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Full Name of Author — Nom complet de l'auteur

DAVID ANTHONY HEDLUND

Date of Birth — Date de naissance

JULY 12, 1950

Country of Birth — Lieu de naissance

CANADA

Permanent Address — Résidence fixe

1820 YORK ST. REGINA, SASK. S4T 4R2

Title of Thesis — Titre de la thèse

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Name of Supervisor — Nom du directeur de thèse

DR. WILLIAM HAGUE

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER PROGRAM

by



DAVID HEDLUND

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE
STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF EDUCATION
IN
COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY

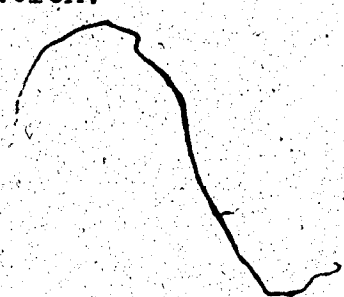
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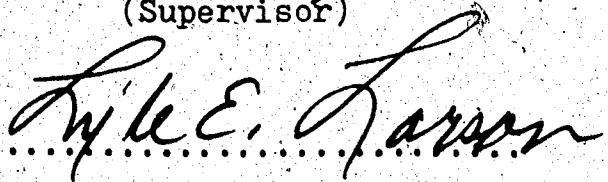
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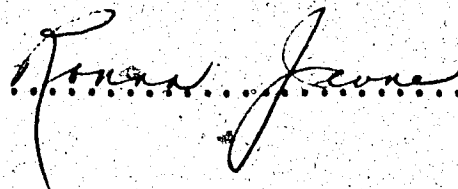
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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "An Investigation of the Marriage Encounter Program" submitted by David Hedlund in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.


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(Supervisor)


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Date .. June 17 / 1980

ABSTRACT

The emphasis of this project was in two basic areas. The first involved a description of National Marriage Encounter, which included discussion of the philosophy, methodology and the dynamics of the weekend marriage enrichment program. The second area was a more particular treatment of Marriage Encounter, Edmonton. The local program was outlined briefly, the development and administration of a follow-up questionnaire designed by the author was described, and the analysis of the questionnaire results was presented.

As a background to these two areas, literature of three types was reviewed. Psychological concepts related to the Marriage Encounter process were presented, several other marriage enrichment programs were described, and literature dealing directly with Marriage Encounter was reviewed.

The follow-up questionnaire was sent to 485 couples who had participated in Marriage Encounter, Edmonton weekend programs from 1973 to 1979. The total number of completed questionnaires returned was 291. Thirty-three percent of the couples were represented by responses from the husband, the wife or both.

Questionnaire items were primarily concerned with quality of communication, and beliefs, attitudes and values. Items requesting demographic information were also

included. Space was provided for general comments, impressions and suggestions. Most items involved estimates of relationship characteristics before exposure to Marriage Encounter as well as estimates of present relationship qualities. The estimated effects of the Marriage Encounter program on the characteristics that had changed were also requested.

The results of data analysis showed that the respondent group viewed the Marriage Encounter program as having positive effects on most communication topics and skills. Responses indicated that the program most often had positive effects on beliefs and values related to marital growth and commitment. In general, respondents' perceptions of the design and results of the program were highly positive.

Pretest and posttest versions of the questionnaire were designed for administration to a smaller comparison group but were not administered. Consequently, possible unrepresentativeness of the respondent sample, and the potential unreliability of retrospective questionnaire items were issues that the study did not resolve. Further research involving a pretest-posttest control group design was recommended.

Several recommendations and suggestions regarding development of the Edmonton Marriage Encounter program were made.

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I want to express appreciation to my wife, Marilyn, for her part in this project. Much of her time over the last year was spent in proofreading, typing the manuscript; data collection and discussion. Her ideas and suggestions are very much a part of this project.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	INTRODUCTION	1
	Background	1
	A Response to the Problem	3
	Marriage Enrichment Programs	3
	The Marriage Encounter Program	5
	Apparent Results and Program Evaluation ...	6
	The Purpose of this Project	6
	Project Format	7
II	A REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE	9
	Related Concepts	9
	Systems Theory Applied to Marriage and Family	9
	Self-Disclosure	12
	Group Leadership	15
	Central person	15
	Modelling	16
	Marriage Enrichment Programs	17
	The Marriage Communication Lab	17
	Philosophy	18
	Participants	18
	Methodology	18
	Leadership	20
	The Minnesota Couples Communication Pro- gram	21
	Philosophy	21

CHAPTER	PAGE
Participants	22
Methodology	22
Leadership	23
Marriage Encounter	24
Philosophy	24
Participants	25
Methodology	25
Leadership	26
Comparison of Major Programs	27
Some Other Marriage Enrichment Programs and Services	28
Marriage Encounter Literature	29
Popular Articles	29
Literature From Within Marriage Encoun- ter	30
Independent Critiques	32
Research Projects on Marriage Encoun- ter	34
Summary	36
III NATIONAL MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER	38
History and Present Organization	38
National Marriage Encounter Philosophy	40
The Tie with Father Calvo	40
The Theological Base	41
The Commitment to Ecumenism	42
The Focus on Relationship	42
Methodology of Weekend Program	43

CHAPTER	PAGE
Organizational Issues	43
Introductory Phase	44
Program Content	44
Encounter with self	45
Spiritual divorce	45
Parable of the sower	45
Marriage in God's plan	45
Confidence and dialogue	45
Wedding at Cana	45
Sacrament of marriage and its graces ..	46
Marriage spirituality	46
Christian commitment of marriage	46
Eucharistic banquet	46
Leadership Style	46
Atmosphere	47
Related Programs	47
Dynamics of the Marriage Encounter Week- end	49
Beliefs, Attitudes and Values/Communi- cation--A Twofold Emphasis	51
Insight and Motivation--A twofold Ap- proach	51
Motivating Factors	52
Uninterrupted time alone	52
Physical atmosphere	52
Religious context	52
Forgiveness/reconciliation	53

CHAPTER	PAGE
Dyadic effect	53
Insight Producing Factors	54
Self-disclosure by leaders	54
Presentation content	54
Dialogue technique	55
Modelling/Central Person	55
Structure	56
Commitment	56
Spirituality and Religious Renewal	57
Negative Dynamics	57
The problem of clientele	58
The problem of extremes	58
Summary	59
IV EDMONTON MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER	61
Local Program Description	61
Philosophy and Methodology	61
Organization	61
National organization	61
Local organization	62
Program Development	62
Beginning and growth	62
The weekend program	63
Selection and training of leaders	63
Follow-up groups	64
Other aspects of the local program	64
Plans for the future	65

CHAPTER

PAGE

Follow-up Research--Questionnaire Adminis- tration	65
Purpose and Rationale	65
Questionnaire Design	67
Follow-up questionnaire	67
Pretest and posttest questionnaires-- purpose	68
Pretest form	69
Posttest form	69
Administration of Questionnaires	70
Follow-up questionnaire	70
Pretest-posttest questionnaire	70
The Value of Questionnaire Results	71
Follow-up Research--Data Analysis and Dis- cussion	73
Characteristics of Respondent Group	73
Present and Past Comparisons	79
Communication characteristics	79
Priorities	80
Satisfaction with communication top- ics	80
Beliefs, attitudes and values	84
General comments	84
Estimated Effects of Program	88
Communication characteristics	88
Communication topics	89
Beliefs, attitudes and values	89
Peripheral areas	92

CHAPTER°

PAGE

General comments	92
Relationship of Demographic Variables to Estimated Program Effects	92
Chi-square analysis	96
Pearson correlations	100
Significance of difference of means (<u>t</u> test)	101
Summary	101
Relationships between Paired Husband and Wife Responses	102
Communication characteristics	102
Topics of communication	103
Beliefs, attitudes and values	103
Peripheral areas	112
Spending time together--a detailed ex- ample	112
General comments	118
Open-Ended Questions	118
Most outstanding impressions of Marri- age Encounter	118
Comments and suggestions	124
Summary	130
V SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS	131
National Marriage Encounter	131
Marriage Encounter, Edmonton	133
General Comments	133
Questionnaire Results	134
Limitations of Results and Importance of Further Research	136

CHAPTER	PAGE
Implications of Questionnaire Results ...	137
Recommendations	139
Follow-up program and couple support services	139
Leadership training	140
Referral service	140
Special programs	141
Publicity	141
Record keeping	142
Further research	142
Conclusion	143
* * *	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	144
APPENDIX A FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRES	155
APPENDIX B COVERING AND FOLLOW-UP LETTERS	168
APPENDIX C PRETEST AND POSTTEST QUESTIONNAIRES	173
APPENDIX D CODING KEY	190
APPENDIX E DATA ANALYSIS	206

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Description	Page
1	Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Data for Respondent Group	74
2	Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Data for Respondent Group	75
3	Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Data for Respondent Group	76
4	Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Data for Respondent Group	77
5	Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Data for Respondent Group	78
6	Present and Past Comparisons of Communication Characteristics	81
7	Present and Past Comparisons of Priorized Importance of Topics	83
8	Present and Past Comparisons of Satisfaction with Communication about Particular Topics ..	85
9	Present and Past Comparisons of the Importance of Beliefs, Attitudes and Values	86
10	Estimated Effects of Marriage Encounter on Communication Characteristics	90
11	Estimated Effects of Marriage Encounter on Communication Topics	91
12	Beliefs, Attitudes and Values Influenced by Involvement in Marriage Encounter	93
13	Estimated Effects of Marriage Encounter on Non-Marriage Related Areas	95
14	Demographic Variables With Differing Distributions of Scores on Particular Program Effect Variables	97
15	Relationship of Paired Husband and Wife Responses to Estimated Present Communication Characteristics	104

Table	Description	Page
16	Relationship of Paired Husband and Wife Responses to Estimated Program Effects--Communication Characteristics	107
17	Relationship of Paired Husband and Wife Responses to Present Satisfaction With Communication Topics	108
18	Relationship of Paired Husband and Wife Responses to Estimated Program Effects--Communication Topics	109
19	Relationship of Paired Husband and Wife Responses to Present Importance of Beliefs, Attitudes and Values	110
20	Relationship of Paired Husband and Wife Responses to Estimated Program Effects--Non-Marriage Related Topics	113
21	Frequencies of Paired Husband and Wife Scores in Categories of Difference	115
22	Percentages of Paired Husband and Wife Scores in Categories of Difference	117
23	Frequency of Responses to Item 27--The Most Outstanding Impressions of Marriage Encounter Involvement	120
24	Categories and Frequencies of Responses to Item 28--Comments and Suggestions	125

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

. . . there has arisen in our culture a grass roots movement that we call "marriage enrichment." Its first identified beginning was in Spain in 1958, when Father Gabriel Calvo, a Catholic priest, began assembling couples for weekend retreats in order to "encounter" one another in depth. (Mace, 1977)

Background

Over the past 15 years there has been an increasing concern on the part of helping professionals and the general public over what has been called the "breakdown of the family." There are reports of rising divorce rates, increased numbers of single parent families, numerous instances of abandoned children and descriptions of various unconventional relationship styles (Rogers, 1972). Many individuals seem to see marriage and family relationships as having limited durability and their aspirations toward permanence in these relationships consequently decline (Mace, 1975). Skepticism about the possibility of long-term marital commitment is evidenced by the incidence of common-law relationships, the support for trial marriages and marriage contracts that contain a dissolution clause. Many people have been alarmed by such trends and have called for a return to "the way things used to

be." Others have been quick to argue that the above trends indicate inevitable changes for the future and have advocated the abolition of traditional marriage and family forms (Cooper, 1971).

It is certain that, like many other institutions, marriage and family are in a state of uneasy transition in present day society. O'Neill and O'Neill (1973) describe the transition from a stable, agrarian culture to a mobile, technological culture where there is more leisure time and increased opportunity for men and women to relate to each other outside the traditional roles of provider and housekeeper. A consequence has been that marriage is seen as a way of gaining a satisfying personal relationship rather than merely a utilitarian contract. Driekurs (1964) suggests that the transition involves the movement from autocratic to democratic ideals in marriage and family relationships and the resulting difficulty of learning to apply a new set of principles in family living. Otto (1975) and Rogers (1972) suggest that the influence of the human potential movement has brought about higher expectations for relationships. Family members and partners are looking for personal fulfillment and growth, and are less willing to endure dissatisfying relationships for long periods of time. At the same time, increasing cultural acceptance of women in the work force, divorce, and extramarital sexual activity has removed some of the social pressure to remain in restrictive marriage

relationships. The combination of higher expectations for relationships and the milder consequences of ending them appears to have had a powerful impact on marital permanence and family life.

A Response to the Problem

In response to the apparent crisis in marital and family institutions, there has been rapid growth in the variety and quality of services offered to couples and families over the past decade. Increasing numbers of marital and family therapists have been trained in newly developed family counselling and therapy programs. Family life education programs have been implemented in public school systems and parent education classes offered through schools and community agencies have increased in popularity. Churches have developed an emphasis on family life in their education and activity programs. Finally, a variety of programs have been developed that focus specifically on enriching family and marital relationships.

Marriage Enrichment Programs

Herbert Otto states that marriage enrichment programs are typically concerned with "enhancing the couple's communication, emotional life, or sexual relationship; with fostering marriage strengths, personal growth, and the

development of marriage and individual potential while maintaining a consistent and primary focus on the relationship of the couple". (Otto, 1976, p. 14). In general, marriage enrichment programs have accepted the notion that the marriage relationship can provide a context for mutual growth and satisfaction for individuals. Programs are designed for couples who see themselves as having fairly well functioning marriages. The assumption is that the "fairly well functioning marriage" has much untapped potential for improvement if the partners are willing to make certain changes. Rather than denying that the marriage relationship can meet the higher expectations placed upon it, enrichment programs endeavour to offer couples the tools needed to make their relationships more satisfying.

Beyond the common emphasis that Otto describes, a number of similarities exist between the various marriage enrichment programs. Most stress in their publicity that they are not intended for couples with serious marital problems. Rather, most have described their focus as "preventative" or for "making good marriages better." Program leaders are typically non-professional husband and wife teams. Most programs use the format of a week-end retreat and maximum group size varies from 6 to 40 couples. There are variations in the proportion of group interaction to couple interaction but verbal participation in the group is voluntary in most programs. Experiential learning is typically emphasized. Many programs were

originally organized in connection with a local church or church denomination and began by offering enrichment experiences to their own adherents and parishioners.

The Marriage Encounter Program

Of all the marriage enrichment programs, Marriage Encounter (ME) appears to have had the earliest beginning. A Catholic priest, Father Gabriel Calvo, first began organizing enrichment programs for couples in Spain in the 1950's (Buettner, 1976). His program evolved and spread throughout Spain, then Latin America and in 1967 the first English ME weekend was held in the United States. Rapid growth and enthusiasm in the United States resulted in some struggles related to leadership and definition of purpose in the early seventies. The division of ME into two groups--National Marriage Encounter and Marriage Encounter Worldwide resulted, with the National group maintaining Father Calvo's original ecumenical ideal. As of 1975, both groups together had involved an estimated 400,000 couples in their weekend "encounters" (Otto, 1975), a figure which is likely at least twice as large at the present time. By comparison, other marriage enrichment programs were much smaller, with most having involved somewhere between 100 and 10,000 couples (Otto, 1975).

Apparent Results and Program Evaluation

According to the enthusiastic reports of couples, the initial weekend experience becomes a highlight of the marriage relationship for many who get involved in ME programs. The rapid growth of ME also bears witness to the positive impact that its participants frequently describe. In spite of the popularity of the program and its apparent effectiveness, there has been very little effort made to formally evaluate its results. Of the limited number of articles in popular and professional periodicals, several have been based on a superficial understanding of the ME program. Others have been descriptive, but have not had an evaluative component. Of the several studies that have attempted to describe the effect that exposure to a ME weekend has on participants, most have been either inconclusive, or have revealed very little about the overall impact of the program.

The Purpose of this Project

In the light of the size of the ME movement, and the significant impact that it is reported to have, it is important to discover more about the reasons for its apparent effectiveness and the character of the changes that result in the lives of its participants. The intent of this project is to begin to do just that by describing

and evaluating the program and the dynamics involved in one division of the ME movement--National Marriage Encounter. That description is supplemented by an overview of Marriage Encounter, Edmonton, a local program which operates according to the National Marriage Encounter philosophy. In contrast to much of the literature from within the ME movement, explanations and descriptions in this project are not religious in nature. Rather, aspects of the ME process that have areas in common with other forms of human services are emphasized.

Project Format

Chapter I is an introduction to the project which provides a background to the emergence and growth of the ME movement.

Chapter II reviews literature relevant to the area of investigation. Several psychological concepts are discussed that appear to be involved in the dynamics of the ME program. A number of marriage enrichment programs are briefly described for comparative purposes. Finally, articles that are descriptive and critical of the ME program and the studies that have attempted to measure some of the effects of ME programs are reviewed.

Chapter III is a description of the philosophy and methodology of the National Marriage Encounter program as well as a discussion of the dynamics that appear to be

at work in the ME weekend.

Chapter IV describes the Marriage Encounter, Edmonton program. Since the local program is similar in emphasis to National Marriage Encounter, the major focus of the chapter is on the results of the Edmonton program as described by participants' responses to a questionnaire developed by the author.

Chapter V includes summary, conclusions and recommendations for program directions and future research.

Appendix A contains the two follow-up questionnaire forms that were administered. Appendix B includes the covering and follow-up letters. Appendix C contains the shortened versions of the questionnaire intended for pretest-posttest administration with a comparison group. Appendix D is the coding key used for translating questionnaire responses into machine-readable data, and Appendix E describes the methods of data analysis.

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Related Concepts

Systems Theory Applied to Marriage and Family

A decade ago Don Jackson made the following prediction:

We are on the edge of a new era in psychiatry and the related disciplines of psychology, social work, anthropology, and sociology. In this new era we will come to look at human nature in a much more complex way than ever before. From this threshold the view is not of the individual in vitro but of the small or larger group within which any particular individual's behavior is adaptive. We will move from individual assessment to analysis of the contexts, or more precisely, the system from which individual conduct is inseparable.
(Jackson, 1969, p. 387)

In the mid-fifties, Gregory Bateson and Murray Bowen began to approach the problem of individual schizophrenia by observing entire families (Satir, 1972). Their discovery of similar interactive patterns in these families led to the search for a model which would include interactive characteristics between family members, as well as individual characteristics. The application of specific ideas from general systems theory (Bertalanffy, 1956) provided such a model. The concept of "system" was defined as "a continuous, boundary-maintaining, variously related assembly of parts" (Buckley, 1967, p. 5). The family, with characteristic interactive patterns among its

individual members was seen as a special kind of living, open "assembly of parts" that continued over time and maintained a particular type of family boundary.

The system model provided a dramatically different approach to psychotherapy in which the focus was on changing patterns of family and couple interaction rather than focusing on individual problems. Attempts to bring entire family groups into therapy proved very successful and a new field of "family therapy" began to emerge (Haley, 1971). Throughout the sixties and seventies, family therapy grew in sophistication and popularity (Bowen, 1978; Minuchin, 1974; Satir, 1964; Watzlawick, Weakland, & Fisch, 1974).

Until recently, however, the development of family systems theory clearly lagged behind the development of family therapy in clinical practice. Family theoreticians have now begun to develop and systematize family systems concepts and to conduct research on a cross section of families, rather than on clinical families only. Solid theoretical frameworks for viewing the family as a system are emerging and some attempts at experimentally verifying these concepts are being made (Kantor & Lehr, 1975; Olson, Sprenkle, & Russel, 1979).

A characteristic of all systems is a medium of connecting energy. In marital and family systems, as in other social systems, the primary connections involve complex communication processes (Miller, Nunnally, & Wackman,

1975). The patterns of communication that typically occur between family members and spouses, largely determine the individual's experience of the relationship. Turbulent or peaceful, invigorating or draining, each type of relationship has its characteristic communication patterns. Change in the style of communication will necessarily involve change in the quality of the relationship (Buckley, 1967; Kantor & Lehr, 1975; Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967; Rappaport, 1976). The complexity of human communication is compounded by the various levels on which it occurs, the possibility of contradictory messages, the potential for misinterpretation, and various other difficulties. The essence of family therapy has been to sort out the complex destructive communication patterns and to strategically alter those patterns in the direction of more constructive communication styles (Bandler, Grinder, & Satir, 1976). Similarly, forms of intervention that develop clearer, more efficient forms of communication in relatively well functioning couples and families tend to have positive effects on their relationships.

Understanding the family or the couple as an interactional system has clear implications for therapeutic programs. First, the most definitive characteristics of a family or couple are seen as the characteristics of the relationships between individual members. Secondly, the most significant form of therapeutic change will be related to changes in relationships between individuals.

rather than in the individuals themselves. Thirdly, since communication processes are seen as the dominant features of the relationship, therapeutic efforts must be aimed at altering communication patterns. Any program that brings families or couples together and focuses on changing their relationships by improving their communication is consistent with a family systems approach.

Self-Disclosure

The importance of honest self-revelation is not a new discovery. Intimate personal communication has always been an important element in the closest relationships between human beings. The emotional health of the individual appears to depend to a large extent on adequate opportunities for meaningful interpersonal relations (Tournier, 1957). The work of Sidney Jourard (Jourard, 1964; Jourard, 1971) has emphasized the importance of self-disclosure in human relationships and clarified both the pre-conditions and effects of personal self-disclosure

Jourard (1964, p. 19) states that "to disclose means to unveil, to make manifest, or to show. Self-disclosure is the act of making yourself manifest, showing yourself so others can perceive you." In spite of the fact that there are aspects of personality that are unknown to the individual, and cannot therefore be disclosed, each individual has areas of experience that he can choose to reveal to another person. Jourard suggests that self-disclosure to another person is often the only means of

reaching higher levels of self-awareness (Jourard, 1964). He believes increasing self-awareness is a prerequisite for personal growth and emotional health. One of the characteristics of a healthy personality is an ability to self-disclose with at least one other significant person. Conversely, every maladjusted person is not able or willing to disclose himself to another human being (Jourard, 1964).

