Ibid., pp. 17-33.

metrical relationships (which was a struggle between spouses for status). He noted that it was essential for the continuance of marriages that the symmetrical struggle be broken.⁴⁴ Bach's constructive fighting techniques included the ingredients for all good communication already discussed.⁴⁵ He also discussed destructive fights and he emphasized that physical violence and using sex, teasing and slanderous statements as weapons, should be definitely avoided. Irrelevant "below the belt" and unresolved issues from the past should also not be brought into the arguments. Bach felt it was important to have a sense of fairness and humour.⁴⁶ Couples must learn how to make up, to accept that in creative marriages fighting never finishes and to enter fights not expecting to win, "the only way to win intimate encounters is for both partners to win."⁴⁷

It is possible to briefly sum up the ideas on marriage held by the authors reviewed. Traditional marriage patterns were considered to be illsuited to today's society, as evidenced by rising divorce rates and other evidence of marital breakdown. Some alternative forms outside of the present legal structure were considered by Bernard and Herbert.⁴⁸ The other authors felt marriage could change successfully within its present structure. It was suggested that each couple must develop their own unique marriage, which would allow for individual as well as couple growth. Roles should therefore be flexible and the main aim should be the establishment of trust and good communication skills,

⁴⁴Lederer and Jackson, p. 161.

⁴⁵Bach and Wyden, pp. 56-88.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 103-113; pp. 142-158.

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 95-102.

⁴⁸Supra, Chapter II, p. 11.

which would include constructive arguing techniques. All the pre-marriage authors also felt couples should definitely go for professional help, should difficulties arise.

CHAPTER IV

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON EDUCATION FOR
MARRIAGE COURSES OUTSIDE OF MONTREAL

Goals

An examination of the six marriage courses reviewed in the literature revealed how similar were the goals of these six courses.¹ All six courses believed that it was essential for couples to think about and discuss their relationship prior to getting married. Rolfe's statement on his goals well summarises the goals of the other courses. Rolfe wished to "encourage and help the couples to make a careful evaluation of themselves, of each other and of their relationship,"² with his underlying philosophy being the belief that couples who gain better awareness of each other's values, expectations and needs will have a better chance to be happily married. All the courses hoped that they could convince the couples that, as Glendenning and Wilson (West Point) explained it, "A deep emotional relationship brings joy."³ The courses also wished to convince the couples that it was necessary to follow the advice given in the courses and to work hard at their relationships, if they wished to have happy marriages. The basic aim therefore of all the courses was to help couples to communicate effectively. Hinkle and Moore (Hinkle)

¹Supra, Chapter II, p. 11. ²Rolfe, p. 1.

³Glendenning and Wilson, p. 551.

further clarified this common basic aim by stating "Satisfying intimacy is based on honest, open communication on almost all important issues."⁴ In order to achieve this basic aim all courses felt that couples should be given factual information, feedback on their interaction and exposed to healthy modelling by the group leaders and by the other participants.

Some courses noted that they were particularly interested in teaching about certain aspects of communication. Bader,⁵ Hinkle,⁶ and the Minnesota program by Miller, Nunnally and Wackman (M.C.C.P.)⁷ stressed their desire that couples be taught to deal with conflict constructively. In addition, Bader hoped that couples exposed to his program would seek professional assistance, should destructive arguing patterns persist. Bader's course was unique in that it aimed to help couples both prior to and after their marriage, the course being split into two separate parts.⁸ Hinkle was interested in helping couples express positive as well as angry feelings, his feeling being that intimacy in a relationship was a cyclical thing, i.e. there were times of closeness and times of psychological distance. Hinkle felt communication kept this cycle moving, with the meaningful expression of affection (both sexual and non-sexual) being equally as important as constructive fighting in maintaining this cycle.⁹

The M.C.C.P. course aimed to teach modern systems and communication theory, the intent being to help couples see what rules could be

⁴Humble and Moore, p. 153.

⁵Bader, p. 2.

⁶Hinkle and Moore, p. 154.

⁷Miller, Nunnally, and Wackman, p. 6.

⁸Bader, p. 3.

⁹Hinkle and Moore, p. 154.

changed, if they became redundant.¹⁰ The M.C.C.P. course also felt that couples should learn how to maintain their own and each other's self-esteem and that they should practice how to metacommunicate, i.e. learn how to effectively communicate about their relationship.¹¹

To summarize briefly, no courses wished to only give out factual information. All wished to teach effective communication, and all hoped the couples would participate openly and actively in their programs and enhance their marriages by practising what they had learned, after the courses were over.

Methods

All courses, regardless of the number of registrants, put their couples into small groups for the duration of the courses. The average number of couples per courses was five, ranging from four couples in Rolfe's course¹² to six couples in Van Zoost¹³ and Bader's course.¹⁴ All courses were short term. Bader,¹⁵ Van Zoost,¹⁶ M.C.C.P.,¹⁷ and Hinkle's¹⁸ course met for an average period of five weeks, prior to the couple's getting married. In addition, the Bader course held three sessions for the original course participants, approximately six months later.¹⁹ Different schedules were utilized by Rolfe, whose couples met on two consecutive afternoons,²⁰ and by West Point, whose course lasted

¹⁰Miller, Nunnally, and Wackman, p. 5.

¹¹Ibid., p. 6.

¹²Rolfe, p. 3.

¹³Van Zoost, p. 188.

¹⁴Bader, p. 3.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁶Van Zoost, p. 188.

¹⁷Miller, Nunnally and Wackman, p. 15.

¹⁸Hinkle and Moore, p. 154.

¹⁹Bader, p. 3.

²⁰Rolfe, p. 3.

for twenty-four hours over a weekend.²¹

Regarding screening, all the courses, except two, (Rolfe and Bader) screened their participants, prior to the start of the courses. This was accomplished by personal interviews (Van Zoost,²² M.C.C.P.²³ and Hinkle²⁴) and by requesting the couples to fill out personality forms (Van Zoost, West Point²⁵ and Hinkle). In addition, Van Zoost's courses videotaped and discussed the screening session with the applicants for their course. Three courses (Hinkle, West Point and Van Zoost) restricted their courses to certain categories of people. Van Zoost and Hinkle sought out university students and West Point would only offer the course to senior cadets and their fiancés. As regards follow-up sessions, only Bader and West Point noted what arrangements they had made for this. Bader saw his groups, as previously discussed, for three group sessions approximately six months after the original course.²⁶ West Point offered couples counselling on an individual basis, should it be required.²⁷ None of the other courses offered follow-up sessions individually or in groups, although all were keenly interested in their participants evaluating the courses. The writer does feel, however, that it was likely all courses encouraged couples to seek counselling, if problems arose, and provided information regarding community counselling resources, even although this was only reported in the West Point literature.

²¹Glendenning and Wilson, p. 551. ²²Van Zoost, p. 188.

²³Miller, Nunnally and Wackman, p. 12.

²⁴Hinkle and Moore, p. 154. ²⁵Glendenning and Wilson, p. 552.

²⁶Bader, p. 4. ²⁷Glendenning and Wilson, p. 562.

All the groups had one or more group leader whose effectiveness was crucial to the achievement of the aims of the courses. It was the group leader's role to "enable" the group to be used as a milieu in which couples could learn self-awareness and effective communication techniques. Group discussion was the main education method used. In order to bring about this learning by discussion, two methods were used. The first method was the giving of factual information on communication and subjects pertinent to married life. The information was presented by the group leaders or by outside resource people. It should be noted that the time devoted to the giving out of factual information was less than the time devoted to discussion sessions. It should also be firmly emphasized that the purpose of the factual information was not merely to enhance participants' knowledge of facts but was to stimulate group discussion. The second method was the use of group, couple and individual exercises.

