

**CHRISTIAN HOME BUILDING:
A MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH**

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CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSION

This essay has been able to inform the readers about the necessity for Christian couples to live together in peace and harmony. This will enable them to make their homes a better place to live and make the work of God (witnessing and Evangelism) to progress in their churches. The writer is of the opinion that, there is no one hundred percent perfect home in the world. Each home has its time of crisis and tension. The spiraling divorce rate and the increasing public awareness of marital tension, both among church members and non-church members, has stimulated the writer to work on this paper. Naturally, when two lives are bounded together in a long-term relationship, there is bound to be an occasional problem. Many couples go into marriage with very little preparation for it. Sometimes they lack sufficient emotional maturity, stability, or flexibility which a successful union must have.¹

The marriage and family is a life of commitment. The uncommitted and irresponsible man or woman cannot raise or maintain the kind of home the writer desires and dreams of. To have the home the writer focus on, the husband must be committed to patterning his life after the life of Christ. The wife must be committed to personal relationship with God, having inner beauty as her priority and always learning upon the Lord to draw strength and wisdom. Then both husband and wife must be committed to loving their children, leading them to salvation in Christ and helping them to develop with active faith in Christ and joyful service

¹ Billy Graham, Christian Worker's Handbook (Minnesota: World Wide Publication, 1984), p. 174.

to the Lord.²

The writer is also concerned about the character of children that are produced in Christian homes. Because the child born into a Christian home should reach a balanced spiritual maturity. This is due to a loving climate and to the way the child is valued³. Christian parents are given more dignity of personhood. They sense the worth of persons above things. Children from a Christian home have the best chance to learn the true meaning of community. A child who is secure in the love of his family is much better able to withstand temptations when pressured by the appeal that "everybody does it." In this day of status seeking, it is a fortunate child who finds himself in a family where Christian values are upheld against the glittering allurements of the beckoning world⁴.

Marriage is the most intimate of all human relationships. When this relationship is good and growing, it provides one of life's greatest satisfactions. When it is poor or static and routine, it can be a source of great frustration and misery. God surely wants marriages to be good - a model of the beautiful relationship between Christ and his church. The Christian counsellor who understands biblical teaching and who knows counselling techniques is best qualified to help couples attain the biblical idea for marriage.⁵

² "The Home we Want: Christian Women Mirror", p. 4.

³ J. Dan Williams, "Values of Christian Home Life", Home Life, 14 June, 1960, p. 41

⁴ Collins R. Gary, Christian Counselling (Texas: World Incorporated, Waco, 1987), p. 184.

⁵ Gary, Christian Counselling, p. 182.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following pastoral approach may be taken, especially by the church groups, which the writer believes will in no small measure contribute effectively in building a happy Christian home.

Teach Biblical Principles of Marriage

The word of God needs to be taught clearly at home and church, and modeled consistently by Christian leaders. Since we live in a society which propagates different values, the biblical values, including the biblical teachings about sex and the meaning of love, must be reinforced frequently.

Stress The Importance of Marriage and Marital Commitment

Marriage takes time, effort and commitment, if it is to grow and develop. This needs to be emphasized in churches and elsewhere. People should be encouraged to make marriage a high priority items in terms of the expenditure of time and effort. Couples should do things together, to work toward mutual goals.

Teach Principles of Communication and Conflict Resolution

Marriage people need to be shown the importance of listening, self-disclosure, acceptance, and understanding. Empathy, warmth and genuineness need not be limited to counselling session. These are attributes which can be learned and practiced in marriage.

Encourage Counselling

Due to the African background, people are reluctant to seek counselling. The church need to emphasize that going for counselling is a sign of strength. The sooner one goes for help, the better for such an individual to make positive amendments in life.

The Responsibilities of Christian Parents Towards their
Children in Building a Happy Home

In order to have the peace of God in the home, parents need to have the peace of God in their hearts. This comes through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. They have to take a firm stand for Christ in the spirit of Joshua, who said, "But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then chose for yourselves this day whom you will serve.... but as for me and my household we will serve the LORD."⁶ Joshua 24:15 (NIV). They must determine to have a home that exalts Christ. They need to learn to rely on God's resources available through prayer. They should covenant God for the wisdom he offers (James 1:5) and claim His help for the proper spiritual development for their children. And learn to pray with their children as well as for them. They need to build the life of the family around the word of God, helping each other member to understand the issues of life from its viewpoint. Encourage them to seek each ones conversion to Christ, centre the family activities largely around a Bible teaching church, and be willing to deal patiently with the children's spiritual doubts.

The widespread respect given to the elders in the home is one of the very attractive features in African society. Parents have to establish rules governing the home which are equitable, reasonable, and "Keepable". Respect is learned as a response to authority. Be as flexible as you can where their identity, independence and self-esteem are concerned. Children need a lot of support and encouragement. Conflicts are never resolved by argument or fighting⁷.

⁶ Joshua 24: 15 (NIV)

⁷ Gary, Christian Counselling, p. 136

Parental example and stability influence children greatly. A good, happy marriage will do more to prepare young people for life than rules and surveillance. A consistent demonstration of children virtues such as love, patience, understanding, encouragement, and trust will provide the anchor the children needs in stressful and changing times. The beliefs of the parents should never be divorced from experience and practice, especially in the home.

Close communication with the children will do much to avoid conflict. This means not only meaningful conversation, but spending quality time with the children. This personal attention will help create a positive self-image and fortify family solidarity. Parents should not be afraid to show physical affection. A fatherly or motherly embrace will aid in making the child feel accepted and loved.

The bible teaches that parents have the responsibility of training and disciplining their children, so that they might be brought up knowing the scripture and honouring the Lord.⁸ In conclusion, couples have to realise that their home is not just two or more individuals eating and sleeping under one roof, but a place where the attributes of the well-being of others, permeate the dwelling.⁹ Thus, the relationship of husband and wife, parent and children become distinctly Christ-centered. They should live on the biblical principles, which will make their homes, a happy, blessed one.

⁸ Graham, *Christian Worker's Handbook*, p. 138.

⁹ Awotoye, *Christian Home Management*, p. 46