Through a variety of experiments, Jourard (1971) gathered some evidence about various conditions that increase or decrease the likelihood of self-disclosure. It appeared that one of the preconditions for self-disclosure was a certain degree of security or self-acceptance. Presumably, the insecure person has an exaggerated fear of personal rejection and is not prepared to risk being known (Regula, 1975). Another condition is the assurance that whatever is disclosed will be held in confidence. This involves a degree of trust and confidence in the listener. Jourard also found evidence that self-disclosure tended to increase if the discloser liked the listener. Also, the more similar the listener was to the discloser (similarity of values would probably be most significant), the higher the level of self-disclosure would be (Jourard, 1964). Finally, Jourard discovered what he called the "dyadic effect"--the tendency for self-disclosure to increase when both people involved are increasingly transparent and self-revealing.

Self-disclosure always involves an element of risk in

that the revelation of personal information opens the self-discloser to the possibility of exploitation or rejection. Consequently, some of the barriers to self-disclosure are simply the absence of the above conditions.

Low self-concept, dislike of the listener, perceived personal differences, lack of trust, and lack of reciprocal self-disclosure can all be factors that minimize the willingness to take the risk to self-disclose. Ironically, the more significant the other person is, the more vulnerable the self-discloser feels to possible rejection or exploitation. All too frequently, individuals are unwilling to take the risk of being open with the people they care about or love the most, because of the "probable reactions" they assume will be forthcoming (Jourard, 1964).

Perhaps the best example of failure to self-disclose to a significant other is in the marriage relationship. Jourard (1964) describes the inevitable growth and change that marital partners experience. The possible consequences of revealing these changes in experience seem too great a threat to the stability of the marital relationship for many couples to face. Instead they move farther away from the ideal of unreserved mutual self-disclosure. Rather than preserving their marital stability, their relationship is gradually eroded as they share less and less of each other's experience. The ultimate solution to such an impasse necessarily involves the risk of acknowledging and disclosing the areas of personal experience and change

that the partners have been hiding from each other.

In summary, the degree of self-disclosure appears to be a crucial factor in the healthy personality and one of the determinants of satisfying interpersonal relationships. Self-disclosure involves risk of rejection and exploitation by others and a number of personal and environmental factors affect the individual's willingness to take that risk. Often, human relationships that have the most potential for enjoyment and growth are weakened and ultimately destroyed by failure to self-disclose.

Group Leadership

Central person. Fritz Redl's concept of "central person" describes a phenomenon involved in group process: "The term central person designates the one through emotional relationship to whom the group formative processes are evoked in the potential group members" (Redl, 1942, p. 574). The central person is the group member which exerts the most influence upon the group and around whom the group dynamics revolve. Redl describes 10 types of central person but the one of interest here is the "good example."

Maximum influence of the central person occurs under two specific conditions. First, the group members must be on the verge of making some type of decision, with at least two alternatives open to them. Secondly, the "central person" must have already resolved for himself the conflict that the group members are experiencing. In the

case of the "good example" central person type, he performs an act before the group. This "initiatory act leads in the direction of moral values versus cowardly self-protection . . . " (Redl, 1942, p. 581). For the group members about to make a decision, the alternative that gets the external support from the central person is the choice that is made. Redl describes this influence as the "infectiousness of the unconflicted personality upon the conflicted one" (Redl, 1942, p. 583). This type of "infectious" influence appears to be at work in many of the marriage enrichment programs.

Redl's explanation of the above phenomenon owes much to psychoanalysis. Bandura's (1977) explanation of "modelling" deals with the same phenomenon from a cognitive behavioral point of view.

Modelling. According to Bandura (1977), much of human behavior is learned by observing both the way in which certain behaviors are performed and the consequences of those behaviors. Symbolic representation of observed behavior serves as a guide for later performance of similar behavior. In the case of a group in which members have previously found a particular behavior threatening, a leader can weaken their inhibitions by modelling that behavior. "Exposure to models performing feared activities without any harmful effects weakens defensive behavior; reduces fears, and creates favorable changes in attitudes" (Bandura, 1977, p. 49). The likelihood of group

members performing that behavior can increase dramatically.

From both Redl's and Bandura's viewpoints, it is clear that, under the right conditions (certain qualities in group members, certain qualities in group leaders, certain environmental conditions, etc.), group leaders exert a strong influence on group members to emulate the activities or behaviors that they demonstrate. Marriage enrichment programs, as we shall see in the next section, have put this phenomenon to good use.

Marriage Enrichment Programs

This section is a description of the major marriage enrichment programs in the United States and Canada. The Marriage Communication Lab program, the Minnesota Couples Communication Program and the Marriage Encounter program are described under the headings of philosophy, participants, methodology and leadership. Several other smaller programs are also mentioned briefly.

The Marriage Communication Lab

The Marriage Communication Lab (MCL) program was begun in 1965 by Leon and Antoinette Smith as part of the Board of Discipleship of the United Methodist Church. Since that time the Christian Reformed Church and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) have implemented programs in their own churches that are modelled after

the MCL (Vander Haar & Vander Haar, 1975; Hopkins & Hopkins, 1976).

Philosophy. The underlying philosophy of the MCL involves the idea that personal relationships are of utmost importance in the Christian Church (Vander Haar & Vander Haar, 1976). Since relationships between people often exist at less than optimum levels, it is the responsibility of the church to strengthen relationships, including the marital relationship. The quality of communication is seen as the "key" to the marriage relationship and consequently, programs are designed to, above all, develop effective communication skills. Since the leaders see themselves as educators and guides rather than therapists, the recognized purpose of the MCL is to "make good marriages better--to assist couples who have fully satisfying marriages to improve their relationships" (Smith & Smith, 1976, p. 241).

Participants. Since the MCL is typically publicized through churches at a local or regional level, participants are usually church members or adherents. Brochures clearly describe the program as an educational event designed for couples with basically healthy marriages. Consequently, most participants are not experiencing serious marital problems. The restricted publicity and the registration fee that covers program costs tends to limit attendance to middle and upper-class couples.

Methodology. The program format varies with the

innovations that different groups have made. Also, leaders have the freedom to vary the program to fit their individual styles. It is typical, however, for a weekend program to be held beginning Friday night and ending Sunday afternoon. Retreat houses are favoured and 4 to 15 couples usually attend. Leaders are husband and wife teams. If the group is larger than 7 couples, 2 lead couples are preferred (Hopkins & Hopkins, 1976; Vander Haar & Vander Haar, 1976).

The emphasis of the weekend is on experiential learning. Hopkins and Hopkins (1976) list the following "necessary components" of a lab design:

- a) welcoming and housekeeping details.
- b) brief community building.
- c) sharing expectations.
- d) teaching and practicing some communication skills (the emphasis being on communicating feelings).
- e) dealing with some specific dimensions of the marriage relationship (the group may determine this based on their expectations, but we always deal at least with conflict, sexuality, roles, and values in some way).
- f) evaluation.
- g) closing.

(Hopkins & Hopkins, 1976, p. 231)

The above components are included through the use of a variety of high-interest awareness and communication exercises. Interaction occurs with combinations of

people (marital dyads, two-couple groupings, the entire group, non-marital dyads, small groups of couples, etc.). Appropriate music is used and a variety of books are made available. There are also blocks of free time in the weekend schedule. Leaders are very much involved in the group as participants while directing the group and responding to its needs. Although the religious dimension is not explicit throughout the weekend, the program is usually closed with some type of worship experience. The greatest amount of time during the weekend is devoted to doing things together as a couple. A group sense typically develops but is not directly emphasized.

The MCL program does not include an extensive follow-up program. However, the Christian Reformed Church has developed a more comprehensive "Phase II Marriage Enrichment Lab" for couples who have already participated in the first weekend program (Van Eck & Van Eck, 1976).

Leadership. Leon and Antoinette Smith have developed a national program for the training and selection of lead couples in the MCL. Each year one couple is selected for training from each conference (a group of churches in one region) on the basis of the following guidelines:

- a) whether or not he/she has a sound, satisfying marriage.
- b) whether or not he/she is a warm, caring person.
- c) ability to communicate understandings and insights to others.

d) ability to face problems and help persons to seek solutions.

e) experience and skill in group work.

f) experience and skill in marriage counselling.

(Smith & Smith, 1976, p. 243)

One member of the couple chosen must also be a professional in the helping field. The couple must agree to do some preparatory reading and to work on their own marital communication before they attend a five-day training lab. Upon completion of the training workshop, couples are permitted to conduct Marriage Communication labs.

The Minnesota Couples Communication Program

Philosophy. The Minnesota Couples Communication Program (MCCP) was developed by Sherod Miller, Elam Nunnally and Dan Wackman in the late 1960's and early 1970's. The program arose from study of family developmental theory and modern systems and communication theory (Nunnally, Miller, & Wackman, 1976). Its authors believe that to be effective, a social system must have rules and also a procedure for changing those rules. The couple, as an interactional system, are relating to each other in a relatively consistent, rule-governed manner whether they are aware of it or not. They may or may not be able to effectively negotiate changes in those rules in order to cope with changing roles and expectations. The purpose of the MCCP is to educate couples in two basic areas. First, they are taught to be aware of themselves, their partner and

their interaction as a couple--to be aware of their "rules." Second, they are taught effective communication skills--the tools for "changing the rules" or creating more effective patterns of interaction (Nunnally et al., 1976).

Participants. Participants in the MCCP have typically been people with some college education. Since the groups are operated with from 5 to 7 couples, program costs are higher than they would be if larger groups attended. Lower income couples are consequently less likely to be involved. Nunnally et al. report that the program has been beneficial for couples at various stages in their relationship--"pairing, living together, during marriage, or in anticipation of remarriage" (Nunnally et al., 1976, p. 190). Although the program is clearly educational and developmental in nature, and consequently most suited to couples with stable relationships, counsellors have reported that the program can be a valuable complement for couples in counselling or therapy (Nunnally et al., 1976).

Methodology. The MCCP is typically scheduled for four weekly, three-hour sessions. (Some leaders schedule the first three sessions on a weekend and the fourth some time later.) From 5 to 7 couples participate. A textbook Alive and Aware (Miller et al., 1975) and a Couple Workbook (Miller, Nunnally, & Wackman, 1976) which supplement the course content are available to couples. The first session deals with identifying dimensions of self-awareness and the related skills of expressing that awareness.

The second session concentrates on listening skills and perception checking. Session three covers four communication "styles" which provide a framework for couples to talk about how they communicate. The fourth session deals with the relationship of communication skills and communication styles. Intentions related to raising or lowering self-esteem in others is also a part of the final session.

The focus in each session is on the couple, but much of that focus is in a group context. Some exercises are used in which a couple volunteers to discuss an issue in front of the group. Later the group gives constructive feedback to the couple, making use of the concepts being learned. There is ample opportunity given for couples to observe and analyse the communication patterns of other couples. They can also choose to open their own relationship for the observation and analysis of the others in the group. Various other exercises are also used. Some lectures are given by leaders and discussion periods are scheduled. Sometimes leaders give assignments to be carried out at home between the sessions.

Leadership. The MCCP instructors do not have to be husband and wife teams and there is no requirement that groups be led by more than one person. However, many couples do choose to work together. Leaders participate in all activities they initiate and in that sense they are group members. They also have a teaching role which involves helping participants to master the concepts that

are presented. Certification for leadership involves taking a three-day training workshop. Candidates must then conduct three intern M CCP groups and obtain written evaluations from participants. If evaluations are positive, certification is granted. The only prerequisite for leadership training is some experience in group leadership. However, many of the certified M CCP leaders are helping professionals.

Marriage Encounter

The National Marriage Encounter program will be dealt with in detail in the next chapter. Following is a brief overview of Marriage Encounter (ME), including both groups, also under the headings of philosophy, participants, methodology and leadership. Where necessary, distinctions between the National and Worldwide groups are made but the description is general and emphasizes what both "expressions" have in common.

Philosophy. The ME program, as originally conceived by Father Calvo, was based on the belief of the centrality of marriage and family relationships both for society and for religious faith and community. Calvo recognized a profound difference in the quality and depth of some marital relationships compared to others. He believed that the basis of the difference was the "profound, mutual, dialogue" that some couples experience. His program was developed with the intention of moving couples into a deep "I-Thou" relationship (Buber, 1958) in the context

of their social and religious experience. The original and continued purpose has been to develop a ministry to couples regardless of their religious persuasion. Marriage Encounter Worldwide (ME Worldwide) has deviated from that purpose in that participation of non-Catholics in weekends as participants and leaders is restricted (Sexton, 1980).

Participants. The participants in North American ME programs have, for the most part, been middle- and upper-middle-class couples. A variety of ages and occupations are represented. Most participants have been Catholic. ME Worldwide limits the number of non-Catholic couples to a certain percentage in its weekend programs while National Marriage Encounter (National ME) has no such restriction. Other religious groups have begun to adapt the ME program to their own situations with the approval of Father Calvo and National ME (Kligfeld, 1976; Sexton, 1980).

Methodology. The ME weekend is usually held in a motel or retreat center. The program begins Friday evening and ends Sunday afternoon. Worldwide weekends have as many as 40 couples in attendance while National weekends may involve from 8 to 20 couples. The team of leaders is always 1, 2 or 3 married couples and a clergyman.

The content of the weekend involves four stages of encounter: the "I" stage, the "We" stage, the "We-God"

stage and the "We-God-World" stage (Genovese, 1975). The organizational pattern for each segment is consistent throughout and the same for each weekend. A lead couple or the clergyman presents a previously prepared talk about personal experiences related to the issue at hand. Couples are then asked to reflect upon that issue and write their responses to certain questions that are given. Then the partners exchange notebooks and discuss their responses together. Group activities are for the most part confined to listening to the leaders' talks and to the common religious and social activities. Worldwide leaders, however, usually do not allow couples to socialize with other couples at all. Personal issues are kept within the format of the dialogue between husband and wife. The religious element is obvious during the weekend through the brief liturgies, the presence of the clergyman, and the content of the talks. Effective use is made of music, posters, candles and flowers for developing atmosphere.

Most local ME programs organize regular follow-up meetings where small groups of couples meet to discuss topics related to marriage and to support each other in their marriage commitment. Other encounter programs have also been developed. Second weekend experiences for couples; weekends for engaged couples, weekends for teenagers and weekends for entire families have been conducted in various local programs.

Leadership. Lead couples are chosen from those who

have already attended a ME weekend. According to the Calvo Manual (Calvo, 1975, p. 4), important characteristics for leaders involve continued experience of the unity, stability, growth and dialogue that are the goals of the weekend. Procedures for selection and training of these couples vary among the local groups that are associated with National ME. The central organization of the Worldwide group allows for more uniform standards of training and selection and only Catholics are permitted to present the Worldwide program. In neither group do leaders participate in the same dialogue activities as the participating couples during the weekend. However, most have found their own weekend experience very meaningful and often their talks involve descriptions of the experience of their first Marriage Encounter. National leaders, for the most part, have a rather low-key approach of giving their talks and insuring that the weekend moves smoothly. Leaders in Worldwide programs often operate from a position of "the encountered" and sometimes display an authoritarian or coercive attitude (Sexton, 1980; Doherty, McCabe, & Ryder, 1978).

Comparison of Major Programs

The three major marriage enrichment programs that have been described differ in many respects. Of the three, the M CCP clearly has the most extensive theoretical base. The ME program is the most structured of the three, has the least emphasis on group interaction and has involved

by far the largest number of people. The MSCP has been most exposed to evaluation of the effects of its program (Nunnally et al., 1976). The MCL program appears to have the highest standards for recruitment of lead couples. The ME program has the strongest emphasis on religious issues and also appears to have the most extensive follow-up program.

Some Other Marriage Enrichment Programs and Services

Numerous other marriage and family enrichment programs are presently in existence. Herbert Otto's article (1975) reports the results of a survey of various programs in the United States. Although many of the programs at that time were small, nearly all of them had set up programs to train more leaders and most programs have continued to grow. Some programs have developed from particular theoretical schools such as Gestalt therapy (Zinker & Leon, 1976) and Transactional Analysis (Capers & Capers, 1976). Others have not quickly launched into expansion programs but have continued to develop and incorporate more effective techniques. The More Joy in Your Marriage Program is an example (Otto & Otto, 1976). Still others, like the Jewish Marriage Encounter (Kligfeld, 1976) have taken basic ideas from an established program and developed them for specific groups. As the interest in marriage and family enrichment programs increases and various programs develop, more attention is being paid to establishing and maintaining high standards. Currently, standards are

being set and certification is available through several organizations (Smith, 1979). Perhaps the most well-known is the Association of Couples for Marriage Enrichment (Mace, 1976). It appears that a new professional area may be emerging.

Marriage Encounter Literature

The literature that relates directly to ME is of four types. Some independent articles appearing in popular magazines and journals have attempted to be descriptive and critical of ME. Descriptive literature has also been produced by people involved in ME. Independent articles have appeared in professional journals that critique the ME weekend program. Finally, some research projects have attempted to measure specific treatment effects of ME programs. This section summarizes the literature that has appeared in all the above categories.

Popular Articles

In their 1976 article in Psychology Today, Joanne and Lew Koch describe their participation in a ME weekend sponsored by ME Worldwide (Koch & Koch, 1976). They describe the powerful impact of sincere leaders communicating the experience of disillusionment and subsequent renewal in their own relationships. They suggest that ME is distinctive among other enrichment programs in its emphasis on rejuvenating the decision to "love" (Koch &

Koch, 1976, p. 83). The authors list the lack of concrete information (about sexuality for example), the anti-intellectual drift, the regimentation, the lack of personal sharing with other couples, and the secrecy about the content of the weekend as concerns that some people might have. Their own experience of the weekend, however, was extremely positive.

Andre McNicoll's article in McLean's compares the dynamics of ME with religious cults (McNicoll, 1978). The secrecy of program content, the offer of a magical solution to marital problems and the control of participants by emotion and guilt are the similarities cited. McNicoll's profile of the typical ME participant is that of a naive convert to false happiness. His article appears to be based on exposure to a ME Worldwide weekend in eastern Canada and some superficial research of the history and present state of ME in North America.

Literature From Within Marriage Encounter

From within ME, Robert Genovese describes the history, program, results, strengths and limitations of ME (Genovese, 1975). He suggests that the impact of the ME weekend is short-lived unless the practice of dialogue is continued. He recognizes that ME is most suitable for couples with basically secure relationships and states that the lack of follow-up for couples with more serious problems is a weakness of the program. A second weakness is the internal conflict among the various "expressions."

Antoinette Bosco's article is an enthusiastic report about the program and individual results of ME (Bosco, 1976). She describes a particular weekend she attended and includes numerous quotes from individuals as evidence for the impact of ME. The history of ME and possible reasons for rapid expansion are also briefly explored.

Marriage Encounter, a book published by National ME, is intended in part as a guide for couples to experience a Marriage Encounter without attendance at a weekend program (Demarest, Sexton, & Sexton, 1977). Its authors include transcripts of lead couple presentations, written responses of participants in the dialogue technique, transcripts of leaders' discussions about program rationals and particular guidelines for couples to use at home. The latter chapters deal with issues such as follow-up, ecumenicism, involvement of priests and the future of ME. The book is the most thorough single source of information about the ME program.

Father Chuck Gallagher's book, The Marriage Encounter, is primarily an inspirational book for people who are unfamiliar with the ME weekend and may want to know more (Gallagher, 1975). It includes very little history of the development of ME and little explanation of the dynamics of the weekend program beyond the dialogue technique. Quotes from enthusiastic participants and brief case histories are a major part of the book.

Ronald Regula identifies three specific psychodynamics

that he believes are involved in the ME weekend (Regula, 1975). He draws from his professional training and his involvement in ME as a priest on weekend leadership teams. The first dynamic is that leaders function as "central persons" (Redl, 1942). The second involves maximizing necessary conditions for self-disclosure (Jourard, 1964). The third is the operation of the "dyadic effect"--the "infectious" nature of self-disclosure (Jourard, 1964). Regula sees ME as having two objectives: to allow couples to experience genuine interpersonal communication with their spouses. Simultaneously, for those who believe in the Transcendant, it is also a mystical experience" (Regula, 1975, p. 153). He stresses that both objectives have been misunderstood and, in some cases, minimized but that both are a vital part of the ME experience.

Independent Critiques

The first independent critique of the ME movement in a professional journal appeared in 1978 (Doherty et al., 1978). Since its authors could not cite any empirical evidence regarding the results of ME programs, their comments are based on a review of some ME literature, participation in ME weekends by two of the authors and interviews with some leaders in both Worldwide and National programs. The article makes little effort to distinguish between National and Worldwide weekend programs and makes criticisms of ME programs in general. ME ideology is described as presenting a restrictive, absolutist pattern

to which all couples must conform. This pattern involves the loss of individuality and personal privacy and is given unquestionable, divine sanction. The authors describe the ME weekend as "authoritarian and coercive" (Doherty et al., 1978, p. 103). Leaders enforce a strict discipline to insure maximum benefit. Great promises are made to those who "dialogue" and strong warnings are given to those who do not. Six potentially harmful effects are listed:

- 1) The perceived effects of the weekend may be either temporary or illusory.
- 2) ME could result in denial of differentness and separateness in couples.
- 3) Stress on "dialogue" could lead to dependency on a ritual.
- 4) The "high" of an ME weekend could end in destructive disillusionment.
- 5) Not practicing the "dialogue" technique could result in destructive guilt.
- 6) Enthusiasm for ME could result in division among family and friends. (Doherty et al., 1978)

The authors cite the opportunity for being alone together and the subsequent opportunity for involvement in groups of couples as a strength of ME. Other positives are the openness and sincerity of leaders, and the awareness of some leaders of potential problems within ME.