All courses presented information on communication techniques to their couples (both verbal and non-verbal techniques). Bader did not reveal what his film on communication techniques contained. The other courses did not give detailed outlines of their material but mentioned some concepts presented to the couples. Rolfe,²⁸ West Point,²⁹ Hinkle,³⁰ and Van Zoost³¹ noted the need for clear, honest, well-timed expression of positive and negative feelings and the necessity for careful listening and accurate feedback. Hinkle also presented information on transactional analysis, his particular two-way feedback model and massage.

²⁸Rolfe, pp. 9-11. ²⁹Glendenning and Wilson, pp. 554-555.

³⁰Hinkle and Moore, pp. 155-158. ³¹Van Zoost, pp. 188-189.

Van Zoost dealt with the function of humour. The M.C.C.P. presentation on communication differed somewhat from the other courses, due to its emphasis on rules and interaction patterns. Four theoretical concepts were discussed in order to enhance participants' knowledge of congruent and complete versus incongruent and incomplete messages, accuracy in exchanging information and different models of communication. The frameworks were the "Awareness Wheel, Shared Meaning Framework, Communication Styles Framework and one other, which was designed to integrate all the material presented."³²

As well as factual presentations on communication, Rolfe,³³ and Bader³⁴ made extensive use of outside speakers and films to present factual information on money, law, sexuality, contraception, childbirth, parenting, religion, family backgrounds and adjustment to marriage. It should be noted that all Bader's sessions used films to stimulate discussion.

The West Point course presented factual information on the particular problems arising in military marriages,³⁵ and on the "Falling Domino" theory of Lederer and Jackson.³⁶

It should be noted that, apart from planned factual presentations, group leaders were often asked for their opinions on sex, religion, parenting, money, law, women's liberation, in-laws, family backgrounds, adjustment in marriage and, of course, constructive and destructive ways of communicating.

³²Miller, Nunnally, and Wackman, pp. 15-16.

³³Rolfe, pp. 4-15. ³⁴Bader, p. 2.

³⁵Glendenning and Wilson, p. 555. ³⁶Ibid., p. 556.

Exercises were used by all the groups, except Bader, to help the couples internalise the factual information, reassess their own relationships and practice the new communication techniques, which they had been given. West Point³⁷ and Rolfe³⁸ also used exercises to alleviate participants' initial anxiety and help the couples to quickly start participating in the group experience. To stimulate learning, three types of exercises were used separately or combined. These were written, (the use of questionnaires), oral, (the use of role-playing and the encouragement of each person to contribute their opinions on a given topic) and visual, (the filming of couples' interaction by videotape and also the use of non-verbal role-playing). The exercises used were unique to each course and were related to the rest of the material being examined in the sessions. There were some group exercises, utilized by Rolfe, Hinkle and Van Zoost. Rolfe's group did money management³⁹ and parenthood⁴⁰ exercises together and also participated in a mock wedding ceremony.⁴¹ Hinkle used a group exercise to examine negative and positive feelings between couples⁴² and stimulated discussion by handing out fight analysis questions.⁴³ Van Zoost videotaped couples interacting and encouraged the group to discuss the tape with the couples, that had been filmed.⁴⁴ Despite the group exercises noted above, the vast majority of exercises were meant to be completed privately by the couples and then shared with the rest of the group. In no group were any of the couples forced to share

³⁷Ibid., p. 553. ³⁸Rolfe, p. 5. ³⁹Ibid., p. 5.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 12. ⁴¹Ibid., p. 13.

⁴²Hinkle and Moore, p. 155. ⁴³Ibid., p. 158.

⁴⁴Van Zoost, p. 188.

their private thoughts with the other couples. In fact, in Rolfe's course there was one exercise, related to sexual matters, that the couples were definitely not expected to share with the group.⁴⁵ Details of the exercises used for individual couples were not always outlined but Rolfe and West Point did discuss their exercises at some length. Rolfe had his couples complete a Financial Priorities Inventory and a Marital Role Inventory, do an Indirect No Exercise and rate the arguing skills of individual parents, future in-laws, fiancé and self.⁴⁶ West Point couples were asked to share their feelings concerning a number of slides that were shown, and to discuss feelings not normally discussed, which included "feelings you don't show but that I am aware of". Each person also had to write out a list of their needs and their perception of their partner's needs. This list was to state which personal need, if attacked, would make the individual vulnerable. A touching exercise also took place.⁴⁷ The Hinkle course had its couples discuss intimacy, use the two-step feedback model of communication and, by the use of verbal and non-verbal exercises, practice constructive fighting techniques.⁴⁸ The M.C.C.P. program also used exercises but did not elaborate on them.

It should be noted that, following all factual information given, everyone was encouraged to react and share their negative or positive views about the material presented with the group. The writer sees this type of guided interaction as being slightly different from the exercises, which had been specifically planned to aid learning in each ses-

⁴⁵Rolfe, p. 15. ⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 6-10.

⁴⁷Glendenning and Wilson, pp. 554-558.

⁴⁸Hinkle and Moore, pp. 155-157.

sion.

In order to stimulate learning between sessions, specific exercises were given to couples for completion at home in four of the courses (Humble, Rolfe, Van Zoost and M.C.C.P.). West Point and Bader made no mention of homework between sessions. Rolfe's couples had to read and discuss the Freedom of Sexual Love, Mosaic and Shulman's Marriage Agreement.⁴⁹ His speaker on religion suggested couples of different faiths should attend each other's services prior to the wedding. Van Zoost's couples had to read and discuss parts of "Man the Manipulator" and parts of "The Intimate Enemy".⁵⁰ Hinkle gave out an exercise related to his feedback theories⁵¹ and M.C.C.P. expected its couples to practice the new skills learned between sessions. All the courses expected their couples would read the written information given out on money, law, communication and sex etc., but there was no specific time limit for this as in the case of the material for the homework.

Outcome

All courses were subjected to an evaluation procedure. The methods used were subjective response of the participants (written and oral) and formal testing. Hinkle⁵² and Rolfe⁵³ were the only courses

⁴⁹ Joseph Bird and Lois Bird, The Freedom of Sexual Love (New York: Doubleday Image Books, 1970); Julien Mercure and Frank Dolphin, Mosaic (Ottawa, Canada: Novalis, 1972); Alix Shulman, "The Shulman's Marriage Agreement," Redbook Magazine, August 1971.

⁵⁰ E.L. Shostrum, Man the Manipulator (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1967); Bach and Wyden, pp. 56-88.

⁵¹ Hinkle and Moore, p. 156.

⁵² Ibid., p. 158. ⁵³ Rolfe, p. 17.

which relied entirely on subjective verbal assessments although Rolfe did claim he would be doing a more thorough formal evaluation at a later date. Two courses (Bader⁵⁴ and West Point⁵⁵) used subjective written and oral evaluation, with Bader's evaluation being completed prior to the course starting, six and eighteen months later. His emphasis was on the couples' ability to deal with conflict. The remaining two courses (M.C.C.P. and Van Zoost) used formal testing. The M.C.C.P. tested couples, using questionnaires and taped sessions of couple interaction, prior to the course and one week following the final session.⁵⁶ Van Zoost's couples completed four written tests before and after the course. These were Form C of Affective Sensitivity Scale, Self Disclosure Questionnaire, Interpersonal Communications Inventory and a Communications Knowledge Test. Van Zoost's couples also did a subjective written evaluation.⁵⁷ Both Bader and M.C.C.P. programs used control groups.

The participants' subjective responses were very positive, and all saw their courses as having been, "A worthwhile investment of time and money,"⁵⁸ (West Point). Everyone liked the small group format and the amount of time devoted to discussion. The participants felt they had learned a great deal from the material presented to them and from each other. They noted that they had learned most about communication and Van Zoost's group felt the course had aided effective communication and interaction. Some evaluations noted material that had been particularly beneficial. Rolfe's couples liked the combined lecture-small group dis-

⁵⁴Bader, p. 6. ⁵⁵Glendenning and Wilson, p. 561.

⁵⁶Miller, Nunnally, and Wackman, pp. 16-20.

⁵⁷Van Zoost, pp. 189-190. ⁵⁸Glendenning and Wilson, p. 561.

cussion approach as they felt the formal presentations focused the discussions. Hinkle's group emphasized the value of the two-step feedback, constructive fighting and the non-verbal communication techniques taught. Van Zoost's group felt videotaping was an excellent teaching method. Three groups (Rolfe, Humble and Van Zoost) noted the value of exercises.

Bader will not have completed his research into the course, using a control group of couples who did not take his course, until December 1976. Van Zoost's couples scored higher on two tests (Self Disclosure Questionnaire and Communications Knowledge Test) after having completed the course. The M.C.C.P. tests revealed statistically significant differences between the control and experimental groups, with the conclusion being that the couples taking the course became more aware of their interaction and of communication skills.

Apart from the Van Zoost and M.C.C.P. programs there was no objective measurement of the success of the programs in meeting their stated goals. The writer does not know how fully each couple entered into and benefited from the group experience. The writer cannot tell how open and honest each couple was in evaluating their interaction patterns, values, needs and expectations. The writer does feel the objective and subjective evidence available makes it safe to assume that all couples, to some extent, examined their relationships prior to getting married and learned something about good communication. However, the many questions about the long-term value of the courses for the participants and about whether the goals of the course were realized could only have been evaluated accurately if more formal objective research had been included in the programs.

CHAPTER V

THE MARRIAGE COURSES IN MONTREAL

Goals

The marriage courses had both secular and religious goals. There were some secular goals that all the courses believed in. All the courses believed that couples should have help in establishing good relationships prior to getting married, felt that the courses should stimulate awareness of various aspects of married life and that couples should learn to communicate between themselves about their problems, expectations and values. The Anglican course brochure noted their course "allows couples to explore together many aspects of interest and concern with respect to the marriage."¹ The Presbyterian course organizer stressed the need for individuals within a marriage to realize their unique potential and it was his opinion that the freedom to do this could only be obtained by having good communication skills. The task force report on the Roman Catholic course clearly defined what their course wished to achieve. Their statement seemed to the writer to clearly sum up the goals of the other courses regarding communication. The report stated, "The major purpose would seem to be to develop in the individuals

¹ Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Montreal, "Courses in Marriage Preparation 1975," brochure issued by the Anglican Church, Montreal, January 1975.

an appreciation of the spiritual, psychological, sociological and physiological nature of marriage and what this might mean for them as a couple. At the same time, it is essential to help them explore their own ideas and expectations of marriage, encourage them to dialogue about differences and point the way toward constructive rather than destructive problem-solving."²

All the marriage courses also saw themselves as being preventative, with the Mental Hygiene Institute having particularly strong feelings on this. The Institute stated that their course "would help people realize that they can depend on themselves and their own family group to work through the normal crisis of growing up and developing and thus become more self-reliant. Studies and experience have shown that growth of self-reliance enhances the degree of mental health."³ The Institute felt the need for counselling help would be reduced by their course and that this would demonstrate the value of preventative services in many areas of married life. The group leader at the Institute also felt learning Satir's "levelling" communication techniques would not only save marriage but would give positive modelling to the children.⁴ The Roman Catholic task force report also strongly supported the preventative aspect of their course. "A loving dynamic relationship between husband and wife in itself provides that environment which is most conducive to the positive growth and development of the child. Any

²Thuringer and Hart, p. 4.

³Mental Hygiene Institute, "Statement of Purpose for the Pre-Marital Education Course," statement issued by Mental Hygiene Institute, Montreal, January 1974.

⁴Virginia Satir, Peoplemaking (California: Science and Behaviour Books, 1972).

effort to strengthen marriage, such as marriage preparation, therefore will spill over into the family and ultimately into society."⁵

It should be noted that, although all courses stressed they wanted to be preventative and had the explicit goals of improving communication between couples, there were differences in how the courses attempted to reach this goal. The Roman Catholic and Jewish organizations felt presenting factual information would achieve this goal, whereas the other courses did not. The methods used will be covered in detail in the methodology section.

The religious goals of the marriage courses were, at times, more difficult to decipher. The Anglican, Presbyterian and Mental Hygiene Institute all claimed that they wanted to help couples form their own value system. At the same time, the Anglicans and Presbyterians admitted that the use of clergymen as group leaders did add a religious dimension to the courses, affecting how the courses were run and what information was presented to the couples. The two group leaders stressed they did not wish to ram their beliefs down the throats of the couples but, at the same time, both group leaders said they would state their opinions on the topics discussed, when it seemed appropriate. There was no confusion in the religious aims of the Jewish course. The teaching of Jewish laws and traditions was the main purpose of the course, with any other information given considered as being of secondary importance. The Jewish Institute for Brides and Grooms stated that their aim was "to bring the couples to Torah and Mitzvoth in general and especially to one of the most vital areas in Jewish life - Taharas Hamishpacha." The

⁵Thuringer and Hart, p. 3.

Institute further stated that "the approach to a happy marriage is found in the Torah and that a successful planning for marriage includes an intimate knowledge of these important directives."⁶ It was the Roman Catholic course which presented the most confusion regarding religious goals. This was due mainly to the fact that there has been no concise written statement on the goals (religious and secular) of the Roman Catholic course. The Roman Catholic task force noted that "It is precisely because marriage is in itself a sacrament that Christians view it as permanent and the way in which man cooperates with God in the creation of human life."⁷ The report further noted that it felt the marriage course "must be an experienced-centred learning process in which the individual couple listen, communicate with each other and other couples, manifest their own feelings about marriage, and through a process of dialogue internalise certain basic concepts of Christian marriage."⁸ The task force recommended that the Christian Family Education Centre (who sponsor the Roman Catholic courses) should formulate a clear statement of its philosophy of marriage and that, based on this philosophy, a clear statement of the goals of the marriage courses should be drawn up.

In the Introduction the question was posed as to whether the underlying philosophies of the organizations giving the courses affected the content of the marriage courses. As previously noted, the Jewish course wanted to teach doctrine, the Roman Catholics were uncertain and the Anglicans, Presbyterians and Mental Hygiene Institute did not want

⁶Schwei, p. 2.

⁷Thuringer and Hart, p. 3.

⁸Ibid., p. 5.

to push religious doctrine. How the courses, in fact, were affected by their underlying philosophies could only be assessed by knowing what the underlying philosophies were.