Alan De Young presents a case history approach to ME by describing his experience of attending an Episcopalian

ME weekend with his wife (De Young, 1979). The weekend schedule was extremely structured and very much under the control of the leaders. Watches were removed, no communication outside the motel by telephone was permitted, all free time was controlled by assignment of discussion topics and enough time for adequate sleep was not allowed. De Young compares the use of a unique vocabulary, the special status acquired by "encountered" couples, and the secrecy surrounding the weekend to the initiation rites of primitive cultures. He describes the weekend as having a strong emphasis on building religious faith and church community in spite of the fact that couples are recruited only on the basis of wanting to improve their relationships. De Young sees potential in the ME program for strengthening marriages and feels that his own was strengthened through the ME experience. He cautions that the religious emphasis, and lack of social and occupational considerations, make ME inappropriate for some couples. He finds it unfortunate that attempts are made to mystify the experience.

Research Projects on Marriage Encounter

In a posttest-only control group design, Thomas Seymour (1977) tested a group of ME participants on the dimensions of perceptual congruence, marital communication and marital commitment (Taylor-Johnson Temperment Analysis, Marital Communication Inventory, Marital Commitment Rating Scale). One posttest was administered immediately

after the weekend and one 60 days later. In comparison to the control group, the test scores were significantly higher on marital communication and marital commitment dimensions, both at the initial posttest and over the 60 day posttest period.

Marilyn Bonjean (1976) compared a group of ME participants involved in follow-up groups with couples who were not. In her posttest-only control group design, tape recordings of couple dialogue from nine months after the ME weekend were rated according to the Hill Interaction Matrix. She found no significant differences in amount of systematic relationship work, content of communication or communication style between the two groups. Methodological issues made results inconclusive.

In a pretest-posttest control group design, Robert Neuhaus (1976) tested ME participants on various relationship dimensions (eg., openness, sensitivity, unconditional regard, self-awareness). Test scores were significantly higher on all ten dimensions after exposure to an ME weekend and mean scores did not decrease significantly on tests administered one month later. Control group scores did not change significantly. Neuhaus cites his small sample size as a limitation of his study.

Michael Samko (1976) used a pretest-posttest control group design to determine the effects of exposure to an ME weekend and frequency of subsequent "dialogue" on self-disclosure and marital communication (Self-Disclosure Sentence

Blank, Primary Communication Inventory). Volunteers were tested just before, two days after and six weeks after the ME weekend. Control group volunteers were on an ME waiting list. Results indicated that, on both posttests, the levels of self-disclosure and primary communication were significantly higher. Both independent variables (ME exposure and frequency of dialogue) were significant.

Joyce Huber (1976) tested volunteers just before, two days after and six weeks after exposure to an ME weekend to determine whether participation in an ME weekend, and subsequent use of the dialogue technique, would result in marital relationship improvements and in increase in relationship self-evaluation. She found significant differences from her control group in test scores measuring marital relationship and relationship evaluation scores on both posttests. Frequency of dialogue was not a significant variable. Huber states her results were inconclusive because of problems in instrumentation and high intercorrelations.

Summary

Articles in popular periodicals have varied in their evaluation of ME but have, perhaps of necessity, been rather superficial. Literature from within ME has been more descriptive and inspirational than evaluative and critical. Independent critiques have raised important issues for ME. However, the extent to which criticisms apply to various "expressions" of ME has not been

adequately dealt with. Several of the empirical studies on ME have had problems with measurement and design. Long-term effects of the initial weekend and follow-up program yet to be determined.

CHAPTER III

NATIONAL MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER

In the previous chapters a distinction has been made between National Marriage Encounter (National ME) and Marriage Encounter Worldwide (ME Worldwide). In actuality, National ME is a board of directors that provides representation for and services to local ME groups that have affiliated with the national organization. These local groups are often referred to as "National ME." Some local groups, which have no formal affiliation with National ME, use the same name because they are modelled after the original ME philosophy and are not part of the ME Worldwide corporate structure. This chapter is an expanded description of the National ME organization, its philosophy and related methodology as applied by local programs. The latter part of the chapter is a description of the forces at work within the National ME weekend.

History and Present Organization

During the first two years that ME weekends were conducted in North America, 1967-69, they were organized from within the Christian Family Movement, an interdenominational organization providing services to families (Buettner, 1976). However, rapid growth and popularity of the ME program convinced some leaders of the necessity of

establishing a separate national organization. In 1969, a group of couples and priests, experienced in conducting ME weekends, met in New Jersey and established themselves as the National Executive Board for the ME movement. Their purpose was to set up guidelines for ME presentations, make materials available to potential leaders, coordinate expansion and act as a clearing house for various local areas. From the board of 12, a priest and a couple were chosen as the executive team (Buettner, 1976)...

By 1970, it became evident that ME programs were developing very differently in various parts of the country. The New York group led by Father Charles Gallagher, one of the National Board members, emphasized the necessity of using the "dialogue" technique daily. Gallagher declared that New York Marriage Encounter was substantially different from all other groups and his large, centrally-organized local group began to move into areas where other local groups were already operating. An emphasis on building the Catholic church through ME also began to replace Calvo's original ecumenical intention in the New York programs (Buettner, 1976).

Although the growing division within ME aroused confusion and frustration during the early seventies, leaders continued to develop guidelines and better ways of representing regional programs at the board level. In 1974, Father Gallagher and other board members associated with New York Marriage Encounter were asked to resign.

The board was restructured with elected representatives from five regions throughout the United States. The continued function of the board was to provide materials, ideas and coordinating services to local ME programs (Buettner, 1976).

Presently, the National Executive board is composed of elected couples and priests from each of seven areas in the United States. A Rabbi and his wife also represent Jewish Marriage Encounter on the National board. The head office in St. Paul publishes a monthly magazine, Marriage Encounter, a monthly newsletter and various other program related materials. The office is funded primarily from sale of these publications and affiliation fees from local programs. The function of the board remains to provide assistance to local programs through publications, sponsorship of conferences, and exchange of information and resources. Program activities of local ME organizations are not centrally regulated.

National Marriage Encounter Philosophy

The Tie with Father Calvo

Perhaps the most basic guiding principle of National ME is a loyalty to the initial and continuing ideas of Gabriel Calvo. Calvo has not attempted to elucidate a precise philosophy for ME. Rather his work is of a general, inspirational nature, expressing his own beliefs and

values and their implications for ME programs. His 1975 "manual" is less of a working manual for a weekend and more of an overview of what elements he considers important to include. The autonomy of local groups and the non-specific nature of Calvo's work has resulted in the freedom of local groups to develop distinctively within Calvo's general guidelines. However, some local groups, although affiliated with National, have been influenced enough by former ties to Worldwide for Father Calvo to be unwilling to endorse them (Sexton, 1980).

The Theological Base

In Father Calvo's mind, and certainly in the minds of most leaders, ME cannot be understood apart from its theological roots and emphasis. The ultimate purpose of ME is the promotion of "God's plan" which, for Calvo, involves a revolution of love and unity beginning with the couple and spreading to the family, the community and ultimately the world (Demarest et al., 1977, p. 197). Calvo also sees the ultimate effectiveness of the ME program as dependent upon supernatural influence. ". . . I believe that the efficacy of a Marriage Encounter cannot be attributed to the god of technique. Rather, its effectiveness is due to the God of Love. A true 'encounter' is a gift of God" (Demarest et al., 1977, p. 201). On another level, effectiveness of ME is a result of "personal communication between the couples, which is an essential element in God's plan" (Demarest et al.,

1977, p. 201). Much of the literature published by National ME is characterized by a blending of the supernatural with the human in describing the ME philosophy and experience.

The Commitment to Ecumenism

National ME is clearly committed to ecumenism. The following is a quote from "A Statement of Philosophy and Purpose of the National Marriage Encounter."

We believe there is a need and desire for all married couples to examine truly the presence and meaning of God in their individual and married lives. We see a response to this need and desire as an essential aspect of National Marriage Encounter. The National Marriage Encounter's philosophy and structure, based on Judeo-Christian concepts, beliefs, and morality enables couples to appreciate more fully the presence of God in their lives. We invite and encourage couples of all faiths or of no religious affiliation to bring the experience and the many benefits of the Encounter into their lives and to become an integral part of the local group. (Demarest et al., 1977, p. 170)

This emphasis results in the acceptance of non-Catholic couples as team members, organizers and participants in local ME programs.

The Focus on Relationship

A third idea that underlies the ME program is the emphasis on the couple's relationship. Calvo's theological rationale is that "the married couple is the image of God" (Calvo, 1975, p. 1). The marriage relationship has the potential to illustrate the character of God to the

couple and to others. Consequently, "the realization of an intense, profound, and mutual dialogue between husband and wife" becomes the goal of ME (Calvo, 1975, p. 1).

Although the separateness of the individual is not denied, the goals and methods of ME have a central focus on qualitative relationship change.

Methodology of Weekend Program

Organizational Issues

The National ME program has consistently been presented in an unbroken time-block over a period of three days. Couples arrive at the motel or hotel facility in the early evening the first night and leave in the late afternoon of the third day. The total time needed for the weekend program, according to the manual, is about 44 hours. Weekends usually involve from 8 to 20 couples, although Father Calvo suggests 10 couples as an ideal group size. One, two or three couples and a clergymen make up the presenting team, depending on their experience as leaders and the size of the group.

Couples apply ahead and are accepted for the weekend program a few weeks in advance. Usually they will have talked with a ME representative over the 'phone or received some written information about the weekend.

Since couples often hear about ME from their friends, they may already know a good deal about the program before

arriving. The fee for the weekend covers only accomodation, meals and materials and, with the exception of a small registration fee, is paid upon arrival.

Introductory Phase

The lead couples and priest take the initiative in making couples feel welcome, familiarizing them with the facility and leading in group introductions. Each person is usually asked to introduce him/herself or his/her spouse to the group and to make a brief comment. After introductions, the first of the presentations, the introductory talk, begins.

In the introductory talk, it is explained that the weekend will be divided into a number of sections. Most will follow a three-part pattern in which lead couples talk of their experience related to the topic; couples write answers to related, assigned questions; then exchange their responses and discuss them together. The pattern begins with the questions of "Why have you come?" and "What do you hope to gain?"..

Program Content

The content of the presentations differ somewhat depending on the changes that local groups and particular leaders choose to make. Each presentation is made by a particular leader and is primarily a personal statement of how he or she has experienced the issue under consideration. Each presentation is prepared by the presenter ahead of time and is supposed to be used for that weekend

only. Explanations of theoretical concepts are kept to a minimum. The general focus of the presentations moves through four stages which emphasize (a) self, (b) the couple, (c) the couple in relationship to God and (d) the couple, God and the world.

Following are the topics described in the Calvo manual (Calvo, 1975) and the Chicago Supplement (Buettner et al., 1976).

Encounter with self. Individuals examine their strengths, weaknesses, ways of misrepresenting themselves and related feelings. Responses to questions are not shown to the spouse.

Spiritual divorce. The stages of love, "illusion," "dillusion" and "joy" are described and couples consider the signs their relationship shows of "spiritual divorce."

Parable of the sower. Couples consider their readiness to accept the plan of God for their relationship--openness with each other.

Marriage in God's plan. The idea of the couple as the "image of God" is presented and the couples consider examples of and the importance of unity in their marriage.

Confidence and dialogue. The importance of taking the risk to be open (confidence) and developing marital friendship and closeness (dialogue) are considered.

Wedding at Cana. The role that Jesus plays in marriage is introduced. The clergyman usually gives the presentation which is the last of the second day.

Sacrament of marriage and its graces. Marriage is presented as an ongoing human sign of the love of God. A 90 minute self-evaluation of the marriage relationship precedes a 90 minute discussion of the evaluation between spouses.

Marriage spirituality. The possibility of experiencing one's own marriage as a sacrament is emphasized and related questions are assigned.

Christian commitment of marriage. The focus is moved outward from the couple to the couples responsibility to their community and world. The couple is encouraged to make resolutions together regarding their marriage, family and community.

Eucharistic banquet. Marriage vows (the written resolutions) are renewed in the ceremony of the Eucharist.

Leadership Style

Although leadership styles vary with individuals, the clear emphasis of Calvo's literature and National ME publications is that leaders are to be facilitators of the encounter which takes place between husband and wife. With the focus on the couple, the primary role of the leaders is to model the behavior that will make the weekend a success for participants. Inclusion of both personal successes and failures in their presentations makes leaders appear more human and softens their role as authorities or experts. They also actively serve participants in the preparation of refreshments, explaining

facilities and ensuring that the schedule is followed. Although the clergyman conducts religious ceremonies, he too is to model the personal openness and honesty that lessens his special status as a religious authority.

Atmosphere

Much of the success of the weekend depends upon the atmosphere the leaders are able to establish. The most significant factor is probably their own attitudes--their ways of relating to each other and to the participants. In addition, a number of techniques are used that build upon the basic atmosphere of acceptance and safety that the leaders try to establish. Recorded music is often played in the common area when couples are gathering and posters with relevant sayings are displayed and changed throughout the weekend. Various arrangements of flowers and candles and lighting effects are used. Some teams use films to supplement certain presentations. Leaders who play instruments may lead in some group singing. Saturday evening may include a wine and cheese social when leaders and participants are free to visit with each other. Local groups try to choose an attractive, comfortable facility with a quiet, retreat-type atmosphere.

Related Programs

Marriage Encounter is the first of four consecutive programs that Father Calvo designed. The second, the

"Retorno," is a weekend experience for couples who wish to "encounter God through Scriptural prayer together" (Buettner, 1976, p. 7). The "Family Encounter" brings entire families together for a weekend program intended to reconcile and unite family members (Demarest et al., 1977). The fourth program is the "Family Retorno." The first three of the above have been implemented in the United States already and the Family Encounter is presently being introduced in Canada. The Marriage Encounter weekend is still by far the most common program since many local groups have not yet implemented any of the other three programs.

Most localities have also developed some type of follow-up program to the initial ME weekend. Two follow-up manuals have been published by the National office, both of which are built around the themes from the weekend (Demarest et al., 1977). They are published as guides only and group leaders are free to revise and adapt the material.

Follow-up meetings are held monthly in someone's home during an evening. If the manuals are followed, the pattern of the meetings is similar to the weekend with personal reflection, couple dialogue and short talks by the host couple. However, opportunity is given to couples to talk in the group as well. Many local groups have also organized follow-up weekends for couples who have already attended an ME weekend a year or more before.

In the United States several offshoots of ME have developed. These programs are similar to ME in their methods but are designed for people other than married couples. The "Engaged Encounter" was developed in Detroit for couples planning to be married (Demarest et al., 1977). The "Beginning Experience" was developed in Texas for previously married people who were widowed or divorced. Other programs have also been developed for people with specific interests and needs, including alcoholics, the poor, members of religious orders, leaders in ME programs and children of people who have attended ME weekends. All programs draw from the content and techniques of the ME weekend (Demarest et al., 1977).

Dynamics of the Marriage Encounter Weekend

It has often been the case that attempts to provide psychological explanations and descriptions of religious phenomena have met with the disapproval of religious people. There is apprehension about applying "scientific," "rational" methods to "non-scientific," "non-rational" phenomena. There may be good cause for apprehension, since psychologists have sometimes been slow to recognize the limits of their discipline. However, religious people have frequently had an unjustifiably low view of the usefulness of psychological principles. Consequently, they have tended to use religious explanations for phenomena

that are not always confined to religious contexts. At least some of the time, religious and psychological explanations are different ways of talking about the same things. Much of what follows describes in non-religious terms what has been described from within ME using religious language. Such an explanation is possible because much of the ME process is very similar to dynamics that occur in non-religious contexts. In the author's view, ME is no less a "tool of God" if it can be described, in whole or in part, using a different vocabulary.

The following description of the dynamics of ME is based on several sources of information. The author has reviewed literature produced by ME leaders, literature critical of ME, research projects on the effects of ME and descriptive literature of other marriage enrichment programs. The written comments of nearly 300 ME participants have been studied and the author has had telephone conversations with approximately 35 others. The ME program has been discussed with several local leaders and the author and his wife attended a ME weekend in 1979.

It is the author's view that most of the various dynamics described commonly affect many of the people involved in ME programs. However, the extensiveness of their impact and their relative importance has yet to be established. Most need further exploration and could become the focus of further study.

Beliefs, Attitudes and Values/Communication--A Twofold Emphasis

Although a number of "outside" factors affect the quality and permanence of marital relationships, the two most important internal factors are the quality of communication, and the beliefs, attitudes and values to which the couple is committed (Lewis and Spanier, 1979). The content and structure of the ME program emphasizes both factors and, with varying degrees of effectiveness, strengthens and brings about changes in the couples' patterns of thought and communication. Either by accident or design, the ME program clearly influences the two areas that any effective marital enrichment program can not ignore.

Insight and Motivation--A Twofold Approach

Much human suffering is a result of people not knowing how to live differently, not truly wanting to live differently or a combination of the two. Less than satisfactory marriage relationships are often the result of the same two factors. The design of the ME program includes an information or insight component and a strong motivational component as well. Both are needed in order for enrichment programs to be effective with the broadest ranges of people. The next sections describe the variety of ways in which the content and structure of the ME program provide insights and influences that result in relationship changes.

Motivating Factors

Uninterrupted time alone. Most participants in ME weekends would probably be described as having a good marriage. Their commitment to their marriage is at least strong enough for them to decide to spend a weekend alone together. The ME weekend is an opportunity to be free from the competing commitments to children, friends and work responsibilities. Concentrated reflection upon and evaluation of the state of their relationship is possible. Time is available for working through issues that may have seemed either too small or too time-consuming to mention before. Such an opportunity results in a release of the already existing motivation toward marital growth.

Physical atmosphere. The facilities in which the ME weekend is held, with meals and other personal services provided, becomes a reminder of an earlier period in marriage--perhaps the honeymoon or the period before the couple had children. The intensity and excitement of discovering another person is revived and the romantic atmosphere is enhanced by the candlelight, flowers, music and general decor.

Religious context. The religious assumptions underlying the weekend contribute to its effectiveness in several ways. Most couples, if not Catholic, are affiliated with some other denomination. There is familiarity, security and, perhaps, comfort derived from the religious content, vocabulary and atmosphere. Many of the ideas

expressed regarding marital growth are framed in a context of God's ultimate purpose for marriage and consequently carry the authority of divine sanction. The theological context also defines marriage as an especially significant relationship which has meaning far beyond the common social institution. For many couples, the religious emphasis increases the impact of the weekend by providing security and an increased sense of the necessity and significance of actively working to improve their marriages.

Forgiveness/reconciliation. Many couples describe their weekend experience as a "break-through" or a "new beginning" in which old injuries were forgiven and a new start was made. The reconciliation rite provides a powerful symbolic picture of acknowledging past differences, putting them to rest and moving ahead to a more intimate relationship. Again, religious symbolism and doctrine assigns a special significance to the act of reconciliation.

Dyadic effect. According to Jourard (1964), self-disclosure by one individual has the effect of motivating the listener to self-disclose to a similar or slightly higher degree. On the ME weekend, the process of self-disclosure is modelled, its importance is emphasized and couples are given a relatively non-threatening way of beginning--writing their thoughts. After the first exchange of notebooks, the dyadic effect is very much involved in the continued and increasing mutual self-disclosure between spouses.

Insight Producing Factors

Self-disclosure by leaders. During the ME weekend, many couples come to the rather startling conclusion that other couples are "just like us." Part of this recognition involves the awareness that most couples have difficulties that are similar in nature. Identifying with the lead couples in their difficulties results in a willingness to attempt some of the solutions that lead couples have found helpful. The taboo against discussing one's marriage publicly is violated and participants benefit from insight into another couple's relationship. A similar process results when the clergyman, who many participants tend to elevate, discloses his personal struggles and his efforts to resolve them.

Presentation content. Although the content of presentations is primarily sharing of personal experiences, a number of concepts are also communicated, some directly and others by inference. They provide new awareness for participants and provide a frame of reference for understanding some specific issues. Many couples develop a new awareness of the growth potential within their marriage relationship. Others realize that such growth does not naturally unfold but, rather, takes consistent effort. The concept of "mask" as a misrepresentation of the individual is presented and men, especially, are able to see how living up to typical cultural roles has been a mask for them. A related concept that some leaders are able

to handle effectively is the distinction between role relationships (based on rigid societal roles) and interpersonal relationships (based on human relations skills).

Dialogue technique. If a couple is prepared to take the ME weekend seriously, great amounts of information are exchanged in a number of important areas. Through reflection, writing, reading and discussing, spouses gain insight into themselves and each other.

Modelling/Central Person

Much of the success of the ME weekend depends upon how each couple chooses to respond. The influence the leaders do exert is primarily through modelling--through their role as central persons. Couples who benefit the most have relatively good relationships; that is, they already have strong marital commitments. In Redl's terms, they are on the verge of making decisions related to personal and marital growth. The "initiatory acts," carried out by the leaders, demonstrate growth producing behavior and couples are influenced to do the same things (Redl, 1942). Participants watch as the leaders model self-disclosure. Leaders describe personal experiences related to forgiveness, role abandonment, marital commitment, religious renewal, the dialogue technique, etc. Inhibitions regarding the above issues decrease and motivation increases as participants see that negative effects are not forthcoming and the positive effects are obvious (Bandura, 1977). Better insight and increased

motivation are both results of the modelling process.

Structure

The ME weekend has a definite structure that couples are informed of the first evening. Participants know the general plan for the weekend and how each segment will be organized. For some couples, the definite schedule provides a secure framework in which the less certain, more risky activity of self-disclosure takes place. The structure of the dialogue technique provides a similar security. The pattern of reflection, writing and discussing eliminates common communication difficulties such as interruption, double messages, failure to listen, and destructive humour. Thoughtfulness and sincerity are promoted.