The Roman Catholic Church feels "valid marriage is indissoluble. All her members, whatever be the laws of their country, are therefore committed to remain faithful to this sacred law on marriage. When two baptized persons marry they are united until death by a bond both natural and sacramental. Marriage in Christ is a sacrament of salvation, and the Church received from her Founder the responsibility of providing her members with the means necessary to live their Christian faith. Therefore, in this area, the church must make its own distinctive laws."⁹ Consequently, the Roman Catholic Church has made many firm pronouncements against divorce, abortion,¹⁰ infidelity, childlessness¹¹ and artificial contraception.¹²

The Jewish faith's attitude towards marriage can only be understood by an appreciation of what it means to be Jewish and to abide by the Covenant made between God and the Jewish people. The fact is that "Under the Covenant the people of Israel are bound to accept God as their only God. They are bound also to fulfill all His Commandments, the six hundred and thirteen precepts included in the original Law as handed down on Mount Sinai. The Eternal One, on the other hand, agreed in the Covenant to cherish Israel as His Chosen People among all the

⁹Canadian Catholic Conference, Contraception, Divorce, Abortion (Ottawa: Canadian Catholic Conference Press, 1968).

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 26-32.

¹¹Fr. Walter M. Abbott, ed., The Documents of Vatican II (Baltimore: America Press), pp. 253-255.

¹²Pope Paul VI, The Regulation of Birth: Encyclical Letter Humanae Vitae (Montreal: Fides, 1968), p. 12.

nations. It is His privilege to punish any failure to live up to the pact and it is their right to reap the promised rewards if they fulfill their part of the agreement.¹³ The Jews have three main obligations. Firstly, to study the word of God. Secondly, to establish a family to preserve and increase the numbers dedicated to the service of the True God. Thirdly, to carry out the myriad social, economic and ritual activities directed toward the fulfillment of the Commandments that regulate the relationship between man and God, man and his fellow man and between man and himself.¹⁴ There are therefore no secular elements in the life of a strict practising Jew as no area of living is divorced from the law. It should, however, be noted that the law is flexible and that there is always room for debate over how the law should be interpreted in each individual case. Disagreement over the interpretation of the law in modern society has caused great friction amongst Jews, who have broken up into different sects. It is the Orthodox Jews who attempt to adhere to the Way of Life described in "Life is With People"¹⁵ and it is the Orthodox Jews who run the Jewish marriage course studied. This group believes strongly in the old Jewish laws and traditions relating to marriage and family life. This means they wish to emphasize the necessity for observing Jewish feast days, observing the Sabbath, keeping a Kosher home and following the Laws of Family Purity.¹⁶ They are opposed to childlessness, divorce,

¹³Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog, Life is With People (New York: Schocken Books, 1962), p. 31.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 105-106. ¹⁵Zborowski and Herzog.

¹⁶Hyman E. Goldin, The Jewish Woman and Her Home (New York: Hebrew Publishing Co., 1941).

contraception and abortion.¹⁷ However, in certain cases divorce, abortion and contraception are permissible.

The Presbyterians and Anglican Churches have less rigid views on marriage. The Anglicans state, "Marriage is a lifetime union in faithful love, for better or for worse, to the exclusion of all others in either side."¹⁸ However, the Anglicans will allow divorce, remarriage in church, the use of contraceptives and the limited use of abortion.¹⁹ The Presbyterian Church allows its members to live according to their conscience and its Church pronouncements are merely recommendations to its members regarding marriage and family living. Their position is that "The essential nature of marriage is that it is an indissoluble union of two people joined together in a one-flesh relationship, for their mutual help."²⁰ The Presbyterians are against adultery but they do accept divorce and remarriage, contraception²¹ and abortion.²²

The Mental Hygiene Institute, being a secular organization, has a philosophy that is naturally different from the religious organizations.

¹⁷Albert M. Shulman, Gateway to Judaism (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1971), pp. 527-540.

¹⁸Anglican Church of Canada, Canon XXI: On Marriage in the Church (Toronto: Anglican Church of Canada Press, 1971).

¹⁹Anglican Church of Canada, Bulletin 200 (Toronto: Anglican Church of Canada Press, 1969).

²⁰Presbyterian Church in Canada, "Committee on the Westminster Confession of Faith," booklet issued by the Presbyterian Church in Canada, Toronto, 1962, p. 15.

²¹Ibid., p. 5.

²²Presbyterian Church in Canada, Board of Evangelism and Social Action, Acts and Proceedings of the 93rd General Assembly (Toronto: Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1967), p. 340.

As previously noted, the Institute's philosophy is that it wants to help couples form their own value system. Their belief is that good communication and teaching couples to be self-reliant will result in better marriages.²³

Methods

The material in the courses was presented in many different ways. Only two organizations (the Presbyterians and the Mental Hygiene Institute) used the small group discussion method for their entire courses. The average number of couples in each Presbyterian group was six and the Mental Hygiene Institute averaged three couples per group. The Anglicans, who attracted twenty-six couples, used thirteen small tables, with two couples at each table. At certain points in the Anglican program each set of two couples was asked to discuss certain material within their own group. After each lecture, series of exercises or small group discussion (all of which will be discussed later in more detail), the Anglicans attempted to involve all twenty-six couples in a large group discussion. The Roman Catholic and Jewish groups sat their couples in rows. In the Roman Catholic program there was only one forty-minute period when the sixty couples were placed in groups of six, in order to have a short small group discussion. The twenty Jewish couples were encouraged to respond to the material presented to them at the end of each lecture but they remained sitting in rows for the entire course.

²³ Mrs. Letti Cox, interview at Mental Hygiene Institute, Montreal, February 1975.

All the courses were short term. The Presbyterian and Mental Hygiene Institute courses lasted for six weeks and the Jewish course lasted for five weeks. In addition, the Mental Hygiene Institute planned to invite its couples to meet for further sessions six, twelve and eighteen months after the original course. It was also hoped that the couples would agree to a further plan which called for their return at regular intervals over the next five years. The Roman Catholic and Anglican courses had a different format. The Anglicans met on three consecutive Sunday afternoons and the Roman Catholics met over a four day period, giving them two week-nights and a full weekend.

Only two organizations saw their course participants, prior to the start of the courses. The Montreal Hygiene Institute met with each couple to discuss their expectations and to assess whether they could relate to the other potential group members. The Presbyterians also discussed their course with each couple, whenever possible, prior to them joining it. It is interesting to note that many of the Roman Catholic and Anglican couples had been forced to attend the courses by their respective priests or clergymen, who threatened they would not marry them if they did not comply. Many non-Anglican, non-Presbyterian and non-Roman Catholics attended the Anglican, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic courses. However, there were no non-Jewish couples attending the Jewish course. The Mental Hygiene Institute did not volunteer any information about the religious preferences of its participants.

As regards follow-up sessions, only the Mental Hygiene Institute, as previously noted, offered these. The Presbyterian course did offer each couple a chance to be seen individually once, following the com-

pletion of the course. The Mental Hygiene, Presbyterian and Anglican courses all encouraged their participants to go for professional help, should problems arise.

It is simple to describe how the Presbyterian and Mental Hygiene Institute courses functioned. In order to stimulate discussion and the learning of effective communication techniques, couples were given factual information on communication and on subjects pertinent to married life. The information was given by the group leaders or by outside resource people. Verbal exercises (group, individual and couple) were also used to aid the learning process. In these two courses the majority of the time was devoted to discussion whereas in the remaining three courses the majority of the time was given to the presentation of factual information to the couples and not to small group discussion. As previously noted, the Roman Catholic and Jewish courses devoted a very small amount of time to group discussion. The Anglican course did better, allowing just under fifty percent of the time to group discussion, couple and individual exercises. The writer noted that the group discussions, attempted by the Roman Catholic, Anglican and Jewish courses, seemed to be ineffective. This appeared to be due to the lack of skilled leadership and also (in the case of the Anglican and Jewish large-group discussions) to the impossibility of having meaningful group discussions with large groups of people.

All the courses gave out factual information on communication. The Mental Hygiene Institute and the Anglican course used the same resource person, who discussed the theories of Virginia Satir. Satir's conceptual framework for looking at communication was presented to the couples. Four dysfunctional patterns of communication were examined.

Firstly, there was the "Placator" who always agreed, apologised, accepted responsibility for what went wrong and never asked for anything for himself. Secondly, the "Blamer" who always disagreed and blamed someone else for what had gone wrong. Thirdly, the "Computer", who was ultra-reasonable, intellectual, controlled, careful and without any semblance of feeling. It was impossible to argue with a computer. Finally, there was the "Distractor", who made irrelevant statements and would do anything to avoid facing up to the issue. Naturally, it was noted that these four styles of communication are ineffective. Satir's theory stressed that the effective communicator was the "Leveller", whose words, body, feelings and voice all presented the same message. The Leveller, in an easy free and honest manner dealt with the issues, without having to put the other person down.²⁴ Also discussed was constructive and destructive fighting patterns. It was noted that, in a creative fight, the couples stuck to the issue, said clearly why they were angry, did not air past grievances, name-call or withdraw into silence. It was said that a good marriage depended on the couple's ability to deal with anger and that, if anger was not resolved, a wall would begin to be built between the couple.

The Roman Catholic course had a much less detailed and formal presentation on communication. A married couple gave the opening session entitled, "Marriage Is". They discussed the importance of good communication, with the statement being made that, if there was no communication, there was no marriage. It was also noted that adjustment to each other during the early part of marriage was impossible unless

²⁴ Satir.

couples could talk about needs, values and expectations. The Jewish course also dealt with good communication in the first session, suggesting that couples could choose to have a marriage where everything was discussed or a marriage where specific areas were not discussed, due to lack of trust or fear of anger. It was felt that, if the latter was chosen as a pattern, that more mistrust and resentment would follow. The speaker emphasized the importance of dealing effectively with anger, saw it as being the key to marital happiness. Apart from knowledge of the Chernick film, the writer has no other information on the communication material presented to the Presbyterian group. The film, "Sexuality and Communication" by the Chernicks, was used by the Roman Catholic, Mental Hygiene and Presbyterian courses.²⁵ This film was felt to ably present these courses' views on sexuality. The film contained factual information on the physiology of the male and female sexual responses. Simple drawings showed how orgasm occurred. The film also, through the use of role playing, illustrated the emotional aspects of sexuality and showed that sexual differences were a reflection of communication difficulties in a marriage.

The Roman Catholic course followed the showing of the Chernick film with an illustrated talk by a gynaecologist. This speaker stressed that sex could be and should be fun but that satisfaction in this area depended on the efforts of the two people involved. He felt that each couple must make up its own rules and that no one could tell what was right for them. However, the doctor did give out some guidelines for successful sex. These were good communication, adequate foreplay, and the acceptance by the couple of each partner's sexual needs, preferences

²⁵Supra, Chapter II, p. 9.

and dislikes. Pregnancy and sex was discussed. The Presbyterians also commented on sex after the film with the group leader (who was a Presbyterian Minister), noting that sex was often thought of by Christians as being sinful. However, he felt sex, in a committed relationship, was good, joyful and fun. He condemned exploitive sex and the use of sex merely as a form of recreation, without an emotional commitment. The Anglican Church did not use the Chernick film in the course attended by the writer, although it has done so in the past. Instead, sex was raised during the talk on communication. It was stressed that good sex was not magic but the result of each partner being aware of their own sexual needs, communicating them to their partner and meeting their partner's own expressed sexual needs. It was felt the problem was how to give and receive pleasure. The Anglican speaker doubted many people were sexually incompatible and felt most sexual dilemmas could be resolved by good communication.

The Jewish course devoted an entire session to a discussion of the laws of Family Purity. Living by these laws was considered crucial if the marriage was to thrive and sexual boredom was to be avoided. Jewish law forbids a husband to approach his wife during the time she is menstruating and for seven days afterwards. During this time husband and wife are expected to act towards each other with respect and affection but no physical expression of love is allowed. At the end of this period of abstinence the wife must visit the Mikveh (a ritual pool) prior to re-establishing physical contact with her husband.

The topic of childbirth and having children was dealt with in the Presbyterian, Jewish and Roman Catholic courses. The Roman Catholics

showed a film, which gave factual information on pregnancy, labour and birth. The theme of the film definitely was that having children was a wonderful experience. In addition to the film a doctor, using a slide presentation, discussed the male and female reproductive systems, puberty, menstruation, ovulation, pregnancy and childbirth. The subjects of birth control and abortion were commented on briefly, with the speaker indicating that it was up to each couple to decide what they were going to do about contraception and abortion. The Presbyterian group leader found that most couples were not interested in devoting an entire session to the subject of children. Therefore, his course dealt with the question of children in their discussion, following the film on sexuality and communication. The group leader stated that each couple must decide for themselves if they wanted to have children. He stressed that couples should be aware of the emotional and economic responsibilities of having children. He admitted that he felt childlessness could be harmful as it might lead to couples having no purpose in life. In the Jewish course no specific factual information on reproduction and childbirth was given. However, throughout the entire course, it was emphasized that each couple had an obligation to have children, in order that the Jewish Community would grow in numbers. It was also stressed repeatedly that having children was the most fulfilling task that the couples, especially the woman, could undertake. In the fourth session, entitled "Equality in Marriage", one of the speakers, who was a woman, condemned Jewish women who choose a career over motherhood. She felt motherhood and a career could be combined within a traditional Jewish marriage, as long as the husband shared the responsibilities involved in

running a household and bringing up the children. Apparently nowhere in the Torah does it say that the husband must only be the breadwinner or that the wife must stay at home. The speaker felt flexibility regarding roles was essential for a successful modern Jewish marriage. The Jewish course also commented briefly on contraception and abortion, indicating that sometimes a woman's mental or physical health dictated that she should have an abortion or use birth control methods.

As four out of the five courses were sponsored by religious groups, the writer expected that a great deal of factual information would be given out on religion. In fact, the Christian courses did not push religion very heavily. However, the Jewish course discussed some aspect of Jewish law in every session. The Presbyterian and Anglican courses had clergymen as their group discussion leaders and naturally, throughout the courses, these two group leaders made subjective comments about the topics being discussed. Both group leaders tried to stimulate the couples to discuss religious values, but tried not to push their own religious views as they knew this would put the couples on the defensive. The Anglican Minister did comment to the couples that his subjective opinion was that a marriage based on faith would have a better chance of success. He was also prepared to answer specific questions on the Anglican Church's attitude on marriage. The Presbyterian Minister, as previously noted, commented on Christianity and sexuality. He also devoted one session to the discussion of the meaning of the Presbyterian wedding ceremony.