Commitment

Plans for change are much more likely to be carried out if they are made specific, if another person is involved in the plan and if some type of formal pledge or contract is made. One of the final stages of the ME weekend, the "Christian Commitment of Marriage," involves all of the above factors. If the weekend has served its purpose, by Sunday afternoon couples are enthusiastic about the discoveries they have made and are highly motivated to make changes. At that point, forms are handed out on which couples write the specific commitments they are willing to make to each other, their family and the world. Together, husband and wife commit themselves to their specific mutual vows in the solemn atmosphere of the

eucharistic ceremony. For many couples, following through on commitments initially made during the weekend results in significant changes in the future.

Spirituality and Religious Renewal

For many couples, the ME experience marks the beginning of a new sensitivity to spiritual issues in their individual lives and marriages. It would seem that, for many, spirituality has been associated with the form, ritual and doctrine of an impersonal church structure. The ME experience produces a sense of the relevance and necessity of religious faith in every day life--especially marriage and family life. Couples report "finding God in their marriage," and both personal and communal religious activities become important and assume a higher priority. These experiences of religious renewal are clearly within the stated goals of the ME weekend. However, the nature of these experiences is highly subjective. Psychological explanations cannot go much further than to say the atmosphere established and beliefs of the participants set the stage for religious experiences to occur. There remains a mystical aspect to the ME experience which the language of psychology is unable to describe.

Negative Dynamics

Negative experiences during or resulting from the ME weekend can be traced to one of two causes. The first is that the ME program is not helpful for all types of people. Consequently, certain participants do not benefit

and may even experience destructive effects. The second cause is that, in some cases, basically good ideas and techniques are carried to extremes.

The problem of clientele. The ME programs are not suitable for couples who are experiencing severe problems in their relationship. The large blocks of time devoted to intense communication about sensitive issues have intensified conflict for some couples. Most participants are relatively comfortable with the degree of religious content in the weekend. Those with no religious convictions or those who are antagonistic toward Christianity could find some of the weekend activities either meaningless or offensive. Since the dialogue technique involves so much reading and writing, people with poor language skills may find the weekend frustrating. Some older couples have found many of the issues raised on the weekend rather irrelevant to their particular concerns.

The problem of extremes. One of the basically good ideas of the ME weekend that is sometimes carried to an extreme is the program structure. Authoritarian leadership, in some cases, is simply the result of thinking that since a little structure is good, a lot of structure is better. Such an extreme can result in negative reactions from participants who begin to feel they are not trusted or respected. The value of the self-disclosure of leaders is sometimes lost if presentations go on too long and begin to seem like staged performances or self-centered

monologues. The encouragement for couples to make specific commitments can increase the likelihood of positive change in the future. However, if couples are urged to make unrealistic commitments, failure and guilt can only result. Although the intense focus on the couple's relationship during the weekend has good results, there is the possibility of continuing that emphasis to the exclusion of other responsibilities. The excitement and enthusiasm for marital growth can result in a form of "couple centeredness" which Father Calvo has called the "sin of conjugalism" (Demarest et al., 1977). In striving for unity, a couple can also begin to deny or ignore important differences. Lastly, in their enthusiasm for what the ME program has done for them, some couples begin to see the ME weekend as a solution for everyone. Indiscriminate recommendation of the program results in some of the problems mentioned above. Also, some couples have the related idea that their own relationship can only be maintained by repeated "treatments" of the ME weekend experience.

Summary

The first part of this chapter was a brief history of National ME in North America. The ME philosophy, the methodology of the ME weekend and some related programs were also described. The latter part of the chapter provided a description of the psychological dynamics that appear to be at work in the National ME weekends. This

chapter serves as a background for Chapter IV, which goes on to look at a particular local program which is modelled after the National ME philosophy and incorporates the related program methodology..

CHAPTER IV

EDMONTON MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER

This chapter is a description of Marriage Encounter, Edmonton (ME, Edmonton). The first section is a brief general description of the philosophy, organization and present development of the Edmonton program. The latter sections discuss the development, administration and results of questionnaires administered to former participants in ME, Edmonton programs.

Local Program Description

Philosophy and Methodology

The local Edmonton group is one of the many autonomous groups often referred to as "National" ME. However, it has no formal link with the National ME organization. The use of the name is appropriate in that the Edmonton group does not manifest any particularly unusual differences from other local groups that do have formal ties. The description of National ME philosophy and methodology in the previous chapter is an accurate description of the Edmonton ME philosophy and methodology as well.

Organization

National organization. Presently, ME groups in Canadian cities are in the beginning stages of forming a national association in Canada. Such an organization would

be parallel to National ME in the United States and both organizations would work in cooperation. Edmonton ME leaders appear generally to be in favour of a national organization and some local leaders are presently involved in its planning and development.

Local organization. The local ME organization consists of an executive board whose officers are elected for a one year term at an annual general meeting. Couples are elected to each of the following positions: Chair-couple, Recruitment and Registration (for weekend programs), Chaircouple Elect (chaircouple for the following year), Secretary-Treasurer, Team Coordination, Rendezvous (follow-up groups). A priest is elected to the position of Chaplain. Two further appointments under the executive are Social Couple and Newsletter Couple.

Program Development

Beginning and growth. The first ME weekend held in the Edmonton area was in January, 1973. In the same year, Edmonton couples began to present their own weekends locally and in other centers. By the spring of 1974, over 100 couples in the Edmonton area alone had attended ME weekends. Beginning at about 60 couples in 1974-75, each year has seen an increase in the number of ME participants. During the 1979-80 year, approximately 130 couples attended weekends in the Edmonton area. In recent years, teams sent from Edmonton to smaller centers have involved in the neighborhood of 50 other couples per year.

05

Presently, well over 600 couples have attended weekends presented by leaders from ME, Edmonton.

The weekend program. The central emphasis of ME, Edmonton is the weekend couple encounter. Approximately 10 weekends are presented each year between September and May. Lead couples from Edmonton also present several other weekends in smaller communities (often in the North) during the same period.

Selection and training of leaders. Local leaders consider the selection of appropriate leaders for weekend programs to be extremely important. Although some couples volunteer for leadership, more often couples who have shown leadership potential in their previous ME involvement are approached individually by members of the executive. Selection is made on the basis of the personal perceptions of ME leaders. No standard criteria are in effect. Selection procedures are workable since most weekends are presented by the same core of experienced lead couples and the number of new lead couples recruited is not very large.

Previous to 1979-80, new lead couples were trained simply by taking minor responsibility on a weekend co-lead with a more experienced couple. During the past year, training sessions have been organized in which experienced couples meet with a group of potential lead couples to discuss the organization and presentation of the weekend program. These sessions are in addition to

the requirement of presenting a weekend with another experienced lead couple.

Follow-up groups. The Edmonton ME executive is responsible for the "rendezvous" groups in Edmonton and the immediate area. Eight groups are operating presently, with about 15 couples associated with each one. Approximately 100 couples are involved. Rendezvous groups meet in individual homes approximately once a month. The groups are independent in that they are led by couples within the group and each group is responsible for setting its own direction. Typically, the materials published by National and Worldwide ME especially for follow-up groups are used by the group leaders.

A strong effort is made to involve couples in the follow-up groups after their initial encounter. Shortly after the weekend, some literature describing the rendezvous groups is mailed to the couple. Several days later the couple is contacted by telephone. If they express interest, their name is given to the secretary couple of a particular rendezvous group and they are personally invited to attend. Approximately half of the weekend participants express interest, and most of these do attend at least one follow-up meeting.

Other aspects of the local program. Each year Edmonton ME organizes a Valentine's banquet and dance for all ME participants. Other social events are held in connection with the annual meeting or other general meetings.

A newsletter is published several times a year and several issues are sent to new ME couples at no cost. It's present circulation is approximately 225.

Plans for the future. In 1980, Edmonton ME sponsored its first "Sons and Daughters" weekend for children of former participants in ME weekends. It was judged to be extremely successful and plans are being made to incorporate this type of weekend into the Edmonton program. Presently, it is seen as preliminary work towards establishing the "Family Encounter," the first of which is planned for the fall of 1980.

Training sessions for lead couples were successful during the first year they were conducted. The present executive expects to see the training program develop to meet the needs of a growing program in years to come.

The Rendezvous couple has recognized the need to strengthen the follow-up program--both the content of the meetings and the procedure for directing new couples into existing groups. Further efforts to develop a more effective follow-up program are expected to be made.

Follow-up Research--Questionnaire Administration

Purpose and Rationale

The original purpose of administering a questionnaire to participants of ME, Edmonton weekends was to provide a general picture of the kind of people involved

and to provide estimates of the effects of the ME program on its participants. It was assumed that the two most significant determinants of marital quality and permanence are (a) quality of communication (Kantor & Lehr, 1975; Satir, 1964; Watzlawick et al., 1967) and beliefs, attitudes and values (Lewis & Spanier, 1979). Since the goals of ME include change in both the above determinants, the questionnaires were designed primarily to obtain information in those two major areas. It was expected that the administration of the questionnaires would result in partial or complete answers to the following questions:

- 1) What are the demographic characteristics of the group of ME participants?
- 2) As a group, what particular effects do ME participants perceive as resulting from their involvement in ME programs?
- 3) Are there differences in perceived effects of ME between groups of participants selected according to demographic characteristics?
- 4) Regardless of treatment effects, what are perceived relationship changes since the period before exposure to ME?
- 5) How similar are spouse's evaluations of their relationship characteristics and the effects of ME?
- 6) What general impressions do ME participants have about the program?

7) What suggestions do ME participants have about ways of improving the program?

Questionnaire Design

All forms of the questionnaire include items related to the same major areas. Items in the first section ask for demographic information. The second section deals with general abilities and relationship characteristics related to effective communication. The third section deals with values in that respondents are asked to rate particular topics in order of their importance. The items of the next section list the same topics and involve estimates of quality of communication in those areas. The fifth section involves judgements about the importance of various beliefs, attitudes and values. All questionnaires have separate forms for husband and wife although in both forms the items are identical.

Follow-up questionnaire. Since such a large number of couples had already been involved in ME, Edmonton programs and no preliminary measures or measures of program effects had been attempted, a questionnaire was designed especially for that group (see Appendix A, p. 155). A basic structure in the questionnaire is a repetitive pattern of three types of items. In the first type, respondents are asked to rate items from their present perspective. In the second type, the same items are answered according to how the respondent thinks those items used to be before exposure to ME. The third type asks to what

extent differences in the two previous series of items are accounted for by the effects of ME programs. The intention is to establish a type of baseline for the present against which the past can be judged before estimated effects of the ME program are requested. Although this pattern is followed throughout most of the questionnaire, there are several exceptions. Items in which respondents rate topics according to importance are prioritized from both present and past perspectives but no estimate of the effects of ME is requested. Four items not directly related to the marital relationship (self-acceptance, spiritual experience, family life and service to others) are included in the follow-up form. Open-ended questions ask for the outstanding feature of the respondents' involvement in ME and for any comments or suggestions regarding the ME program (see Appendix A, p. 155).

Pretest and posttest questionnaires--purpose. It was recognized that a central difficulty with the follow-up questionnaire was the unreliability of responses to retrospective questions about relationship characteristics and judgements about the effects of the ME program (Neale & Liebert, p. 149). A second difficulty was expected to result from the possibly unrepresentative nature of the group of ME participants who would respond to the follow-up questionnaire. Consequently, it was decided to design two related forms of the questionnaire that would be administered to a group of ME participants

before their initial weekend experience and at a later date. Such a group could serve as a comparison group against which the reliability⁰ of the retrospective responses of the other, larger group could be judged. Also, with a group of this type, a large response rate on at least the initial form would be expected. Consequently, a standard would be provided by which to estimate the representativeness of the larger group.

Pretest form. The pretest questionnaire is a much shorter version of the follow-up form because all retrospective questions and items related to effects of the ME program are eliminated. The same demographic items are included and the present-oriented questions related to communication characteristics, prioritization of topics, satisfaction with communication about those topics, and the importance of specific values, attitudes and beliefs are also included. An open-ended question asks respondents what they are expecting from the ME program. Husband's and wife's forms have identical items (see Appendix C, p. 173).

Posttest form. The posttest form is identical to the pretest form with the exception of the open-ended questions. Two questions ask about the outstanding impression of respondents' experience of ME and for any comments or suggestions about ME programs. Again, husband's and wife's forms include the same items (see Appendix C, p. 173).

Administration of Questionnaires

Follow-up questionnaire. In late February, 1980, a package containing two questionnaires; a self-addressed, postpaid envelope; a covering letter and a letter from the ME executive chaircouple (see Appendices A and B) was sent to all couples who had attended an ME, Edmonton weekend between 1973 and June, 1979. Couples who attended weekends during the 1979-80 year were not included. Approximately 45 packages had outdated addresses and were returned. In all, 485 couples received the initial mailing. During the first week of April, 1980, a follow-up letter was sent to couples whose completed questionnaires had not been returned. In late April, a third letter was sent, giving May 12 as the deadline for receipt of questionnaires. By mid-May, 1980, 160 responses had been received, representing 33 percent of the maximum possible. Of these, 135 had been completed by both husband and wife. The total number of completed questionnaires was 291. In addition, approximately 35 people responded by telephone to explain why they were unable or unwilling to return their questionnaires. Most of these people answered general questions about their experience with and impressions of the ME program.

Pretest-posttest questionnaire. When the ME executive gave their initial approval to the proposal for a study of ME, Edmonton, the administration of a pretest was not a part of the proposal. Later, pretests could not

be scheduled before the weekends remaining in the 1979-80 season and the time constraints of this project made it impossible to accomodate a delay of several more months. Consequently, the present project does not have the benefit of comparison between a pretest, posttest group and the larger follow-up group.

The Value of Questionnaire Results

Although the questionnaire results are not representative of the entire group of ME participants, they do represent a large group of people who have been exposed to ME. Even though their responses may, to some extent, be distinctive to their particular subgroup, they represent personal characteristics and perceived effects of ME that are at least as important as those of any other subgroup.

When organized and analysed, the data collected by the questionnaire can serve an exploratory function. Relationships between subgroups selected according to demographic data (i.e., sex, age, education, etc.) and responses to other items can be explored to see if there is evidence for group differences in the effects of ME. Particular characteristics of communication, satisfaction with communication in particular areas and various values, attitudes and beliefs can be compared to see which are considered most/least affected by exposure to ME. The strength of the relationship between responses to parallel items on paired husband and wife forms can also be

considered. Relationships between past- and present-oriented items can be explored as well. Relationships and patterns within the data can lead to hypotheses that determine the direction of subsequent research.

At the present time, no rigorously designed longitudinal studies of the effects of ME have been carried out. In light of this fact, the views and responses of people involved in ME programs over the years can either be ignored or carefully considered with a recognition of the problems involved. The results of the ME questionnaire can be viewed cautiously, at the present time, and future research can provide further evidence regarding generalizability and reliability. In the meantime, data has been gathered which does provide some evidence for assessing some of the strengths and limitations of the program.

Finally, the responses to the open-ended questions are not subject to the same kinds of difficulties as are other items. Thoughtful comments and impressions from a large group of ME participants, many of whom are clearly committed to the ME organization, are a valuable source of information and need to be given strong consideration.

They represent a group whose authority is based upon personal experience in ME programs. Their perceptions are the best single type of evidence by which to judge the effectiveness of the ME program.

Follow-up Research--Data Analysis and Discussion

This section is a summary and brief discussion of the analysis of data collected by the follow-up questionnaire. It is intended to describe the general character of the analysis that was carried out and to outline the most important results. More information is summarized in this section in the form of tables and frequent reference to the related tables is made. A summary of the statistical procedures and the related computer programs is included in Appendix E, page 206.

Characteristics of Respondent Group

The demographic data is summarized in Tables 1 to 5. As expected, most respondents were 30 to 45 years of age, married 5 to 15 years with 2 or 3 children. Eighty-one percent were Catholic and most were in middle- and upper-income categories. It is of interest that the respondents were more highly educated than expected. Thirty-seven percent had 4 or more years of college education and the average amount of education was 14.46 years. The proportion of respondents who had attended their first ME between 1 and 4 years ago was also higher than would have been expected. As a group, respondents were more heavily involved in ME programs than the entire group of participants. Leaders report that more than one-half of all participants do not attend any follow-up meetings. However, 75% of respondents had been involved beyond

Table 1

Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic
Data for Respondent Group

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	151	51.9
	Female	140	48.1
Forms returned	both spouses	270	92.8
	husband only	5	1.7
	wife only	16	5.5
Age	21-35	129	44.3
	36-50	125	43.0
	51-69	37	12.7
Years married	1-8	102	35.0
	9-14	90	30.9
	15-25	69	23.7
	26-39	30	10.3

Table 2

Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic
Data for Respondent Group

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Number of children	none	23	7.9
	1	31	10.7
	2	104	35.7
	3	51	17.5
	4	47	16.2
	5	15	5.2
	6-12	20	6.9
Religious affiliation	Catholic	276	81.1
	Protestant	10	3.4
	United	18	6.2
	Anglican	13	4.5
	Lutheran	5	1.7
	Other	3	1.0
	None	6	2.1

Table 3
Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic
Data for Respondent Group

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Education	<u>Years College</u>		
	1	15	5.2
	2	22	7.6
	3	15	5.2
	4	41	14.4
	over 4	66	22.7
	<u>Years Vocational Training</u>		
	1	23	7.9
	2	19	6.5
	3	15	5.2
	4	15	5.2
	over 4	2	.7
	<u>Total Years</u>		
	8-11	23	7.9
	12-15	142	48.8
	16 or more	126	43.3

Note. Average total years education = 14.46

Table 4
Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic
Data for Respondent Group

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Income	under \$16,000	29	10.1
	\$16-\$30,000	150	52.4
	over \$30,000	107	37.4
	no response	5	
Years elapsed since first ME weekend	1	57	19.6
	2	76	26.1
	3	75	25.8
	4	27	9.3
	5	20	6.9
	6	15	5.2
	7	20	6.8
ME involvement after weekend	None	71	24.4
	1 or 2	84	28.9
	3-5	39	13.4
	6-10	24	8.2
	over 10	73	25.1

Table 5
Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic
Data for Respondent Group

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Number of couples recommended for ME	none	27	9.3
	1 or 2	72	24.7
	3-10	146	50.2
	11-20	14	4.8
	over 20	30	10.3
Involvement as lead couple	yes	39	13.4
	no	252	86.6

point of the initial weekend, 13% had been involved in leadership and 92% had recommended ME to at least 1 or 2 other couples.

Judging from the demographic data collected, the known reasons for the non-return of some forms (i.e., through telephone calls and letters) and the characteristics of some forms that were partially or improperly completed, there can be some speculation about the direction of biases in the respondent group. It is probable that, as a group, respondents were more enthusiastic about their involvement in ME, more recently introduced to the ME program, and more satisfied with their marital relationships than were members of the entire group of ME, Edmonton participants.

Present and Past Comparisons

The results of the questionnaire provide comparisons between present and past attitudes in four areas. Various characteristics involved in effective communication, topics prioritized according to importance, satisfaction with communication in topical areas and importance of various beliefs, attitudes and values were estimated for the present and for the period before exposure to the ME program. Tables 6, 8 and 9 summarize the average present and past scores on each of the items, the corresponding differences, and indicate the level of statistical significance.

Communication characteristics. Average scores on all

15 items related to characteristics of communication were lower for the present than for the past. Differences between average scores ranged from .5 to 1.5 on the 7-point "almost always" to "almost never" scale. For the various items, 75% to 90% of the present scores were lower (better) than the average of the past scores for the same item. Greatest changes from past to present were observed on items related to mutual understanding, direct expression and forgiveness. The least change was observed on an item dealing with spending enough time alone together. All differences were large enough to be statistically significant at the .01 level (see Table 6).

Priorities. The comparison of estimated importance of various topics from the past to the present showed that, overall, Raising Children and Personal Feelings were unchanged as the most important and second most important topics. Family Decisions, Spiritual Life, and Time and Recreation increased in relative importance while Sexual Relationship, Work, and Finances decreased in relative importance (see Table 7).

Satisfaction with communication topics. Average scores on all 10 items estimating satisfaction with communication on particular topics were higher for the present than for the past. Differences ranged from approximately .8 to 1.2 on the 7-point "extremely dissatisfied" to "completely satisfied" scale. For the various items, 75% to 85% of the present scores were higher than the

Table 6
Present and Past Comparisons of
Communication Characteristics

	Average Present Score	Average Past Score	Difference
My spouse understands what I try to communicate.	2.65	4.05	1.43 *
I understand what my spouse tries to communicate.	2.62	3.96	1.34 *
I ask my spouse directly for what I want him or her to do.	2.44	3.95	1.50 *
My spouse asks me directly for what he or she wants me to do.	2.55	3.67	1.12 *
I express appreciation for what my spouse does for me.	2.66	3.82	1.16 *
My spouse expresses appreciation for what I do for him or her.	2.64	3.58	.94 *
I listen and express interest in things my spouse says.	2.53	3.53	1.00 *
My spouse listens and expresses interest in the things I say.	2.73	3.69	.96 *
I am comfortable about expressing disagreement with things my spouse says or does.	2.83	4.21	1.38 *

Continued

Note. almost always 1 . . . 7 almost never

* significant at .01 level

Table 6 Cont'd
Present and Past Comparisons of
Communication Characteristics

	Average Present Score	Average Past Score	Difference
I enjoy just sitting and talking with my spouse.	2.11	3.05	.94 *
I feel that my spouse and I spend enough time alone together.	3.47	4.03	.56 *
I am able to forgive my spouse after I have been offended in some way.	2.14	3.39	1.24 *
My spouse is able to forgive me when I offend him or her.	2.12	3.11	.99 *
I find ways to express affection for my spouse without using words.	2.31	3.23	.92 *
My spouse finds ways to express affection for me without using words.	2.41	3.26	.85 *

Note. almost always 1 7 almost never

* significant at .01 level

Table 7

Present and Past Comparisons of
Priorized Importance of Topics

Present		Past	
Raising Children	1	Raising Children	1
Personal Feelings	2	Personal Feelings	2
Spiritual Life	3	Sexual Relationship	3
Family Decisions	4	Work	4
Sexual Relationship	5	Family Decisions	5
Time and Recreation	6	Spiritual Life	6
Work	7	Finances	7
Finances	8	Time and Recreation	8
Long Range Goals	9	Long Range Goals	9
Relatives	10	Relatives	10

Note. most important = 1

least important = 10

average of the past scores for the same item. Scores indicated that Time and Recreation, Spiritual Life and Personal Feelings were the topics with which respondents were least satisfied at the present time. However, the greatest estimated change from past to present was in the area of Personal Feelings. All past to present differences were statistically significant at the .01 level (see Table 8).