The Roman Catholic Church only devoted one session to religion, with a priest discussing the topic, "And God makes three". The priest felt that marital happiness could only be achieved if couples became less

stubborn and selfish and more loving. He felt it was essential to believe in and obey God in order for these changes to occur. It was his opinion that, without God's presence, a marriage was doomed to failure. The Priest also commented on St. Paul's definition of love, on how to avoid getting caught up in the rat race and on the practical details of the wedding ceremony. Mass was said at the end of this session but it was not compulsory to attend.

As previously noted, the Jewish course aimed to teach its couples the Jewish laws and traditions regarding marriage. Consequently, all the speakers were either Rabbis or practising Orthodox Jews. It was noted that commitment to a marriage was most crucial and that the commitment must be made to yourself, to your wife and, most important of all, to God. The speaker stated that those who lived selfishly, denied God and did not observe the Jewish laws, would have a disastrous marriage. It was also noted that divorce was rare among Orthodox Jews and that the reason for this was the fact that the set roles for husband and wife avoided conflict and gave marriage structure and stability. One Rabbi explained that the Torah's teachings were like traffic signals, which prevented people from harming each other. The observance of the Sabbath was also seen as a very important factor in a happy marriage, as it provided time for physical and mental relaxation. Also discussed were the Kosher laws, the Family Purity laws (as previously noted), and the use of the Mezuzah, the prayer book and the bible. The final Jewish session was devoted to a panel discussion, in which three young couples and a Rabbi re-emphasized how much happiness would come to couples who observed the Jewish marriage and family laws. The comment was made that it was practically impossible to be an observant Jew unless couples lived

near to other practising Jews and had access to Kosher foodstores, Jewish schools and synagogues.

Money was dealt with by the Presbyterian, Anglican, Mental Hygiene Institute and Roman Catholic courses. The Roman Catholic speaker gave out a vast amount of practical information on budgeting, misleading advertising, credit, buying and saving. He encouraged couples to keep track of all their purchases for the first year of their marriage, said both husband and wife should consult on money matters but that the most competent person should be responsible for handling the budget, be it husband or wife. The Presbyterian, Anglican and Mental Hygiene courses gave out some factual information (budget sheets, brochures on credit, mortgages, etc.). However, their main emphasis was on the discussion of the emotional aspects of money. The Presbyterians stressed that conflict over money was generally a sign of marital disharmony and not a cause of marital breakdown. The Anglicans suggested an enforced savings plan was a good idea.

Secular law was covered in the Anglican, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian and Mental Hygiene courses. All these groups used lawyers as resource people, due to the complicated nature of the subject. The topics discussed were legal requirements for marriage, grounds for annulment, legal obligations of marriage, marriage contracts, wills, leases, sales contracts and house purchases. Both the Anglican and Roman Catholic speakers noted that divorce caused a great deal of anguish for all concerned and urged the couples to be sure that their partner was the person they wished to spend the rest of their life with, prior to getting married.

Other topics dealt with were in-laws (Presbyterians, Mental

Hygiene Institute and Roman Catholics), Family Backgrounds and Adjustment to Marriage (Roman Catholics, Jews, Presbyterians and Mental Hygiene Institute) and the use of leisure (Mental Hygiene Institute). As the writer did not attend the Mental Hygiene Institute and Presbyterian courses it is not possible for her to know what additional topics were raised for discussion by the two groups.

Apart from the factual information already described, three groups used exercises to stimulate interaction and learning. The Mental Hygiene Institute and the Anglicans used Rolfe's Financial Priorities Inventory, Rolfe Budget Sheets, Rolfe's arguing skills and "Indirect No" exercises. The Anglicans also used Rolfe's Group Project on Religion and Inventory of Values in Marriage. All these exercises involved individual, couple and group participation.²⁶ The Presbyterians used a group exercise as an introductory technique, asking each individual three personal questions. The questions were, where did you live from 8-14, what was the centre of human warmth in that period and when did God become a reality to you?

Apart from the factual material and exercises given during the courses, additional written information was available to the couples in all courses. The Jewish course in particular had a large supply of literature on Judaism. The Anglicans gave out some exercises as homework and all the courses expected their couples to discuss the material presented in the courses between the sessions. As previously noted, at

²⁶David J. Rolfe, "Marriage Preparation Manual," a guide for organisers of marriage preparation programs, issued at Lansing, Michigan, 1973.

times films, slides and diagrams were used to convey information.

Outcome

It was impossible to assess whether all the courses achieved their goals, as only three courses had some kind of evaluation procedure. The Mental Hygiene Institute are involved in a long-term research project to assess, on an objective basis, whether its courses have achieved the goal of helping couples learn to communicate effectively and therefore have better marriages. This research has not yet been completed. However, the couples have also been asked for their verbal subjective responses. All the couples liked the small group discussion method, the idea of further checkups and all felt they had learned to communicate better with their partners. The Presbyterian couples also liked the small group discussion method and reported verbally that they had found all the sessions interesting and helpful in terms of getting ready for marriage and in learning about communication. The Anglican course asked its couples to hand in written comments after each session. It was noted that the lectures on Law and Communication and doing the exercise on values in marriage had been most valuable.

No evaluations were done by the Jewish or Roman Catholic courses.

The writer felt there was insufficient evidence to prove whether or not all the goals of the marriage courses had been met. It was unknown, due to lack of research, whether couples did, in fact, benefit from the courses in the way that had been intended. There can only be speculation as to whether couples were helped to establish better relationships and learned to communicate effectively about values, goals and expectations. Some goals were achieved. All the courses intended to

use certain ways of presenting their material (groups, lectures or a combined approach), and carried through with these plans. As intended, the Roman Catholic and Jewish courses did present a massive amount of factual material to their couples on all aspects of married life. The Jewish course also appeared to meet its goal of teaching the couples the Jewish laws and traditions on marriage and family living. Religion was not indeed pushed by the Presbyterians or Anglicans to any large extent, as planned. As the Roman Catholics had no clearly defined goal regarding religion, one cannot say if they achieved any sort of religious goal or not.

The great difficulty experienced by the writer in assessing the outcomes of the courses clearly illustrated the need for more formal objective research to be done on all the courses, sponsored by religious organizations.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

The two research questions posed in the Introduction were:

(1) Does the content of the Montreal courses seem relevant to the needs of today's couples? The relevancy was to be judged by comparing the Montreal courses studied with literature on marriage courses outside of Montreal and with literature on the theoretical concepts of marriage.

(2) How do the philosophies of the organizations sponsoring the courses appear to have affected the content of the courses?

Each question will be considered separately with the relevance of the Montreal courses being considered first. The Montreal courses, the other courses outside of Montreal and the marriage literature have all been examined separately in the preceding chapters. It is proposed to compare and contrast the Montreal courses with the literature marriage courses and then to compare the Montreal courses with the marriage literature.

As previously noted in the Methodology section, the Montreal courses and the courses in the literature were reviewed separately under the three headings of goals, methods and outcomes. The fact that the material was broken down into these sections simplified the task of comparing and contrasting the material in each course. The table in Appendix A also helps to clarify the content of both the Montreal and the literature courses. The goals of the literature marriage courses and the

Montreal courses were very similar. All the courses believed that couples should be helped to form good relationships prior to marriage, that they should learn how to communicate regarding values, needs, goals and expectations. Hard work and following the advice given out in the courses was considered essential if marriages were to be happy. All the courses hoped that they would be preventative. The literature marriage courses did not have religious goals, whereas the Montreal courses did, to some extent, with the Jewish course quite definitely stating that the teaching of Jewish law was the main goal of its course. There was also disagreement over how the goals of the courses should be obtained. The literature courses felt some factual information should be given out to stimulate learning about communication. ^{The} Presbyterian and the Mental Hygiene Institute courses agreed with this approach. However, the Jewish, the Roman Catholic and, to some extent, the Anglican programs saw the giving out of factual information as the main function of their courses.

The methods used also had similarities and differences. The literature courses all believed in the short term small group discussion method. The Montreal courses were all short-term but only two courses (the Presbyterians and the Mental Hygiene Institute) used the small group discussion method throughout their entire courses. The Roman Catholics and Jews sat in formal rows for the vast majority of the time and the Anglicans tried a combined lecture and small group discussion approach. As regards follow-up of the couples after the courses ended, only two groups in Montreal (The Presbyterians and the Mental Hygiene Institute), and two literature groups (Bader and West Point) had any kind of follow-up. Group leaders, used as "enablers" were utilised by

all the Montreal and literature courses, who relied on the small group discussion method. Outside resource people were used on specific occasions by both the Montreal and the literature courses. Four literature courses (Hinkle, Rolfe, Van Zoost and M.C.C.P.) gave couples homework between sessions. Only the Anglican course in Montreal gave out homework, although all the other courses encouraged their couples to dialogue about the material, which had been presented, between the sessions.

The actual topics presented to both sets of courses, either by lecturers or in small group discussions, were very similar. The main topics covered were sexuality, communication, money, law, parenting, religion, family backgrounds, the role of women and adjustment to marriage. Naturally, no one course included all these items in its agenda. The main differences between the Montreal and literature courses were related to how much time was devoted to particular topics and how the material presented was used. The majority of the time in the literature courses was devoted to the learning of effective communication techniques, with all other information used to stimulate this learning. As previously noted, apart from the Presbyterian and Mental Hygiene courses, it appeared that the Montreal courses saw the presentation of factual information on various aspects of marriage as a major end in itself. Communication techniques were definitely not stressed by the Jewish and Roman Catholic courses. The Anglicans appeared to have not really resolved this issue in their courses. The different emphasis in the Roman Catholic and Jewish courses explained why these two courses did not use group, couple or individual exer-

cises to stimulate learning about communication. The literature courses and the Anglican, Presbyterian and Mental Hygiene Institute courses all used exercises. The Roman Catholics and the Jews were not exposed to any new ideas about communication and consequently were not introduced to the use of video (Van Zoost), fight analysis (Hinkle) or systems and role theory (M.C.C.P.). The Presbyterians, Anglicans and Mental Hygiene Institute did attempt to introduce some new concepts to the couples about communication.

The outcome of the marriage courses in the literature and in Montreal was not easy to assess. All the literature courses had subjective evaluations (written and oral) or formal testing (M.C.C.P. and Van Zoost). The Montreal courses had oral, (Mental Hygiene Institute and Presbyterians), written, (Anglican) and objective (Mental Hygiene Institute). The research assessment undertaken by the Mental Hygiene Institute has not yet been completed. The Roman Catholics and Jews had no evaluations. The literature courses all had positive evaluations as couples liked the small group discussion method and claimed to have learned a great deal, particularly about communication. The testing (Van Zoost, M.C.C.P.) revealed positive gains in communication skills had been made by the participants. The Montreal evaluations, that did exist, were mixed. The Mental Hygiene Institute and Presbyterians were very enthusiastic about the small group format, felt they had learned from each other and from the material presented. The Anglicans had a written evaluation form but few couples bothered to complete it. Those who did noted some of the exercises (individual and couples) had been helpful and that they liked the factual presentations on law and communication. However, they did not like the sessions that dealt with reli-

gion and money using large group discussions. Both the Montreal and literature courses need to have more objective evaluations of their programs. At this point, it is practically impossible to accurately assess whether the goals of both sets of courses have been achieved. Subjective responses are simply not enough.

To summarise, some of the goals and methods used in the Montreal and marriage literature courses were similar. However, the Roman Catholic and Jewish courses' emphasis on presenting factual information and on not using the small group discussion method made them different from the literature courses and appeared to make the attainment of all of their goals impossible. It seemed unlikely that couples could learn to communicate effectively if they were given no opportunity to learn about and practice communication techniques in the courses. The writer wondered how much of the information given out in the Roman Catholic and Jewish lectures was retained. As the Roman Catholic and Jewish courses were not assessed, there is no way of knowing how the couples felt about the content. Indeed, only three courses out of all the courses studied have arranged for objective testing to be done. What can be concluded is that the Presbyterian and Mental Hygiene courses were very similar to the literature courses reviewed and, on that basis, can be judged to be relevant to the needs of today's couples. The content of the Anglican course studied was similar, in some ways, to the literature courses. However, some changes (e.g. less lectures and more time for guided small group discussion) will have to be made before the course will be completely relevant to the needs of its couples. The Roman Catholic and Jewish courses were obviously not similar to the literature courses and,

by that standard, cannot be considered relevant to the needs of today's couples.

The relevancy of the Montreal marriage courses was also judged by comparing the content of the courses with the theoretical concepts on marriage, obtained from the literature. The literature reviewed revealed that all the writers felt marriage today was not fulfilling its functions (as evidenced by the increase of marital breakdown) and that changes must be made. The writers agreed with the notion, held by the Montreal marriage courses, that couples must be given more access to information about marriage and that hard work was essential for relationships to be successful. Some writers felt new forms of relationships should be tried (communes, serial marriages, two-step marriages, etc.) whereas others felt effective changes could be made within the present legal marriage structure. One could argue that alternative marriage forms should not be discussed in marriage courses. On the other hand, serial marriages, living common law, and adultery are facts of life, which probably will have to be faced eventually by everyone going into marriage. It seems logical, therefore, that some time should be devoted in the Montreal courses to a discussion of marriage as it really is today, including the problems, the alternatives and the potential for change. At present, as far as the writer is aware, the Montreal courses do not deal with this subject.

Most writers of the books reviewed concentrated on defining what changes should be made within the present marriage structure. It was felt that couples should work at developing their own unique relationships and should avoid being forced by society into obsolete, traditional marriage patterns. This new kind of relationship would allow room for couples to

grow as individuals. Learning how to trust and communicate effectively was seen as the only way to achieve this kind of relationship. Certain writers defined what specific ideas about communication should be taught, with the concepts of "intimacy", "gunny sacking", "meta-communications", "systems" and "rules" being discussed. The Montreal courses stated as their common goal that they wished to help couples learn to communicate in order that couples should be able to work out a satisfactory marital relationship. The Presbyterian and Mental Hygiene Institute courses, which used the small group discussion method, did allow their couples the opportunity to explore the type of relationships that they wanted, the needs of individuals within marriage and effective communication. The Anglican course gave its couples some opportunity to discuss marriage styles and communication but the Roman Catholic and Jewish courses (with their emphasis on facts) allowed practically no opportunity for couples to discuss anything. The Roman Catholic and Jewish couples were not even given factual presentations on new communication techniques and theories or on new ideas about marital relationships. As previously noted, in an earlier chapter, the Institute for Brides and Grooms believed that following the Jewish laws was essential for a happy marriage. The writer felt that the couples attending the Jewish course were not encouraged to seriously question the validity of these laws or to feel that they had freedom to openly choose to ignore these laws. The ideas on marriage in the literature were in the material used by the Presbyterian and Mental Hygiene Institute courses and, on this basis, these courses can be judged to be relevant. The Anglican course material contained some of the ideas in the marriage

literature and therefore some of its content can be considered relevant. The Roman Catholic and Jewish courses seemed to almost completely ignore the ideas contained in the literature reviewed and on this basis the content of these courses cannot be considered relevant to the needs of today's couples.