Beliefs, attitudes and values. The responses regarding the importance of various beliefs, attitudes and values indicated that, for a number of people, some items were difficult to understand and answer. On two items, scores were extremely varied and differences between averages of past and present scores were minimal (i.e., "economic advantages of married life" and "fear of change and risk"). The items that showed the greatest change from past to present were those related to marital growth and commitment. All differences were statistically significant at the .01 level except the "fear of change and risk" item (see Table 9).

General comments. The variability of past-oriented items was consistently greater than for present items. Recognizing the unreliability of retrospective questions, such a result is not unusual. Also, although average scores on nearly all present items were significantly different from corresponding past items, there was a tendency for these scores to rise and fall together (Pearson's r

Table 8

Present and Past Comparisons of Satisfaction
with Communication about Particular Topics

	Average Present Score	Average Past Score	Difference.
Finances	5.61	4.75	.86 *
Raising Children	5.60	4.45	1.06 *
Relatives	5.71	4.79	.91 *
Time and Recreation	5.21	4.36	.85 *
Work	5.42	4.50	.91 *
Sexual Relationship	5.32	4.37	.95 *
Spiritual Life	5.28	4.21	1.08 *
Family Decisions	5.67	4.61	1.07 *
Personal Feelings	5.23	3.88	1.35 *
Long Range Goals	5.36	4.45	.91 *

Note. extremely dissatisfied 1 . . . 7 extremely satisfied

* significant at .01 level

Table 9

Present and Past Comparisons of the Importance
of Beliefs, Attitudes and Values

	Average Present Score	Average Past Score	Difference
The economic advantages of married life.	3.35	3.53	-.18 *
Your religious beliefs.	5.87	4.93	.95 *
Your religious beliefs regarding divorce and separation.	5.25	4.74	.52 *
Your need for companion- ship and emotional sup- port.	6.33	5.59	.74 *
Your marriage vows.	6.22	5.58	.64 *
Your understanding of the effects of separa- tion and divorce on children.	5.92	5.25	.68 *
Your determination to "make your marriage work."	6.43	5.53	.90 *
Your fear of change and risk.	4.15	4.26	-.10
Your fear of what others think.	3.09	3.75	-.66 *

Continued

Note. of no importance 1 . . . 7 extremely important

* significant at .01 level

Table 9 Cont'd

Present and Past Comparisons of the Importance
of Beliefs, Attitudes and Values

	Average Present Scores	Average Past Scores	Difference
Your desire to see your marriage reflect the image of God.	5.61	4.37	1.24 *
Your enthusiasm for the possibility of a richer, fuller marriage relationship.	6.38	5.15	1.24 *
Your belief that your own personal growth is promoted in your marriage relationship.	6.22	4.74	1.48 *
Your commitment to intimate sharing of all aspects of your personality with your spouse.	5.98	4.52	1.46 *

Note. of no importance 1 7 extremely important

* significant at .01 level

between .15 and .75). Again, such a result is not unusual if retrospective judgements tend to be distorted in the direction of present attitudes (Campbell & Stanley, 1963, p. 66).

Estimated Effects of Program

Questions judging the effects of ME were in the basic areas of communication characteristics, satisfaction with areas of communication, and beliefs, attitudes and values. The effects of ME on four areas not directly related to the marriage relationship were also estimated. Tables 10 to 13 summarize the averages of estimated effects for each item within the above categories.

Communication characteristics. Average scores for estimated effects of ME on various communication characteristics ranged from 5.16 to 5.77 on the 7-point "affected for the worse" to "affected for the better" scale.

Characteristics estimated to be most affected by ME were related to mutual understanding, listening, enjoyment of each other and forgiveness. The least affected characteristic was expressing disagreement. For most items, 95% of the scores fell between the values of 4 (not affected by ME) and 7 (directly affected for the better) inclusive. If participants perceive ME as a primary influence on the marriage relationship, some parallels between large past-present differences and corresponding estimates of the effects of ME would be expected. Such parallels existed with the characteristics of mutual understanding and

forgiveness (see Table 10).

Communication topics. Average scores for estimated effects of ME on communication about particular topics ranged from 4.66 to 5.50 on the 7-point scale. Approximately 70% of the scores fell between the values of 4 (not affected by ME) and 6 inclusive. The topics judged to be the least affected were Finances, Relatives and Long Range Goals. The most affected topics were Spiritual Life, Sexual Relationship, Family Decisions and Personal Feelings. Again, the highest average score for changes in communication of personal feelings is consistent with a larger relative difference between the past and present average scores for that topic (see Table 11).

Beliefs, attitudes and values. Respondents were not asked to rate the degree to which particular attitudes, values and beliefs had been affected by ME. Rather, they were to place a check-mark beside the items which had changed in importance as a result of ME. Enthusiasm for marital growth, the belief that personal growth is promoted in marriage, and the commitment to intimate personal sharing with one's spouse were the three most frequently checked items. Each of the three was checked by over 50% of respondents. Least frequent were the items concerning economic advantages of married life and the understanding of the effects of divorce and separation on children, which were checked by 7.2% and 9.6% of respondents respectively. Most frequently checked items were once again

Table 10

Estimated Effects of Marriage Encounter
on Communication Characteristics

	Average Score	Standard Deviation
Understanding each other	5.77	.95
Making direct requests	5.27	1.03
Expressing appreciation	5.46	1.06
Listening	5.56	1.05
Expressing disagreement	5.16	1.08
Enjoying each other	5.57	1.16
Spending time together	5.30	1.17
Forgiveness/reconciliation	5.57	1.08
Nonverbal affection	5.30	1.07

Note. directly affected for the worse 1 . . . 4 . . . 7
not affected by ME
directly affected for the better

Table 11

Estimated Effects of Marriage Encounter
on Communication Topics

	Average Score	Standard Deviation
Finances	4.66	.93
Raising Children	5.06	.96
Relatives	4.77	1.01
Time and Recreation	5.05	1.03
Work	4.89	1.00
Sexual Relationship	5.16	1.13
Spiritual Life	5.19	1.10
Family Decisions	5.16	1.03
Personal Feelings	5.50	1.06
Long Range Goals	4.88	1.01

Note. directly directly
 affected not affected
 for the affected for the
 worse by ME better
 1 4 7

those that showed the greatest difference between the averages of the pre-encounter and present scores (see Table 12).

Peripheral areas. Average scores for estimated effects of ME on the areas of self-awareness, spiritual experience, family life and service to other people ranged from 5.18 to 5.54 on the 7-point scale. The value 4 represented "no real change because of ME." Virtually all scores fell between the values of 4 and 7 inclusive (see Table 13).

General comments. There appears to be a correspondence between the areas in which the greatest changes have taken place and the areas in which respondents estimate the effects of ME to be the strongest. Such a correspondence suggests that respondents perceive their involvement in ME as a significant factor in relationship change. The characteristics, topics and attitudes that were reported to be most affected by ME appear to be those that are the least specific and perhaps are items that actually include or overlap with more specific items.

Relationship of Demographic Variables to Estimated Program Effects

In order to determine whether or not different types of people in the group of respondents estimated the effectiveness of the ME program differently, three types of statistical tests were carried out. In the first (chi-square test of independence), respondents were divided

Table 12

Beliefs, Attitudes and Values Influenced
by Involvement in Marriage Encounter

	Percentage of Respondents Affected	Percentage of Respondents Unaffected
The economic advantages of married life.	7.2	83.2
Your religious beliefs.	25.1	64.9
Your religious beliefs regarding divorce and separation.	12.7	87.3
Your need for companion- ship and emotional sup- port.	31.6	55.0
Your marriage vows.	20.3	69.1
Your understanding of the effects of separ- ation and divorce on children.	9.6	80.4
Your determination to "make your marriage work."	36.1	51.9
Your fear of change and risk.	19.2	71.1
Your fear of what others think.	19.6	70.4
Your desire to see your marriage reflect the image of God.	36.8	52.2

Continued

Table 12 Cont'd

Beliefs, Attitudes and Values Influenced
by Involvement in Marriage Encounter

	Percentage of Respondents Affected	Percentage of Respondents Unaffected
Your enthusiasm for the possibility of a richer, fuller marriage relationship.	54.0	32.3
Your belief that your own personal growth is promoted in your marriage relationship.	53.3	35.4
Your commitment to intimate sharing of all aspects of your personality with your spouse.	54.3	33.3

Table 13

Estimated Effects of Marriage Encounter
on Non-Marriage Related Areas

	Average Score	Standard Deviation
Self-awareness and self-acceptance	5.39	.92
Spiritual experience	5.18	1.06
Family life	5.54	1.03
Commitment to others	5.12	1.08

Note. strong no real strong
 changes change changes
 for the because for the
 worse of ME better
 1 . . . 4 : . . . 7

into groups according to their responses to items requesting demographic information (i.e., age, income, religion, etc.). Distributions of scores on estimates of program effects were compared for each of the subgroups. In the second set of tests (significance of Pearson correlations), demographic variables with numerical values were compared to scores on estimated program effects to see if they varied together. The third type (t tests) compared the average scores of males and females on the items estimating effects of the program. Following is a summary of the results of the analysis.

Chi-square analysis. After each demographic variable was divided into categories, a separate table was created for that variable and each of the variables estimating the effects of ME. The values of chi-square indicated the probability that differences in the distribution of program-effect scores between categories of each demographic variable were a result of chance alone. When the value of chi-square indicated significant differences in the distributions, they could be examined to determine the nature of the differences. The following "differences" in distributions were judged to be significant only if their probability of occurrence by chance alone was less than one in a hundred (see Table 14).

For the religious affiliation variable, Catholics indicated that ME had greater effects on self-acceptance and self-awareness than did other religious groups.

Table 14

Demographic Variables With Differing Distributions
of Scores on Particular Program Effect Variables

Demographic Variable	Program/Effect Variable	Value of Chi-square	Probability
Religion	Change in self-awareness and acceptance.	41.74	.0012 *
Income	Expressing appreciation.	28.89	.0041 *
	Change in family life.	25.48	.0013 *
Number of ME gatherings attended	Raising children.	35.47	.0034 *
	Time and recreation.	43.41	.0018 *
	Personal feelings.	48.77	.0003 *
	Change in self-awareness and acceptance.	37.99	.0002 *
	Change in spiritual experience.	47.00	.0001 *
	Change in family life.	44.96	.0001 *
	Change in helping others.	57.87	.0000 *

Continued

Note. * Chi-square significant at .01 level

Table 14 Cont'd

Demographic Variables With Differing Distributions
of Scores on Particular Program Effect Variables

Demographic Variable	Program/Effect Variable	Value of Chi-square	Probability
Number of couples recommended to ME	Expressing disagreement.	38.16	.0084 *
	Spiritual life.	42.42	.0024 *
	Change in self-awareness and acceptance.	32.26	.0013 *
	Change in spiritual experience.	50.17	.0000 *
	Change in family life.	39.62	.0009 *
	Change in helping others.	72.02	.0000 *
Lead couple	Forgiveness.	17.62	.0035 *
	Sexual relationship.	18.26	.0026 *
	Spiritual life.	16.67	.0052 *
	Personal feelings.	18.98	.0019 *
	Change in self-awareness and acceptance.	12.48	.0059 *
	Change in spiritual experience.	20.19	.0005 *
	Change in family life.	20.45	.0004 *
Continued			

Note. * Chi-square significant at .01 level

Table 14 Cont'd

Demographic Variables With Differing Distributions
of Scores on Particular Program Effect Variables

Demographic Variable	Program/Effect Variable	Value of Chi-square	Probability
Lead couple	Change in helping others.	26.78	.0000 *
Age	Spiritual life.	30.86	.0006 *

Note. * Chi-square significant at .01 level

This result is probably reflective of a relationship between religious affiliation and degree of involvement in ME.

The group reporting the highest levels of income judged ME to be more influential on their expression of appreciation and their family life than did the lower- and middle-income groups.

The three demographic variables that indicate the degree of involvement in and enthusiasm for the ME program are (a) number of gatherings attended, (b) number of couples recommended to ME and (c) involvement as a lead couple. Understandably there were significant differences between scores for subgroups categorized within these variables. Generally, higher estimates of the effects of ME were made on a number of the program-effect items by respondents who encouraged more people to attend ME, who were involved in more ME activities and who had been involved in ME leadership.

The only other demographic variable within which significant differences were observed was age. The oldest age group (51 to 69 years) indicated that ME had stronger effects on their spiritual life than did the younger age groups.

Pearson correlations. The Pearson correlation coefficient is an indicator of the strength of relationship between two variables with numerical values. Demographic variables of this type were compared with scores on

estimates of ME program effects. The only significant relationship was a positive one between the length of time since the first ME weekend and the estimated effects of ME on satisfaction with the topic of raising children ($r = .156$; $p = .01$).

Significance of difference of means (t test). The average scores of males and females were compared for each of the items estimating the effects of ME. The only significant difference was for estimated effects of ME on self-awareness and self-acceptance. Wives indicated that ME had stronger effects in that area than did husbands.

A comparison of the standard deviations (measures of score variability) of men and women showed that wives' scores were consistently more widely spread on the items estimating program effects than were husbands' scores.

Summary. In general, there were no clear indications in the above comparisons that particular types of people judge the overall effectiveness of the ME program differently. The subgroups that indicated stronger ME effects in particular areas were relatively few in number and there was no obvious way to interpret those differences. Demographic variables related to degree of involvement in and enthusiasm about ME programs can also be seen as estimates of program effectiveness which would be expected to correspond with the program-effect items in subsequent sections of the questionnaire. Consequently, the finding that subgroups most involved in and enthusiastic about ME

had many significantly higher scores on program-effect items is relatively unimportant.

Relationships Between Paired Husband and Wife Responses

This segment of the analysis was intended to describe the degree of similarity between spouses' responses to various questionnaire items. Data from questionnaires returned by one spouse only was removed and the remaining data was separated into paired husband and wife segments. The relationship between husband and wife responses to parallel items was estimated by calculating Pearson correlation coefficients. The probabilities of each coefficient occurring as a result of chance alone were also calculated. The following correlations are described as "significant" if the probability of the corresponding coefficients reaching their respective magnitudes by chance alone was less than .01. As an example of further analysis that could be done, a particular program effect item, Spending Time Together, was also analysed using a cross-tabulation of husband-wife responses.

Communication characteristics. Husband-wife correlation coefficients were calculated for the present-oriented items related to communication characteristics (see Table 15). Since 12 of the items were "reversals" of each other, correlations were calculated for the reverse side of the paired items (eg., "I understand my spouse" was compared to the spouse's response to "my spouse understands me."). Other items were compared with their

parallel items on the spouse's form. Husband and wife responses to items estimating ME program effects on communication characteristics were also compared. All correlation coefficients were significant and ranged between .12 and .49. A positive relationship existed between all items (see Table 16).

Topics of communication. On all present-oriented judgements about satisfaction with communication topics (with the exception of "Work"), husband and wife correlations were significant and ranged from .19 to .53 (see Table 17). Significant correlations were also found between husband and wife estimates of the effects of ME on communication in all areas except Finances, Relatives, and Time and Recreation. For these three topics, the correlations, although positive, were not at a significant level. Correlations ranged from .12 to .50 (see Table 18).

Beliefs, attitudes and values. Husband and wife correlations for estimates of the present importance of various beliefs, attitudes and values ranged from .13 to .43. Although all relationships were positive, only on 5 of the 13 items were correlations large enough to be significant at the .01 level. On the remaining items, each individual's score was relatively unresponsive of the score of the individual's spouse (see Table 19). There is no obvious explanation for high husband and wife correlations for particular items and low correlations for others. However, differing degrees of importance would be expected

Table 15

Relationship of Paired Husband and Wife Responses to
Estimated Present Communication Characteristics

Item	Pearson Correlation	Probability
My wife understands what I try to communicate. and I understand what my hus- band tries to communicate.	.37	.000 *
My husband understands what I try to communi- cate. and I understand what my wife tries to communicate.	.39	.000 *
I ask my wife directly for what I want her to do. and My husband asks me direct- ly for what he wants me to do.	.28	.001 *
I ask my husband direct- ly for what I want him to do. and My wife asks me direct- ly for what she wants me to do.	.23	.003 *
I express my appreciation for what my wife does for me. and My husband expresses ap- preciation for what I do for him.	.34	.000 *

Continued

Note. * Pearson r significant at .01 level

Table 15 Cont'd

Relationship of Paired Husband and Wife Responses to
Estimated Present Communication Characteristics

Item.	Pearson Correlation	Probability
I express my appreciation for what my husband does for me. and My wife expresses appreci- ation for what I do for her.	.42	.000 *
I listen and express inter- est in the things my wife says. and My husband listens and ex- presses interest in the things I say.	.42	.000 *
I listen and express inter- est in the things my hus- band says. and My wife listens and ex- presses interest in the things I say.	.37	.000 *
I am comfortable about expressing disagreement with the things my spouse says or does.	.22	.006 *
I enjoy just sitting and talking with my spouse.	.36	.000 *
I feel that my spouse and I spend enough time alone together.	.36	.000 *
Continued		

Note. * Pearson r significant at .01 level

Table 15 Cont'd

Relationship of Paired Husband and Wife Responses to
Estimated Present Communication Characteristics

Item	Pearson Correlation	Probability
I am able to forgive my wife after I have been offended in some way. and My husband is able to forgive me when I offend him.	.46	.000 *
I am able to forgive my husband after I have been offended in some way. and My wife is able to forgive me when I offend her.	.46	.000 *
I find ways to express affection for my wife without using words. and My husband finds ways to express affection for me without using words.	.39	.000 *
I find ways to express af- fection for my husband without using words. and My wife finds ways to ex- press affection for me without using words.	.36	.000 *

Note. * Pearson r significant at .01 level

Table 16

Relationship of Paired Husband and Wife Responses
to Estimated Program Effects--Communication
Characteristics

Item	Correlation of Husband and Wife Scores	Probability
Understanding each other	.38	.000 *
Making direct requests	.25	.003 *
Expressing appreciation	.38	.000 *
Listening	.28	.001 *
Expressing disagreement	.21	.009 *
Enjoying each other	.34	.000 *
Spending time together	.29	.000 *
Forgiveness/reconciliation	.32	.000 *
Nonverbal affection	.33	.000 *

Note. * Pearson r significant at .01 level

Table 17

Relationship of Paired Husband and Wife Responses
to Present Satisfaction With Communication Topics

Item	Pearson Correlation	Probability
Finances	.34	.000 *
Raising Children	.30	.000 *
Relatives	.42	.000 *
Time and Recreation	.31	.000 *
Work	.19	.015
Sexual Relationship	.53	.000 *
Spiritual Life	.44	.000 *
Family Decisions	.39	.000 *
Personal Feelings	.27	.001 *
Long Range Goals	.34	.006 *

Note. * Pearson r significant at .01 level

Table 18

Relationship of Paired Husband and Wife Responses to
Estimated Program Effects--Communication Topics

Item	Pearson Correlation	Probability
Finances	.12	.083
Raising Children	.32	.000 *
Relatives	.18	.023
Time and Recreation	.19	.017
Work	.27	.001 *
Sexual Relationship	.47	.000 *
Spiritual Life	.50	.000 *
Family Decisions	.42	.000 *
Personal Feelings	.34	.000 *
Long Range Goals	.29	.000 *

Note. * Pearson r significant at .01 level

Table 19

Relationship of Paired Husband and Wife Responses to
Present Importance of Beliefs, Attitudes and Values

Item	Pearson Correlation	Probability
The economic advantages of married life.	.32	.000 *
Your religious beliefs.	.28	.001 *
Your religious beliefs regarding divorce and separation.	.42	.000 *
Your need for companionship and emotional support.	.20	.011
Your marriage vows.	.17	.023
Your understanding of the effects of separation and divorce on children.	.13	.087
Your determination to "make your marriage work."	.11	.107
Your fear of change and risk.	.18	.018
Your fear of what others think.	.06	.241
Your desire to see your marriage reflect the image of God.	.43	.000 *
Your enthusiasm for the possibility of a richer, fuller marriage relationship.	.08	.196
Continued		

Note. * Pearson r significant at .01 level

Table 19 Cont'd .

Relationship of Paired Husband and Wife Responses to
Present Importance of Beliefs, Attitudes and Values

Item	Pearson Correlation	Probability
Your belief that your own personal growth is promoted in your marriage relationship.	.22	.006 *
Your commitment to intimate sharing of all aspects of your personality with your spouse.	.03	.380

Note. * Pearson r significant at .01 level

to be attached to various beliefs, attitudes and values by individuals in the same relationship, and these differences would be expected to be larger than on previous items which judged less personal, more relationship-oriented areas. A second factor could be the difficulty that many respondents experienced in understanding the directions for Question 19. Husband-wife differences could have been exaggerated for that reason.