To summarise, a comparison of the Montreal courses with literature on marriage courses outside of Montreal and with literature on theoretical concepts of marriage was done. The conclusion was that, on the basis of this comparison, the Presbyterian and Mental Hygiene Institute courses were relevant, the Anglican course had some aspects that were relevant and the Roman Catholic and Jewish courses were not relevant. The writer feels that both the Roman Catholic and Jewish courses would benefit from clarifying their goals and examining their present teaching methods. In fact, the Roman Catholics have already started to do this and changes will be made in the format of their Autumn, 1976, marriage courses.

The research question has also been asked whether the philosophies of the organizations sponsoring the Montreal courses has affected the content of the courses. A previous review of the philosophies involved (religious and secular) in Chapter V, revealed that the Anglican and Presbyterian churches both had flexible stands on marriage. Although permanence is seen as the ideal, by both Churches, divorce and remarriage is allowed. Contraception and abortion are also permitted. The Mental Hygiene Institute, being a secular organization, has no religious doctrine but it does believe in helping people become self-sufficient and in aiding them to work out a value system for themselves.

The Roman Catholic and Jewish organizations have much more rigid views on married life. Orthodox Jews are expected to follow the Jewish laws, although there is some flexibility regarding the interpretation of these laws in specific cases. At times, therefore, divorce, contraception and abortion are allowed. The Roman Catholics see marriage as a sacrament and have specific doctrine opposing divorce, abortion, re-marriage and contraception.

It is interesting that the organizations with the flexible views (the Anglicans, Presbyterians and Mental Hygiene Institute) run courses whose formats allow couples to discuss and decide on their own value systems and to challenge the views of the organizations running the courses. The courses run by the Jewish and Roman Catholic organizations (with more rigid views) are not set up to allow this. It would seem that these two groups have, consciously or unconsciously, chosen to run courses with lecture-type formats. Due to this, little opportunity is available for couples to criticize religious doctrine or to discuss lifestyles opposed by the religion. In addition, the teaching of good communication techniques is not emphasized in the Jewish and Roman Catholic courses. One can only speculate on why lectures are used and the importance of teaching good communication techniques largely ignored. However, there is some evidence to suggest that the Roman Catholic and Jewish courses are affected by their underlying philosophies. For example, the Jews believe that the Jewish laws are important and must be taught. The content of their courses certainly does seem to reflect this belief. The Roman Catholics noted, in their task force report, that there was confusion regarding the goals of their marriage course. They felt that marriage education should include the spiritual dimension

(based on the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church) and that a formal decision must be made about the place of religious teaching in their program.

Are the courses affected by the philosophies involved? There is insufficient evidence to answer this question. However, the writer's own purely subjective feeling is that the philosophies have definitely affected the content of the courses. The more rigid courses belong to the more rigid organizations and the more flexible courses are run by the more flexible organizations. The fact that the Roman Catholic course plans to use the small group discussion method shortly would seem to be a reflection of the Roman Catholic Church's changing and more flexible attitudes towards marriage and family life in Canada.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY

The primary aim of this study was to assess whether pre-marital education programs in the Montreal area were relevant to the needs of today's couples. The secondary aim was to examine what effect the philosophies, held by the organizations running the courses, had on the content of the courses. The five pre-marital education courses, studied in the Spring of 1975, were run by English-speaking religious (the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian and Jewish faiths) and secular organizations (the Mental Hygiene Institute). The relevancy of these courses was judged by comparing them to six other pre-marital education courses (outside of Montreal) in the literature and to seven books on modern theoretical concepts of marriage. Knowledge of the Montreal courses was obtained from written material, from discussions with those running the courses and from personal attendance at the courses.

The comparison study of the Montreal courses and the literature courses showed that, although many of the goals were similar, (e.g. all wished to promote good communication) there was disagreement over how the goals should be reached. The literature courses all used the small group discussion method, with some factual information being utilized to stimulate learning about communication. Three of the Montreal courses used the small group discussion method. The remaining two courses concentrated almost entirely on giving out factual information. The

majority of the books on modern theoretical concepts of marriage felt couples should have marriages, based on trust and good communication, which allowed room for couples to grow as individuals. These ideas were contained in the material presented to the three courses, using small group discussions. The two courses, using lecturers, did not use this material.

The study concluded that the Presbyterian and Mental Hygiene Institute courses were relevant, the Anglican course was fairly relevant, and the Roman Catholic and Jewish courses were irrelevant to the needs of today's couples. The most structured courses were run by the organizations having the most rigid underlying philosophies on marriage. However, there was insufficient evidence to conclude that the philosophies, held by the organizations running the courses, affected the content of the courses.

APPENDIX A

TABLE COMPARING THE MONTREAL MARRIAGE COURSES WITH THE LITERATURE MARRIAGE COURSES

	MONTREAL COURSES	LITERATURE COURSES
G O A L S	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To establish good relationships prior to marriage 2. To prevent marriage breakdown 3. To promote self-awareness 4. To promote effective communication 5. To help couples decide own values-Jewish course wishes to teach Judaism 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To establish good relationships prior to marriage 2. To prevent marriage breakdown 3. To promote self-awareness 4. To promote effective communication
M E T H O D S	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.a) Small group discussion method with factual information used to stimulate learning (Presby.)¹ (M.H.I.)² b) Lectures (R.C.'s and Jews) c) Combined small group discussion/lectures (Angl.) 2. All short term (M.H.I. course pre and post marital) 3. Couple seen prior to course (Presby. and M.H.I.) 4. Small groups used group leaders as "Enablers" (Presby. and M.H.I.) 5. Resource people used 6. Main topics covered - money, sexuality, children, law, religion, communication, adjustment to marriage, family background 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All used small group discussion method. 2. All short term (Bader course pre and post marital) 3. Couples seen prior to course (Van Zoost, Hinkle R.C.C.P., West Point) 4. All groups used group leaders as enablers 5. Resource people used 6. Main topics covered - money, sexuality, children, law, religion, communication, family backgrounds, adjustment to marriage

¹Presbyterian

²Mental Hygiene Institute

APPENDIX A-Continued

TABLE COMPARING THE MONTREAL MARRIAGE COURSES
WITH THE LITERATURE MARRIAGE COURSES

	MONTREAL COURSES	LITERATURE COURSES
M E T H O D	7. Exercises used-group, individual and couple (Presby. Anglican M.H.I.)	7. All groups used exercises - group, individual and couple
	8. Homework (Anglican)	8. Homework (Hinkle, Rolfe, Van Zoost, M.C.C.P.)
	9. Films, literature used	9. Films, video, slides, literature used
	10. Follow up (Presbyterian M.H.I.)	10. Follow up (Bader, West Point)
O U T C O M E	1. Only three evaluated subjective (Presbyterian Anglican) and objective (M.H.I.)	1. All evaluated subjective - objective (Van Zoost M.C.C.P.)
	2. Responses positive (M.H.I. Presby.) Mixed response (Anglican)	2. Subjective and objective responses positive
	3. Need for more objective research	3. Need for more objective research

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