Peripheral areas. The estimated effects of ME on self-awareness, spiritual experience, family life and service to other people were all significantly correlated for husbands and wives. Correlations were .33, .49, .53 and .43 respectively (see Table 20).

Spending time together--a detailed example. In the previous sections on paired husband and wife responses, the correlation coefficient described the degree of relationship between responses to parallel items of spouses. Very little information was gathered about the proportion of all couples who rated parallel items similarly or differently and to what degree their paired items differed. In this section, the item estimating the effect of ME on "Spending time together" was chosen for a more detailed analysis of how spouses differed from each other.

Paired husband and wife scores were cross-tabulated with husbands' scores in rows and wives' scores in columns. It was then possible to calculate exactly how many couples had the same score on the "Spending time together"

Table 20

Relationship of Paired Husband and Wife Responses to
Estimated Program Effects--Non-Marriage
Related Topics

Item	Pearson Correlation	Probability
Self-awareness and self-acceptance	.33	.000 *
Spiritual experience	.49	.000 *
Family life ,	.53	.000 *
Commitment to others	.43	.000 *

Note. * Pearson r significant at .01 level

item, how many had different scores, and how large, and in what direction the difference was. Every combination of paired scores was represented by a cell and the cell contained the number of couples who responded with that particular combination. Tables 21 and 22 summarize the results of the cross-tabulation in the form of frequencies and percentages.

A number of observations can be made regarding the relationship of spouse's responses. Approximately one third of the paired husbands and wives gave the same estimate of the effect of ME on the item in question. Over two thirds of the same group differed by one unit or less on the 7-point scale. Nine percent of couples differed by three units or more on their estimates of the effects of ME on spending time together. Consensus was just as high among couples who estimated ME to have little effect on this area as it was for those who gave a high estimate of the ME effect. The frequency of husbands who scored higher than their wives was similar to the frequency of wives who scored higher than their husbands at all levels of difference.

Using the above type of analysis, much more could be done with the questionnaire data. Other items in the questionnaire could be cross-tabulated and analysed in the same way to determine their distinctive patterns of husband and wife differences. New variables involving consensus on specific items could be created. Comparisons

Table 21

Frequencies of Paired Husband and Wife Scores
in Categories of Difference

	HUSBAND'S SCORE							% of total
	affected for the worse			not affected by ME			affected for the better	
Wife's score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
same as husband	-	-	-	11	8	14	9	*33.9%
greater by 1	-	-	-	10	6	10	-	21.0%
greater by 2	-	1	-	6	4	-	-	8.9%
greater by 3	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	2.4%

Continued

Note. * same cases

Table 21 Cont'd

Frequencies of Paired Husband and Wife Scores
in Categories of Difference

	WIFE'S SCORE							% of total
	affected for the worse			not affected by ME			affected for the better	
Husband's score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
same as wife	-	-	-	11	8	14	9	*33.9%
greater by 1	-	-	1	9	9	2	-	16.9%
greater by 2	-	-	3	7	3	-	-	10.5%
greater by 3	-	-	1	6	-	-	-	5.6%
greater by 4	1	-	-	-	0	-	-	.8%

Note. * same cases

Table 22

Percentages of Paired Husband and Wife Scores
in Categories of Difference

Degree of difference	PERCENTAGES		Total
	Husbands greater	Wives greater	
0 (same)	*33.9	*33.9	33.9%
1	16.9	21.0	37.9%
2	10.5	8.9	19.4%
3	5.6	2.4	8.0%
4	.8	-	.8%

Note. * same cases

could then be made between various categories of consensus (e.g., high consensus and low satisfaction, high consensus and high satisfaction, low consensus with wife's scores greater, low consensus with husband's scores greater, etc.) and demographic variables to see if group differences exist in how spouses perceive their relationship characteristics relative to each other. Pretest-posttest studies could examine changes in these patterns of husband and wife differences resulting from exposure to the ME program.

General comments. Since spouses experience their relationship differently, extremely strong relationships (correlation coefficients approaching 1) were not expected between paired husband and wife responses. However, some positive relationship was expected (positive correlation coefficients) since spouses do have some common perception and experience of their relationship. Since most correlations ranged from .1 to .5, the above results were in keeping with these expectations. Without any type of reference group, further interpretation of the correlation coefficients for particular items cannot be made. However, much more information could be gathered about paired husband and wife responses by following the example and suggestions in the immediately preceding section.

Open-Ended Questions

Most outstanding impressions of Marriage Encounter.

Approximately 85% of the respondent group answered the

first open-ended question. Comments were categorized under the headings of Philosophy, Content, Format, Presentation and Results (see Table 23). By far the most responses (and categories) fell under the heading of Results. Following are comments that are representative of the nine categories that occurred most frequently. Item 27 asked: "What stands out most in your mind when you think of your involvement in Marriage Encounter?".

"The beautiful weekend away from everyday distractions; time to be alone with my spouse whom I came to know better and love and appreciate more."

"The close and intimate friendship I have developed with other couples."

"It helped me to think positively about my husband-- instead of always thinking about his faults."

"It has given us a new avenue to go in serious times. A new tool to use in communication."

"Us being able to communicate on issues which both of us knew were very important, but had not discussed because of fear of trying 'not to hurt' the other person's feelings."

"How much better our life as partners has been since ME."

"More important than ever before is the religious aspect of our marriage. I am slowly sorting my own beliefs out. ME has stimulated much thought on the place of religion in my life."

Table 23

Frequency of Responses to Item 27--The Most Outstanding Impressions of Marriage Encounter Involvement

	Frequency
<u>Philosophy</u>	
Significant emphasis on the spiritual aspect of marriage.	5
Affirmation of marriage as an important social institution.	5
<u>Content</u>	
The emphasis on directness and openness, and the value of marital communication.	16
The emphasis on the effort involved in maintaining a good marital relationship.	13
The emphasis on marital strengths as opposed to individual weaknesses.	4
The provision of an uninterrupted opportunity to focus on the marriage relationship.	42
The good quality of the general program format.	9
The provision of an opportunity for renewed commitment to marriage.	8
The difficulty and importance of demands placed upon the participants.	3
The unsatisfactory nature of specific program format areas.	3 *

Continued

Note. * most outstanding impressions which were negative

Table 23 Cont'd

Frequency of Responses to Item 27--The Most Outstanding Impressions of Marriage Encounter Involvement

	Frequency
<u>Format</u>	
Insufficient amount of time allowed for discussion between spouses.	2 *
<u>Presentation</u>	
The attractiveness of (and encouragement drawn from) the personal sharing approach of the leaders.	13
The attractiveness of the strong personal qualities of the leaders chosen.	8
The strong appeal of the emotional climate established.	5
The insufficiency of leadership skills demonstrated by some leaders.	2 *
The attractiveness of the physical atmosphere.	2
<u>Results</u>	
Developed increased intimacy (i.e., trust, closeness, mutual understanding, mutual self-disclosure and sharing, forgiveness) in the marriage relationship.	52
Developed more effective communication and problem-solving skills.	41
Resulted in meaningful social interaction (i.e., support, encouragement, friendship) because of common beliefs, values, needs, goals, etc. of ME participants.	38
	Continued

Note. * most outstanding impressions which were negative

Table 23 Cont'd

Frequency of Responses to Item 27--The Most Outstanding Impressions of Marriage Encounter Involvement

	Frequency
<u>Results</u>	
Developed an increased awareness of spouse's inner self.	36
Resulted in positive emotional experience with mate and all involved.	31
Resulted in non-specific positive effect on the quality of the marriage relationship.	29
Facilitated breaking through of barriers to effective communication within the marriage.	22
Developed increased spiritual awareness, growth and/or commitment in marriage.	18
Resulted in personal development (i.e., increased sense of self-worth, self-awareness, self-acceptance).	17
Resulted in better quality of family life.	17
Developed new optimism about the potential of marriage.	14
Received reaffirmation of the meaningfulness of own marital relationship.	13
Made already existing commitment to the marriage relationship stronger.	11
Resulted in frustration and/or disappointment.	11 *
Resulted in limited (or no) change in the marital relationship that can be directly attributed to ME involvement.	10

Continued

Note. * most outstanding impressions which were negative

Table 23 Cont'd

Frequency of Responses to Item 27--The Most Outstanding Impressions of Marriage Encounter Involvement

	Frequency
<u>Results</u>	
Developed increased motivation to communicate effectively.	10
Developed understanding of benefits and/or enjoyment of service to others.	8
Developed awareness of marriage as a developmental progress.	7
Developed increased appreciation and enjoyment of spouse.	7
Resulted in welcome but short-lived benefits to the marriage.	7
Developed an awareness that personal marital struggles were not atypical.	3

The preceding comments are indicative of the overwhelmingly positive nature of the "outstanding impressions" responses. Only 4 of the 37 categories could be called "negative" and a total of 18 responses were placed in these categories.

Table 23 summarizes the classification and tabulation of responses to Item 27. Each of the categories and the corresponding frequency of response is listed in descending order under the five headings mentioned previously.

Comments and suggestions. Approximately 65% of the respondents answered Item 28 with comments or suggestions. Fifteen of the organizational categories established were represented by 3 to 10 respondents. Thirty others included only 1 or 2 responses. Six other categories had 10 or more responses (see Table 24). No attempt was made to divide responses into positive and negative since suggestions cannot be said to be either negative or positive. Since the respondent group was generally favourable toward ME, suggestions must be seen primarily as ideas intended to make a good program better.

The most frequently occurring type of comment was categorized as "Strong general affirmation of ME experience." Sixty-seven respondents made the following type of comments:

"It's been quite some time and I remember it as a beautiful-work-filled experience. Positive and nowhere to go, but forward."

Table 24

Categories and Frequencies of Responses to
Item 28--Comments and Suggestions

	Frequency
Strong general affirmation of ME experience.	67
ME programs should be expanded or altered to serve needs broader than marriage enrichment.	21
Any (interested) couple could benefit from ME.	21
More than one encounter is needed/desired.	16
An advanced program is needed to parallel the initial weekend experience.	12
The spiritual emphasis should be increased during the weekend.	10
The spiritual emphasis should be more ecumenical in character.	8
The ME weekend was enjoyable, but no great change resulted or can be directly attributed to ME.	8
The style and approach of some leaders is inappropriate.	8
Promotional methods should be strengthened.	8
The rendezvous follow-up program is effective.	7
The existing follow-up program should be strengthened.	7
The quality of surroundings is important for the success of the weekend.	5
The weekend program content is too comprehensive for the time allowed.	5

Continued

Table 24 Cont'd

Categories and Frequencies of Responses to
Item 28--Comments and Suggestions

	Frequency
Participant has strong views regarding the National-Worldwide expressions.	5
More emphasis on the existing follow-up program is needed during the initial ME weekend.	4
The spiritual emphasis should be decreased on the weekend.	3
ME is not appropriate for certain types of relationships.	3
All aspects of the program should be more standardized.	3
General affirmation of the value of the ME movement to society.	3
Couples in leadership should have age and family profiles similar to participants.	2
Miscellaneous comments and recommendations (made by only 1 or 2 respondents):	
- New approaches and ideals are needed for growth in ME to continue.	
- Edmonton ME should be associated with National ME.	
- There should be more instruction on issues such as parenting and retirement.	
- Since the concept of marriage has been changing, the program should be "re-vamped."	
- There should be no diversion from Father Calvo's original format.	

Continued

Table 24 Cont'd

Categories and Frequencies of Responses to
Item 28--Comments and Suggestions

	Frequency
- The newsletter is inappropriate ("crusading," "mushy").	
- More structure is needed in weekend presentations.	
- The weekend programs should be presented in shorter weekly sessions as an alternative.	
- Non-participants should not be allowed to intrude in the last session.	
- A babysitting service could be provided.	
- A marriage counsellor should be present at weekends for consultation.	
- A program manual should be devised to show responsibilities of participants and leaders.	
- Couples should be allowed to leave Saturday night and earlier Sunday. There is no need to "pen" people in.	
- ME is getting "too big."	
- ME needs to remain "friendly and open" as the organization grows.	
- Follow-up is a problem in isolated communities.	
- The name "Marriage Encounter" should be changed.	
- Lists of names, addresses and 'phone numbers could be circulated to participants at the end of the weekend.	

Continued

Table 24 Cont'd

Categories and Frequencies of Responses to
Item 28--Comments and Suggestions

	Frequency
- The suggestion that one weekend can "change your life" makes the participants end up "feeling bad."	
- Leadership teams need the opportunity to plan ahead together.	
- There is too much variation in age among participants and leaders.	
- Appropriate books should be provided at the weekend.	
- Good leadership is extremely important.	
- More professional people should be available to ME participants.	
- "May it stay uncomplicated."	
- "I would hope that it always keeps that personal touch."	
- Follow-up meetings with a mass and a speaker could be held every second month.	
- Leadership training sessions should be held early in the fall.	
- Authoritarian leadership approach is repulsive; one-way sharing approach is inappropriate; specific group exercises and social activities would seem to contradict the "couples encounter" theme of the weekend.	
- People can get over-involved in ME and neglect their other responsibilities.	

"Keep it up!"

"A great program."

Twenty-one respondents suggested that ME programs need to be expanded or altered to serve needs broader than marriage enrichment. Some suggestions involved divorced couples, engaged couples, couples in common-law relationships, couples with one or both spouses handicapped, older couples facing retirement and lower-income couples.

Another group commented that any interested couple could benefit from ME. The following quotations represent their comments:

"Needs to be available to any couple who wishes to participate."

"It would be an asset to all marrieds."

Two further categories included comments regarding the need for further, advanced weekend programs or the need to repeat the initial weekend experience. In all, 28 people made comments like the following:

"I would like to see another ME scheduled for, let's say, six months later to see how the first ME was affecting the marriage . . . There exists a tendency to forget aspects of that first experience."

"Would like to take it second time around."

"It should be compulsory every 2 years."

Ten respondents made comments and suggestions indicating their desire to see an increased emphasis on religious or spiritual issues in the ME weekend program. The

following comment is representative of this group of respondents:

"I was disappointed with ME because although it is supposed to be a Christian organization, it does not emphasize the founder of Christianity, our Lord Jesus, in our marriage relationship."

All other categories were represented by less than 10 respondents. Table 24 summarizes the classification and tabulation of the comments and suggestions made in response to Item 28. Again, categories and corresponding response frequencies are listed in descending order.

Summary

The first section of this chapter was a brief general description of the philosophy, organization and present development of the Edmonton ME program. The second section dealt with the development of questionnaires designed to evaluate effects of the Edmonton program, and the subsequent questionnaire administration. The third section was a description of the methods used to analyse the data that was collected and a discussion of these results. Results will be discussed further in the following chapter in which some conclusions regarding the local program are drawn and recommendations are made.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

The emphasis of this project has been in two basic areas. The first involved a description of National ME which included discussion of the philosophy, methodology and the dynamics involved in the weekend program. The second area was a more particular treatment of ME, Edmonton; in which the local program was outlined briefly before the development and administration of a questionnaire was described and the analysis of questionnaire results was presented. As a background to these two areas, literature of three types was reviewed. Psychological concepts related to the ME process were presented, several other marriage enrichment programs were described, and literature dealing directly with ME was reviewed.

In this chapter, concluding comments are made regarding National ME and the local Edmonton ME organization. In the section on the local group, data from the questionnaire is summarized and interpreted further. The final section is a set of recommendations and suggestions intended to assist the Edmonton ME leaders in future program development.

National Marriage Encounter

At the national level, the ME organization appears to

be under very capable leadership. The National board maintains its commitment to provide coordination and support services to local groups without attempting to exercise control. Leaders are open and responsive to criticism of the ME movement and have publicized and responded to scholarly attempts to evaluate the ME program. National leaders appear to be well aware of limitations of ME and cooperate with the numerous initiatives of their affiliates to provide services to groups with special needs.

When compared with other major marriage enrichment programs, both the content of presentations and the group processes of the ME weekend are relatively unsophisticated. The ME weekend has been described as "supervised self-effort" (Mace, 1979) and leaders do not need to be highly skilled in group leadership. Although the "training" aspect is minimal, the motivation aspect is well developed and is one of the most obvious strengths in the ME program.

The ME program clearly has a special entry into society through its primary connection with the Catholic church. The confidence inspired and the authority implied by its religious connections enable ME to involve couples that would never be attracted to secular services to families. Because the program is presented in a religious context and defines its purpose as "making good marriages better," many couples are able to acknowledge their need for marital growth and become involved.

There are important differences between National ME and ME Worldwide in purpose, methods and emphasis (Sexton, 1980). Negative responses to the National program result either from distortions of the basic set of guidelines by weekend leaders, or from the participation of people for whom the program is not appropriate. If leaders are well chosen and the ideals are maintained, the charges of authoritarianism, coercion, secrecy and unrealistic promises, that have been levelled at the ME movement in general, are not applicable to National ME programs.

Since the marriage enrichment field is relatively new, judgements about program effectiveness have been largely subjective. There is need for research that would test these judgements by more objective forms of measurement. The ME program, like other programs, would benefit from well designed studies gathering information from ME participants before, during and after their involvement in ME and employing suitable control groups. A better understanding of the ME process would result and areas in which various aspects of the program could be strengthened would become evident.

Marriage Encounter, Edmonton

General Comments

The Edmonton ME program is also in the hands of capable leaders. They appear to be well aware of the

limitations of the local program and are committed to improvement. New ideas and programs are being implemented to meet these needs. Leaders are open to evaluation and have supported the present project by providing helpful information and encouraging ME participants to take part in the study through completion of the questionnaire.

Areas of difficulty in the Edmonton program are not unique. Questionnaire responses indicated that negative experiences on the weekend encounter were a result of the same two problems previously mentioned--distortion of the ME ideal by lead couples (authoritarian leadership) and participation of couples with needs inappropriate for the weekend program. Leaders and many participants agree the existing follow-up program must be expanded and/or changed in order to provide more effective support for larger percentages of ME participants. The majority of couples involved in ME, Edmonton programs have been middle- to upper-middle-class Caucasians who are affiliated with a Christian church denomination. As yet, no effective way of providing services to broader ranges of people has been found.

Questionnaire Results

Questionnaire respondents, for the most part, were between the ages of 30 and 45 and had been married 5 to 15 years. As a group, they were highly educated; most were in middle- and upper-income categories and were heavily involved in ME programs. Eighty-one percent were Catholic.

Present to past comparisons on virtually all questionnaire items (i.e., communication characteristics; communication topics; beliefs, attitudes and values) showed significant changes in a positive direction. Raising Children and Personal Feelings were rated as most important topics. Topics of Family Decisions, Spiritual Life, and Time and Recreation were judged to have increased in relative importance since the period before ME.

Estimates of the effects of ME on communication characteristics and communication topics were in a positive direction for all items. Estimated effects on self-awareness, spiritual experience, family life and service to other people were positive as well. Areas judged as most affected by ME were mutual understanding, listening, mutual enjoyment, forgiveness, spiritual life, sexual relationship, family decisions and personal feelings. Values most often judged as affected by ME were those related to commitment and growth.

Although there were some single items that subgroups within the respondent group judged differently, there were no clear group differences in the way respondents judged the overall effectiveness of the ME program.

Paired husband and wife responses to parallel items tended to vary together for nearly all items in the major areas of the questionnaire. Although the relationships were not strong ($.1 < r < .5$), nearly all items were positively related.

The most frequently occurring "outstanding impressions" of ME involvement were related to increased intimacy and the opportunity for improved communication. The most frequent comment was a general affirmation of the ME program. Most frequent suggestions were that ME should be expanded to meet broader needs, and that there is need for advanced programs.

In summary, results suggested that, as a group, respondents saw positive changes occurring in their relationship after the ME experience and that ME had an effect on that improvement. The most change was reported in areas related to increased intimacy, spiritual awareness and effective communication.

Limitations of Results and Importance of Further Research

In the previous chapter, it was pointed out that questionnaire results can be intentionally or unintentionally distorted in systematic ways. Retrospective questions are especially susceptible to these types of difficulties. The possible unrepresentative nature of the respondent group was also mentioned in the previous chapter. The implication is that characteristics and responses of the respondent group cannot be generalized to the entire group of ME participants. There is evidence that the respondent group is distinct in at least some ways and the degree of distinctiveness cannot be determined.

The above difficulties could be substantially lessened by administering the pretest and posttest forms

to a smaller group of ME participants before and after their exposure to ME. Effort would have to be made to administer the pretest to as high a percentage of participants as possible--perhaps on the first evening of the weekend. Another alternative would be to have forms completed before the weekend but to introduce the administration with a letter and subsequently a telephone call. If either procedure was followed, a group of respondents could be developed that would closely represent the profile of all ME participants. No retrospective questions would be included in the forms. Such a group would provide a comparative standard for judging the seriousness of reliability and representativeness problems that exist for the follow-up questionnaire data. More confident conclusions about the overall effectiveness and particular effects of the ME program could then be made.

Implications of Questionnaire Results

The responses to the questionnaire clearly represent ME as having a strong general impact on important characteristics and topics of communication for most couples in the respondent group. Indications of changes in values related to marital commitment and growth are also clear. In light of the obvious time and effort that many respondents put into their questionnaire, and in light of their commitment to ME shown in other ways, it is extremely unlikely that their estimates of the effectiveness of the ME program on their relationships was deliberately

distorted in a positive direction. It is probable that most respondents do genuinely judge their relationships to have been effected for the better by ME. There is a sense in which a couple's subjective judgement of which factors contribute to their marital satisfaction cannot be disputed. For at least one large group of ME participants, the group of respondents, there is strong evidence that the ME program effectively serves its purpose.

No patterns were observed within the data that suggested that ME is especially effective in producing certain results for certain types of people. Nor did the data suggest that there are areas in which the ME program is particularly weak. There was evidence that ME has the most impact in developing more effective communication, enthusiasm for increased marital intimacy and heightened spiritual awareness. Again, this evidence applies to the respondent group only.

The responses to the open-ended "comments or suggestions" questions are extremely significant. Responses are a collection of careful suggestions from a group of well informed people who are enthused about the ME program and interested in its growth. As a group, respondents are probably acquainted with the majority of ME, Edmonton participants and probably represent involvement in nearly every weekend program and activity that ME, Edmonton has sponsored. Their suggestions have been taken into account in the recommendations included in the next section.

Recommendations

Follow-up program and couple support services. In comparison with other major marriage enrichment programs, ME already has the most extensive follow-up program. Responses to the "most outstanding impressions" question indicated the strong impact that couple support through follow-up meetings has had for many couples in Edmonton. Others have indicated that the follow-up groups did not provide the degree of helpful content they were looking for and they stopped attending. A number of respondents explicitly stated their desire for another experience like the initial encounter. The following suggestions should be considered and explored:

a) Continue to develop the "Sons and Daughters" and "Family Encounter" weekend programs. Perhaps "Second Time Around" should be reinstated.

b) Increase the emphasis on follow-up programs and couple support services during the weekend program. (Sheets with 'phone numbers and addresses of all couples could be handed out and casual contact suggested, availability of follow-up groups could be stressed.)

c) Explore other resources that could be of additional help to couples involved in ME. (Minnesota Couples Communication Program [now offered through Edmonton Family Service Bureau]; literature, films, tapes, lectures on family life). Perhaps a "Resource Couple" could be appointed who would research and recommend resources.

Special ME activities could be organized with speakers or films at which literature and tapes could be displayed and sold.

Leadership training. In a volunteer organization, the keys to effective leadership are selection and training. Most comments regarding leadership were extremely positive but several comments suggested that the present move toward a more extensive training program is appropriate. Generally, the more information leaders have about what is appropriate and what is expected, the more comfortable and effective they will be. Following are some suggestions:

a) Use training sessions to provide opportunities for practicing some of the skills involved in the weekend. (Some programs bring leaders together and each couple is required to present a particular exercise or talk.)

b) Involve professionals in the leadership sessions who are knowledgeable about group processes and techniques and familiar with the ME process.

c) Continue to use experienced couples as trainers in group sessions of potential leaders.

d) Consider making the training sessions a prerequisite for leading a weekend.

e) Continue to use experienced couples to co-lead weekends with newly trained couples.

Referral service. It is clear from questionnaire and telephone responses that both before and after

exposure to ME a number of couples and individuals experience serious marital and personal problems. The ME program could provide a valuable service to these people by referring them to professional counsellors. Some type of arrangement could be made with a counsellor or agency to accept referrals from ME. Since some couples with unstable relationships inevitably do attend ME weekends, the association with a professional counsellor whose work ME endorses, could be mentioned early in the weekend program. Such couples would not be left unattended. Other couples who need professional help at some time after their weekend encounter could also make use of the service.

Special programs. A number of respondents suggested that ME needed to expand beyond services to married couples. People who have been divorced, or who have experienced the death of a spouse, engaged couples, older couples, lower-income couples and people with physical disabilities are some of the groups that were mentioned. Seven or eight individuals who were experiencing the loss of separation or death responded to requests for information by telephone or letter. Most of these people were positive about the ME program but recognized that, in their present circumstances, ME had nothing to offer them. Edmonton ME could consider developing some of the programs for these special needs--programs other local ME groups have already implemented.

Publicity. At the present time, the Edmonton ME

program is not very well known, especially outside the Catholic community in Edmonton. The ecumenical thrust implies an openness to people of other religious persuasions. Some creative ways of publicizing ME outside its present circle should be explored. Publicity should include two things that participants are not always aware of--that ME is designed to "make good marriages better" and that the weekend includes a religious component.

Record keeping. In the past, Edmonton ME has not kept thorough records of programs offered, the number of couples involved and the degree of their involvement. As the program expands, both in size and in new program directions, the recent emphasis on improved record-keeping methods will become increasingly important. Improved programming will depend, in part, on accurate and accessible information about what has occurred in previous years. Efforts to develop a system for gathering program data should be continued.

Further research. This project has gathered evidence regarding the strengths and limitations of the Edmonton ME program. However, since only one third of the ME participants contributed to the data gathered, the rather positive results must not be seen as a complete picture of the effectiveness of the Edmonton program. Neither should a great deal of confidence be placed in the accuracy of retrospective questions. Further research, including the administration of questionnaires before and after

involvement in ME programs, is necessary before confident conclusions can be drawn about the overall effectiveness and particular effects of the Edmonton ME program. The local program could only stand to benefit from a more complete assessment of the results of its programming. Participation in further research and evaluation is strongly recommended.

Conclusion

The popular response to ME in North America has shown that couples are interested in improving the quality of their marital relationships. The evidence gathered to this point suggests that the ME program is perceived as an effective way of moving toward that goal. As ME programs continue to grow and expand into more diversified areas of human service, it is essential that programs be evaluated on a local and national level if quality of service is to be maintained and improved. Hopefully this and further projects will contribute to the growth and development of an already successful approach to improving marital and family life.

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APPENDIX A

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRES

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE

(HUSBAND'S FORM)

DIRECTIONS

1. Your questionnaire is exactly the same as your spouse's. Answer your questions without discussing your responses with your spouse. If you do discuss your responses together later, do not change your original answers.
2. Although many of the following questions will require some thought, try not to take a great deal of time on any one question. Rather, answer each as quickly and carefully as possible.
3. Complete all six pages of the questionnaire, beginning with this page and working through to page 6.
4. When you and your spouse have completed your questionnaires, please put both in the self addressed, postpaid envelope and mail them promptly.

Items 1 to 10 request information about descriptive personal characteristics as well as your involvement in ME programs.

1. Age _____
2. Number of years married _____
3. Number of children _____ Ages _____
4. Religious affiliation (Check 1) Catholic _____ Other (specify) _____ None _____
5. Level of education less than high school _____ high school graduate _____
 years vocational training 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ more _____
 years college/university training 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ more _____
6. Approximate annual family income (Check 1) under 16,000 _____ \$16-30,000 _____
 over \$30,000 _____
7. In what year did you attend your first ME weekend? _____
8. How many ME gatherings have you been none _____ 1 or 2 _____ 3-5 _____ 6-10 _____ over 10 _____
 involved in after the first weekend?
9. How many other couples have you none _____ 1 or 2 _____ 3-10 _____ 11-20 _____ over 20 _____
 encouraged to attend an ME weekend?
10. Have you and your spouse ever been a lead couple? yes _____ no _____

ITEMS 11 TO 18 ARE PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH YOUR COMMUNICATION, how you used to communicate, and whether or not changes have resulted from your involvement in Marriage Encounter. Respond to the items from your own point of view, without considering what might be ideal or what someone else might think of your responses.

11. At the present time, to what extent do the following statements describe your relationship with your spouse? (Circle the appropriate number.)

	almost always							almost never
a My spouse understands what I try to communicate.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
b I understand what my spouse tries to communicate.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
c I ask my spouse directly for what I want him or her to do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
d My spouse asks me directly for what he or she wants me to do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
e I express my appreciation for what my spouse does for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
f My spouse expresses appreciation for what I do for him or her.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
g I listen and express interest in things my spouse says.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
h My spouse listens and expresses interest in the things I say.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
i I am comfortable about expressing disagreement with things my spouse says or does.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
j I enjoy just sitting and talking with my spouse.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
k I feel that my spouse and I spend enough time alone together.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
l I am able to forgive my spouse after I have been offended in some way.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
m My spouse is able to forgive me when I offend him or her.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
n I find ways to express affection for my spouse without using words.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
o My spouse finds ways to express affection for me without using words.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

12. NOW STOP AND THINK BACK to the six month period just before your first ME weekend. Think about what your relationship with your spouse was like then.

How would the above statements have described your relationship with your spouse at that time, just before your first ME weekend? (Put an "X" through the appropriate numbers above.)

13. Many things cause changes in our relationships. To what extent have the following qualities in your relationship with your spouse been affected by your involvement in ME?
(Circle the appropriate number.)

	directly affected for the worse			not affected by ME		directly affected for the better	
Understanding each other	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Making direct requests	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Expressing appreciation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Listening	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Expressing disagreement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Enjoying each other	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Spending time together	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Forgiveness/reconciliation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Expressing affection without words	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

14. AT THE PRESENT TIME, which of the topics listed seem the most important for you and which are the least important?

(Put a 1 beside the most important, a 2 beside the second most important, 3 beside the third most important.....up to a 10 beside the least important.)

Finances
Raising children
Relatives
Time and recreation
Work
Sexual relationship
Spiritual life
Family decisions
Personal feelings
Long range goals

15. NOW STOP AND THINK BACK to the six month period just before your first ME weekend. Think about what your relationship with your spouse was like then.

Which of the topics listed seemed the most important for you then and which seemed the least important at that time, just before your first ME weekend?

(Put a 1 beside the most important, 2 beside the second most important, etc.)

Finances
Raising children
Relatives
Time and recreation
Work
Sexual relationship
Spiritual life
Family decisions
Personal feelings
Long range goals

16. AT THE PRESENT TIME, how satisfied are you with the quality of your communication with your spouse about the following topics? (Circle the appropriate numbers.)

	extremely dissatisfied						completely satisfied	
Finances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Raising children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Relatives	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Time and recreation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Sexual relationship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Spiritual life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Family decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Personal feelings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Long range goals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

17. NOW STOP AND THINK BACK to the six month period just before your first ME weekend. Think about what your relationship with your spouse was like then.

How satisfied were you with the quality of your communication about the above topics with your spouse at that time, just before your first ME weekend? (Put an "X" through the appropriate numbers above.)

18. Many things change how we communicate. To what extent do you think your communication with your spouse in the following areas has been affected by your involvement in ME? (Circle the appropriate number.)

	directly affected for the worse			not really affected			directly affected for the better	
Finances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Raising children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Relatives	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Time and recreation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Sexual relationship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Spiritual life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Family decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Personal feelings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Long range goals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Many ideas seem to be important when we consider the quality and permanence of our marriage relationships. Items 19, 20 and 21 are concerned with how important various values, attitudes and beliefs seem for you when you consider the future of your marriage relationship.

19. When you think about the things that could affect the future of your own marriage relationship, how important do the following factors seem to be AT THE PRESENT TIME? (Circle the appropriate numbers.)

	of no importance						extremely important	does not apply
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
a The economic advantages of married life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
b Your religious beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
c Your religious beliefs regarding divorce and separation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
d Your need for companionship and emotional support.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
e Your marriage vows.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
f Your understanding of the effects of separation and divorce on children.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
g Your determination to "make your marriage work".	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
h Your fear of change and risk.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
i Your fear of what others think.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
j Your desire to see your marriage reflect the image of God.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
k Your enthusiasm for the possibility of a richer, fuller marriage relationship.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
l Your belief that your own personal growth is promoted in your marriage relationship.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
m Your commitment to intimate sharing of all aspects of your personality with your spouse.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

20. NOW STOP AND THINK BACK to the six month period just before your first ME weekend. Think about what your relationship with your spouse was like then.

When you thought about the things that could affect the future of your own marriage relationship, how important did the above factors seem at that time, just before your first ME weekend? (Put an "X" through the appropriate numbers above.)

21. If you compare the "circles" and the "X's" you have marked on this page above, you will see to what extent the importance of each attitude, value or belief has changed for you since the time before your first ME weekend. A number of things could have caused those changes.

Which of the above items (items "a" to "m") have changed in importance for you because of your involvement in Marriage Encounter? (Put a check [☐ a, ☒ b, ☐ c, etc.] beside any of the items, "a" to "m" which your involvement in ME has helped to change.)

Most of this questionnaire has dealt with your relationship with your spouse. However, Items 23 to 26 are concerned with how you think about yourself, your spiritual experience, your family life and your service to other people. Many things could have brought about changes in these areas. The next four items ask how much these areas have been changed by your involvement in ME programs. (Circle the appropriate numbers.)

- | | strong changes
for the worse
because of ME | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | strong changes
for the better
because of ME |
|--|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 23. Have there been changes in your self awareness and self acceptance <u>resulting from your exposure to ME?</u> | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| 24. Have there been changes in your satisfaction with your spiritual experience <u>because of ME?</u> | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| 25. Have there been changes in your family life <u>because of your ME involvement?</u> | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| 26. Have there been changes in your commitment to help others outside your home <u>as a result of your ME involvement?</u> | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |

27. What stands out most in your mind when you think about your involvement in Marriage Encounter?

28. Do you have any comments or suggestions about any aspect of the ME program?

Thank you for your cooperation.

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE

(WIFE'S FORM)

DIRECTIONS

1. Your questionnaire is exactly the same as your spouse's. Answer your questions without discussing your responses with your spouse. If you do discuss your responses together later, do not change your original answers.
2. Although many of the following questions will require some thought, try not to take a great deal of time on any one question. Rather, answer each as quickly and carefully as possible.
3. Complete all six pages of the questionnaire, beginning with this page and working through to page 6.
4. When you and your spouse have completed your questionnaires, please put both in the self addressed, postpaid envelope and mail them promptly.

Items 1 to 10 request information about descriptive personal characteristics as well as your involvement in ME programs.

1. Age ____
2. Number of years married ____
3. Number of children ____ Ages ____
4. Religious affiliation (Check 1) Catholic ____ Other (specify) ____ None ____
5. Level of education less than high school ____ high school graduate ____
 years vocational training 1 ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ more ____
 years college/university training 1 ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ more ____
6. Approximate annual family income (Check 1) under \$16,000 ____ \$16-30,000 ____
 over \$30,000 ____
7. In what year did you attend your first ME weekend? ____
8. How many ME gatherings have you been none ____ 1 or 2 ____ 3-5 ____ 6-10 ____ over 10 ____
 involved in after the first weekend?
9. How many other couples have you none ____ 1 or 2 ____ 3-10 ____ 11-20 ____ over 20 ____
 encouraged to attend an ME weekend?
10. Have you and your spouse ever been a lead couple? yes ____ no ____

ITEMS 11 TO 18 ARE PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH YOUR COMMUNICATION, how you used to communicate, and whether or not changes have resulted from your involvement in Marriage Encounter. Respond to the items from your own point of view, without considering what might be ideal or what someone else might think of your responses.

11. At the present time, to what extent do the following statements describe your relationship with your spouse? (Circle the appropriate number.)

	almost always	1	2	3	4	5	6	almost never
a My spouse understands what I try to communicate.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b I understand what my spouse tries to communicate.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c I ask my spouse directly for what I want him or her to do.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d My spouse asks me directly for what he or she wants me to do.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e I express my appreciation for what my spouse does for me.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
f My spouse expresses appreciation for what I do for him or her.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
g I listen and express interest in things my spouse says.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
h My spouse listens and expresses interest in the things I say.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
i I am comfortable about expressing disagreement with things my spouse says or does.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
j I enjoy just sitting and talking with my spouse.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
k I feel that my spouse and I spend enough time alone together.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
l I am able to forgive my spouse after I have been offended in some way.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
m My spouse is able to forgive me when I offend him or her.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
n I find ways to express affection for my spouse without using words.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
o My spouse finds ways to express affection for me without using words.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7

12. NOW STOP AND THINK BACK to the six month period just before your first ME weekend. Think about what your relationship with your spouse was like then.

How would the above statements have described your relationship with your spouse at that time, just before your first ME weekend? (Put an "X" through the appropriate numbers above.)

13. Many things cause changes in our relationships. To what extent have the following qualities in your relationship with your spouse been affected by your involvement in ME? (Circle the appropriate number.)

	directly affected for the worse			not affected by ME		directly affected for the better	
Understanding each other	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Making direct requests	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Expressing appreciation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Listening	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Expressing disagreement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Enjoying each other	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Spending time together	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Forgiveness/reconciliation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Expressing affection without words	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

14. AT THE PRESENT TIME, which of the topics listed seem the most important for you and which are the least important?

(Put a 1 beside the most important, a 2 beside the second most important, 3 beside the third most important.....up to a 10 beside the least important.)

Finances
 Raising children
 Relatives
 Time and recreation
 Work
 Sexual relationship
 Spiritual life
 Family decisions
 Personal feelings
 Long range goals

15. NOW STOP AND THINK BACK to the six month period just before your first ME weekend. Think about what your relationship with your spouse was like then.

Which of the topics listed seemed the most important for you then and which seemed the least important at that time, just before your first ME weekend?

(Put a 1 beside the most important, 2 beside the second most important, etc.)

Finances
 Raising children
 Relatives
 Time and recreation
 Work
 Sexual relationship
 Spiritual life
 Family decisions
 Personal feelings
 Long range goals

16. AT THE PRESENT TIME, how satisfied are you with the quality of your communication with your spouse about the following topics? (Circle the appropriate numbers.)

	extremely dissatisfied						completely satisfied
Finances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Raising children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Relatives	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Time and recreation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sexual relationship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Spiritual life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Family decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Personal feelings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Long range goals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

17. NOW STOP AND THINK BACK to the six month period just before your first NE weekend. Think about what your relationship with your spouse was like then.

How satisfied were you with the quality of your communication about the above topics with your spouse at that time, just before your first NE weekend? (Put an "X" through the appropriate numbers above.)

18. Many things change how we communicate. To what extent do you think your communication with your spouse in the following areas has been affected by your involvement in NE? (Circle the appropriate number.)

	directly affected for the worse			not really affected			directly affected for the better
Finances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Raising children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Relatives	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Time and recreation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sexual relationship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Spiritual life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Family decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Personal feelings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Long range goals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Many ideas seem to be important when we consider the quality and permanence of our marriage relationships. Items 19, 20 and 21 are concerned with how important various values, attitudes and beliefs seem for you when you consider the future of your marriage relationship.

19. When you think about the things that could affect the future of your own marriage relationship, how important do the following factors seem to be AT THE PRESENT TIME? (Circle the appropriate numbers.)

	of no importance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	extremely important	does no apply
a The economic advantages of married life.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
b Your religious beliefs.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7		8
c Your religious beliefs regarding divorce and separation.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7		8
d Your need for companionship and emotional support.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
e Your marriage vows.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
f Your understanding of the effects of separation and divorce on children.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7		6
g Your determination to "make your marriage work".		1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
h Your fear of change and risk.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
i Your fear of what others think.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
j Your desire to see your marriage reflect the image of God.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7		8
k Your enthusiasm for the possibility of a richer, fuller marriage relationship.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
l Your belief that your own personal growth is promoted in your marriage relationship.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
m Your commitment to intimate sharing of all aspects of your personality with your spouse.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7		

20. NOW STOP AND THINK BACK to the six month period just before your first ME weekend. Think about what your relationship with your spouse was like then.

When you thought about the things that could affect the future of your own marriage relationship, how important did the above factors seem at that time, just before your first ME weekend? (Put an "X" through the appropriate numbers above.)

21. If you compare the "circles" and the "X's" you have marked on this page above, you will see to what extent the importance of each attitude, value or belief has changed for you since the time before your first ME weekend. A number of things could have caused those changes.

Which of the above items (items "a" to "m") have changed in importance for you because of your involvement in Marriage Encounter? (Put a check [☐ a, ☒ b, ☐ c, etc.] beside any of the items, "a" to "m" which your involvement in ME has helped to change.)

Most of this questionnaire has dealt with your relationship with your spouse. However, Items 23 to 26 are concerned with how you think about yourself, your spiritual experience, your family life and your service to other people. Many things could have brought about changes in these areas. The next four items ask how much these areas have been changed by your involvement in ME programs. (Circle the appropriate numbers.)

- | | strong changes
for the worse
because of ME | | | | no real
change
because of ME | | | | | strong changes
for the better
because of ME |
|--|--|---|---|---|------------------------------------|---|---|--|--|---|
| 23. Have there been changes in your self awareness and self acceptance <u>resulting from your exposure to ME?</u> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | |
| 24. Have there been changes in your satisfaction with your spiritual experience <u>because of ME?</u> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | |
| 25. Have there been changes in your family life <u>because of your ME involvement?</u> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | |
| 26. Have there been changes in your commitment to help others outside your home <u>as a result of your ME involvement?</u> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | |

27. What stands out most in your mind when you think about your involvement in Marriage Encounter?

28. Do you have any comments or suggestions about any aspect of the ME program?

Thank you for your cooperation.

APPENDIX B

COVERING AND FOLLOW-UP
LETTERS

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

169

February 25, 1980

Dear Marriage Encounter Couples,

The executive of Marriage Encounter, Edmonton supports the enclosed research project. Research can assist us to understand our strengths and limitations from another point of view.

Continual critical review of our organization is essential so that the weekend will effectively promote the emotional and spiritual growth of couples. For some, the thought of researching such a personal and intimate event seems like an invasion of privacy. The executive is aware of the hesitation of some, but decided an attitude of cooperation opens us to the possibility of a better understanding of ourselves, which can only make the Marriage Encounter experience better.

Therefore, we encourage you to support the enclosed research project.

Sincerely,

Jan & Jerry Moran

Jan and Jerry Moran,
Executive Chaircouple,
Marriage Encounter,
Edmonton



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

FACULTY OF EDUCATION
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

February 25, 1980

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Jones,

As a couple who has attended a Marriage Encounter (ME) weekend, you can help us to assess the results of the ME, Edmonton program and to determine the areas in which it can be strengthened. I am asking each of you to assist in our assessment by completing one of the enclosed questionnaires.

You will find two questionnaires enclosed, one HUSBAND'S FORM, and one WIFE'S FORM. I ask you both to take the time during the next week to complete your forms and return them in the self-addressed, postpaid envelope that is provided. Your envelope is numbered so once your response is received, no further reminder notices will be sent.

Because of the personal nature of some of the items, your responses will be kept completely confidential. Please do not put your names on your questionnaires.

If you have any questions regarding this project, or concerns about how the information will be used, please call me, Dave Hedlund, 464-0549 or the supervisor of the project, Dr. Bill Hague, 432-3743.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Dave Hedlund
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
University of Alberta





DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

April 7, 1980

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Jones,

Several weeks ago you received two questionnaires as a follow-up to your involvement in a Marriage Encounter, Edmonton weekend. Although a large number of completed forms have been returned, we have not yet heard from you.

Your responses are needed in our evaluation of the ME program. If you have not already done so, please take the time soon to fill out your separate forms and return them in the self-addressed envelope that was provided.

Again, I assure you that your responses will be kept completely confidential. If you have questions or concerns about any aspect of the project, please call me at 464-0549.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Dave Hedlund
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
University of Alberta





DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

FACULTY OF EDUCATION
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

April 30, 1980

Dear Mr. and Mr. Jones,

We are encouraged by the response to the questionnaires mailed to couples who have been involved in Marriage Encounter, Edmonton. A great deal of information about the results of the ME program has been gathered, and many excellent suggestions for improvements have been made.

We believe that your contribution to the study is also of unique importance and we are concerned that we have not yet received your response.

The purpose of this letter is to give you a final opportunity to share your viewpoint with us. We will look forward to receiving your responses no later than Monday, May 12. Please take the time during the next week to complete your separate forms, and return them in the self addressed envelope that was provided.

If you have any concerns about this project, or difficulties related to the completion of the questionnaires, please call me, Dave Hedlund at 464-0549.

We hope to hear from you before our May 12 deadline.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dave Hedlund
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
University of Alberta



APPENDIX C

PRETEST AND POSTTEST
QUESTIONNAIRES

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER QUESTIONNAIRE - FORM 1

(Husband's Form)

DIRECTIONS

1. Your questionnaire is exactly the same as your spouse's. Answer your questions without discussing your responses with your spouse. If you do discuss your responses together later, do not change your original answers.
2. Although many of the following questions will require some thought, try not to take a great deal of time on any one question. Rather, answer each as quickly and carefully as possible.
3. Complete all four pages of the questionnaire, beginning with this page and working through to page 4.

Items 1 to 6 request information about descriptive personal characteristics.

1. Age ____
2. Number of years married ____
3. Number of children ____ Ages ____
4. Religious affiliation (Check 1) Catholic ____ Other (Specify) ____ None ____
5. Level of education less than high school ____ high school graduate ____
years vocational training 1 ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ more ____
years college/university training 1 ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ more ____
6. Approximate annual family income (Check 1) under \$16,000 ____ \$16-30,000 ____
over \$30,000 ____

ITEMS 7 to 9 ARE PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH YOUR COMMUNICATION. Respond to the items from your own point of view, without considering what might be ideal or what someone else might think of your responses.

7. AT THE PRESENT TIME, to what extent do the following statements describe your relationship with your spouse? (Circle the appropriate numbers.)

	almost always	1	2	3	4	5	6	almost never
a My spouse understands what I try to communicate.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b I understand what my spouse tries to communicate.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c I ask my spouse directly for what I want him or her to do.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d My spouse asks me directly for what he or she wants me to do.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e I express my appreciation for what my spouse does for me.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
f My spouse expresses appreciation for what I do for him or her.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
g I listen and express interest in things my spouse says.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
h My spouse listens and expresses interest in the things I say.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
i I am comfortable about expressing disagreement with things my spouse says or does.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
j I enjoy just sitting and talking with my spouse.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
k I feel that my spouse and I spend enough time alone together.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
l I am able to forgive my spouse after I have been offended in some way.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
m My spouse is able to forgive me when I offend him or her.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
n I find ways to express affection for my spouse without using words.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
o My spouse finds ways to express affection for me without using words.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8. AT THE PRESENT TIME, which of the topics listed seem the most important for you and which seem the least important?

(Put a 1 beside the most important, a 2 beside the second most important, 3 beside the third most important.....up to a 10 beside the least important.)

Finances	_____
Raising children	_____
Relatives	_____
Time and recreation	_____
Work	_____
Sexual relationship	_____
Spiritual life	_____
Family decisions	_____
Personal feelings	_____
Long range goals	_____

9. AT THE PRESENT TIME, how satisfied are you with the quality of your communication with your spouse about the following topics? (Circle the appropriate numbers.)

	extremely dissatisfied						completely satisfied	
Finances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Raising children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Relatives	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Time and Recreation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Sexual relationship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Spiritual life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Family decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Personal feelings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Long range goals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Many ideas seem to be important when we consider the quality and permanence of our marriage relationships. Item 10 is concerned with how important various values, attitudes and beliefs seem for you when you consider the future of your marriage relationship.

10. When you think about the things that could affect the future of your own marriage relationship, how important do the following factors seem to be AT THE PRESENT TIME? (Circle the appropriate numbers.)

	of no importance						extremely important	does not apply
The economic advantages of married life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Your religious beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Your religious beliefs regarding divorce and separation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Your need for companionship and emotional support.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Your marriage vows.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Your understanding of the effects of separation and divorce on children.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Your determination to "make your marriage work".	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Your fear of change and risk.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Your fear of what others think.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Your desire to see your marriage reflect the image of God.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Your enthusiasm for the possibility of a richer, fuller marriage relationship.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Your belief that your own personal growth is promoted in your marriage relationship.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Your commitment to intimate sharing of all aspects of your personality with your spouse.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

4

11. What stands out most in your mind when you think about your involvement in Marriage Encounter?

12. Do you have any comments or suggestions about any aspect of the Marriage Encounter program?

Thank you for your cooperation.

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER QUESTIONNAIRE - FORM 1

(Wife's Form)

DIRECTIONS

1. Your questionnaire is exactly the same as your spouse's. Answer your questions without discussing your responses with your spouse. If you do discuss your responses together later, do not change your original answers.
2. Although many of the following questions will require some thought, try not to take a great deal of time on any one question. Rather, answer each as quickly and carefully as possible.
3. Complete all four pages of the questionnaire, beginning with this page and working through to page 4.

Items 1 to 6 request information about descriptive personal characteristics.

1. Age _____
2. Number of years married _____
3. Number of children _____ Ages _____
4. Religious affiliation (Check 1) Catholic _____ Other (Specify) _____ None _____
5. Level of education less than high school _____ high school graduate _____
years vocational training 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ more _____
years college/university training 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ more _____
6. Approximate annual family income (Check 1) under \$16,000 _____ \$16-30,000 _____
over \$30,000 _____

ITEMS 7 to 9 ARE PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH YOUR COMMUNICATION. Respond to the items from your own point of view, without considering what might be ideal or what someone else might think of your responses.

7. AT THE PRESENT TIME, to what extent do the following statements describe your relationship with your spouse? (Circle the appropriate numbers.)

	almost always	1	2	3	4	5	6	almost never
a My spouse understands what I try to communicate.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b I understand what my spouse tries to communicate.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c I ask my spouse directly for what I want him or her to do.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d My spouse asks me directly for what he or she wants me to do.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e I express my appreciation for what my spouse does for me.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
f My spouse expresses appreciation for what I do for him or her.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
g I listen and express interest in things my spouse says.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
h My spouse listens and expresses interest in the things I say.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
i I am comfortable about expressing disagreement with things my spouse says or does.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
j I enjoy just sitting and talking with my spouse.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
k I feel that my spouse and I spend enough time alone together.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
l I am able to forgive my spouse after I have been offended in some way.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
m My spouse is able to forgive me when I offend him or her.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
n I find ways to express affection for my spouse without using words.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
o My spouse finds ways to express affection for me without using words.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8. AT THE PRESENT TIME, which of the topics listed seem the most important for you and which seem the least important?

(Put a 1 beside the most important, a 2 beside the second most important, 3 beside the third most important.....up to a 10 beside the least important.)

Finances	_____
Raising children	_____
Relatives	_____
Time and recreation	_____
Work	_____
Sexual relationship	_____
Spiritual life	_____
Family decisions	_____
Personal feelings	_____
Long range goals	_____

3

AT THE PRESENT TIME, how satisfied are you with the quality of your communication with your spouse about the following topics? (Circle the appropriate numbers.)

	extremely dissatisfied						completely satisfied
Finances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Raising children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Relatives	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Time and Recreation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sexual relationship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Spiritual life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Family decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Personal feelings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Long range goals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Many ideas seem to be important when we consider the quality and permanence of our marriage relationships. Item 10 is concerned with how important various values, attitudes and beliefs seem for you when you consider the future of your marriage relationship.

When you think about the things that could affect the future of your own marriage relationship, how important do the following factors seem to be AT THE PRESENT TIME? (Circle the appropriate numbers.)

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Your need for companionship and emotional support.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Your marriage vows.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Your understanding of the effects of separation and divorce on children.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Your determination to "make your marriage work".	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Your fear of change and risk.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Your fear of what others think.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Your desire to see your marriage reflect the image of God.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Your enthusiasm for the possibility of a richer, fuller marriage relationship.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Your belief that your own personal growth is promoted in your marriage relationship.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Your commitment to intimate sharing of all aspects of your personality with your spouse.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

4

11. What stands out most in your mind when you think about your involvement in Marriage Encounter?

12. Do you have any comments or suggestions about any aspect of the Marriage Encounter program?

Thank you for your cooperation.

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER QUESTIONNAIRE - FORM 2

(Husband's Form)

DIRECTIONS

1. Your questionnaire is exactly the same as your spouse's. Answer your questions without discussing your responses with your spouse. If you do discuss your responses together later, do not change your original answers.
2. Although many of the following questions will require some thought, try not to take a great deal of time on any one question. Rather, answer each as quickly and carefully as possible.
3. Complete all four pages of the questionnaire, beginning with this page and working through to page 4.

Items 1 to 6 request information about descriptive personal characteristics.

1. Age ____
2. Number of years married ____
3. Number of children ____ Ages ____
4. Religious affiliation (Check 1) Catholic ____ Other (Specify) ____ None ____
5. Level of education less than high school ____ high school graduate ____
 years vocational training 1 ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ more ____
 years college/university training 1 ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ more ____
6. Approximate annual family income (Check 1) under \$16,000 ____ \$16-30,000 ____
 over \$30,000 ____

ITEMS 7 to 9 ARE PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH YOUR COMMUNICATION. Respond to the items from your own point of view, without considering what might be ideal or what someone else might think of your responses.

7. AT THE PRESENT TIME, to what extent do the following statements describe your relationship with your spouse? (Circle the appropriate numbers.)

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a My spouse understands what I try to communicate.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b I understand what my spouse tries to communicate.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c I ask my spouse directly for what I want him or her to do.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d My spouse asks me directly for what he or she wants me to do.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e I express my appreciation for what my spouse does for me.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
f My spouse expresses appreciation for what I do for him or her.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
g I listen and express interest in things my spouse says.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
h My spouse listens and expresses interest in the things I say.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
i I am comfortable about expressing disagreement with things my spouse says or does.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
j I enjoy just sitting and talking with my spouse.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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l I am able to forgive my spouse after I have been offended in some way.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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8. AT THE PRESENT TIME, which of the topics listed seem the most important for you and which seem the least important?

(Put a 1 beside the most important, a 2 beside the second most important, 3 beside the third most important.....up to a 10 beside the least important.)

Finances	_____
Raising children	_____
Relatives	_____
Time and recreation	_____
Work	_____
Sexual relationship	_____
Spiritual life	_____
Family decisions	_____
Personal feelings	_____
Long range goals	_____

9. AT THE PRESENT TIME, how satisfied are you with the quality of your communication with your spouse about the following topics? (Circle the appropriate numbers.)

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Sexual relationship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
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Many ideas seem to be important when we consider the quality and permanence of our marriage relationships. Item 10 is concerned with how important various values, attitudes and beliefs seem for you when you consider the future of your marriage relationship.

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Your belief that your own personal growth is promoted in your marriage relationship.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Your commitment to intimate sharing of all aspects of your personality with your spouse.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

11. From what you have heard, what are you expecting your Marriage Encounter weekend to be like?

Thank you for your cooperation.

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER QUESTIONNAIRE - FORM 2

(Wife's Form)

DIRECTIONS

1. Your questionnaire is exactly the same as your spouse's. Answer your questions without discussing your responses with your spouse. If you do discuss your responses together later, do not change your original answers.
2. Although many of the following questions will require some thought, try not to take a great deal of time on any one question. Rather, answer each as quickly and carefully as possible.
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 years vocational training 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ more _____
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6. Approximate annual family income (Check 1) under \$16,000 _____ \$16-30,000 _____
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e I express my appreciation for what my spouse does for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
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g I listen and express interest in things my spouse says.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
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m My spouse is able to forgive me when I offend him or her.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
n I find ways to express affection for my spouse without using words.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
o My spouse finds ways to express affection for me without using words.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

8. AT THE PRESENT TIME, which of the topics listed seem the most important for you and which seem the least important?

(Put a 1 beside the most important, a 2 beside the second most important, 3 beside the third most important, up to a 10 beside the least important.)

Finances	_____
Raising children	_____
Relatives	_____
Time and recreation	_____
Work	_____
Sexual relationship	_____
Spiritual life	_____
Family decisions	_____
Personal feelings	_____
Long range goals	_____

9. AT THE PRESENT TIME, how satisfied are you with the quality of your communication with your spouse about the following topics? (Circle the appropriate numbers.)

	extremely dissatisfied						completely satisfied	
Finances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Raising children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Relatives	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Time and Recreation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Sexual relationship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Spiritual life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Family decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
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Long range goals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Many ideas seem to be important when we consider the quality and permanence of our marriage relationships. Item 10 is concerned with how important various values, attitudes and beliefs seem for you when you consider the future of your marriage relationship.

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Your marriage vows.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
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Your determination to "make your marriage work".	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Your fear of change and risk.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Your fear of what others think.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Your desire to see your marriage reflect the image of God.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Your enthusiasm for the possibility of a richer, fuller marriage relationship.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Your belief that your own personal growth is promoted in your marriage relationship.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Your commitment to intimate sharing of all aspects of your personality with your spouse.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

4

11. From what you have heard, what are you expecting your Marriage Encounter weekend to be like?

Thank you for your cooperation.

APPENDIX D

CODING KEY

VARIABLE	QUESTION	COLUMN	DESCRIPTION AND CODE
VAR 001	--	1-4	Questionnaire #. (0001 ... husband) (1001 ... wife)
VAR 002	--	5	Card # (1)
VAR 003	--	6, 7	Returning time (# of days)
VAR 004	--	8	Forms returned Husband's only ... 1 Both 2 Wife's only 3
VAR 005	1	9, 10	Age (# of years) NR = 00
VAR 006	2	11, 12	Time married in years (01, 02) NR = 00
VAR 007	3	13, 14	# of children (00, 01, 02)
VAR 008	3	15	# of children 5 or under
VAR 009	3	16	# of children 6-12
VAR 010	3	17	# of children 13-15
VAR 011	3	18	# of children 16-18
VAR 012	3	19	# of children over 18
VAR 013	4	20	Religious affiliation Catholic 1 Protestant ... 2 United 3 Anglican 4 Lutheran 5 Other 6 None 7 NR 8

VARIABLE	QUESTION	COLUMN	DESCRIPTION AND CODE
VAR 014	5	21, 22	Education (total # of years) 01, 02 . . . NR = 00
VAR 015	5	23	Vocational training 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 = more NR = 0
VAR 016	5	24	College/university 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 = more NR = 0
VAR 017	6	25	Income under \$16,000 = 1 \$16-\$30,000 = 2 over \$30,000 = 3 NR = 0
VAR 018	7	26	Time since first weekend (1980 - year) NR = 0
VAR 019	8	27	# of gatherings attended none = 1 1 or 2 = 2 3-5 = 3 6-10 = 4 over 10 = 5 NR = 0
VAR 020	9	28	# of couples recommended none = 1 1 or 2 = 2 3-10 = 3 11-20 = 4 over 20 = 5 NR = 0
VAR 021	10	29	Ever a lead couple? no = 1 yes = 2 NR = 0

VARIABLE	QUESTION	COLUMN	DESCRIPTION AND CODE
RELATIONSHIP CHARACTERISTICS			
VAR 022	11a	30	almost always almost never
VAR 023	11b	31	1 7
VAR 024	11c	32	NR = 0
VAR 025	11d	33	
VAR 026	11e	34	
VAR 027	11f	35	
VAR 028	11g	36	
VAR 029	11h	37	
VAR 030	11i	38	
VAR 031	11j	39	
VAR 032	11k	40	
VAR 033	11l	41	
VAR 034	11m	42	
VAR 035	11n	43	
VAR 036	11o	44	
RELATIONSHIP - RETROSPECTIVE			
VAR 037	12a	45	almost always almost never
VAR 038	12b	46	1 7
VAR 039	12c	47	NR = 0
VAR 040	12d	48	
VAR 041	12e	49	
VAR 042	12f	50	
VAR 043	12g	51	

VARIABLE	QUESTION	COLUMN	DESCRIPTION AND CODE
			RELATIONSHIP - RETROSPECTIVE
VAR 044	12h	52	almost always 1 . . . 7 almost never
VAR 045	12i	53	
VAR 046	12j	54	NR = 0
VAR 047	12k	55	
VAR 048	12l	56	
VAR 049	12m	57	
VAR 050	12n	58	
VAR 051	12o	59	
			EFFECT OF ME - RELATIONSHIP
			worse 1 . . . 7 better
			NR = 0
VAR 052	13	60	Understanding
VAR 053	13	61	Requests
VAR 054	13	62	Appreciation
VAR 055	13	63	Listening
VAR 056	13	64	Disagreement
VAR 057	13	65	Enjoyment
VAR 058	13	66	Time
VAR 059	13	67	Forgiveness
VAR 060	13	68	Affection

VARIABLE	QUESTION	COLUMN	DESCRIPTION AND CODE
			PRIORITIES
			Priority 01, 02 . . . 10
			NR = 00
VAR 061	14	69, 70	Finances
VAR 062	14	71, 72	Children
VAR 063	14	73, 74	Relatives
VAR 064	14	75, 76	Time and Recreation
VAR 065	14	77, 78	Work
VAR 066	14	79, 80	Sexuality
CARD 2			
VAR 067	--	1-4	Questionnaire # (0001 ... husband) (1001 ... wife)
VAR 068	--	5	Card # (2)
			PRIORITIES CONT'D
VAR 069	14	6, 7	Spirituality
VAR 070	14	8, 9	Family
VAR 071	14	10, 11	Personal
VAR 072	14	12, 13	Goals
			RETROSPECTIVE PRIORITIES
			Priority 01, 02 . . . 10
			NR = 00
VAR 073	15	14, 15	Finances

VARIABLE	QUESTION	COLUMN	DESCRIPTION AND CODE
			RETROSPECTIVE PRIORITIES
			Priority 01, 02 10
			NR = 00
VAR 074	15	16, 17	Children
VAR 075	15	18, 19	Relatives
VAR 076	15	20, 21	Time and Recreation
VAR 077	15	22, 23	Work
VAR 078	15	24, 25	Sexuality
VAR 079	15	26, 27	Spirituality
VAR 080	15	28, 29	Family
VAR 081	15	30, 31	Personal
VAR 082	15	32, 33	Goals
			TOPICAL COMMUNICATION
			dissatisfied satisfied 1 7
			NR = 0
VAR 083	16	34	Finances
VAR 084	16	35	Children
VAR 085	16	36	Relatives
VAR 086	16	37	Time and Recreation
VAR 087	16	38	Work
VAR 088	16	39	Sexuality
VAR 089	16	40	Spirituality
VAR 090	16	41	Family

VARIABLE	QUESTION	COLUMN	DESCRIPTION AND CODE
			TOPICAL COMMUNICATION dissatisfied satisfied 1 7 NR = 0
VAR 091	16	42	Personal
VAR 092	16	43	Goals
			RETROSPECTIVE - TOPICAL dissatisfied satisfied 1 7 NR = 0
VAR 093	17	44	Finances
VAR 094	17	45	Children
VAR 095	17	46	Relatives
VAR 096	17	47	Time and Recreation
VAR 097	17	48	Work
VAR 098	17	49	Sexuality
VAR 099	17	50	Spirituality
VAR 100	17	51	Family
VAR 101	17	52	Personal
VAR 102	17	53	Goals
			EFFECT OF ME - TOPICAL worse better 1 7 NR = 0
VAR 103	18	54	Finances

VARIABLE	QUESTION	COLUMN	DESCRIPTION AND CODE
			EFFECT OF ME. - TOPICAL worse 1 7 better NR = 0
VAR 104	18	55	Children
VAR 105	18	56	Relatives
VAR 106	18	57	Time and Recreation
VAR 107	18	58	Work
VAR 108	18	59	Sexuality
VAR 109	18	60	Spirituality
VAR 110	18	61	Family
VAR 111	18	62	Personal
VAR 112	18	63	Goals
			IMPORTANCE OF VALUES none 1 7 extreme does not apply = 0 NR = 0
VAR 113	19a	64	
VAR 114	19b	65	
VAR 115	19c	66	
VAR 116	19d	67	
VAR 117	19e	68	
VAR 118	19f	69	
VAR 119	19g	70	
VAR 120	19h	71	
VAR 121	19i	72	
VAR 122	19j	73	

VARIABLE	QUESTION	COLUMN	DESCRIPTION AND CODE
			IMPORTANCE OF VALUES
VAR 123	19k	74	none extreme
VAR 124	19l	75	1 7
VAR 125	19m	76	does not apply = 0 NR = 0
			IMPORTANCE OF VALUES - RETROSPECTIVE
VAR 126	20a	77	none extreme
VAR 127	20b	78	1 7
VAR 128	20c	79	does not apply = 0
VAR 129	20d	80	NR = 0
CARD 3			
VAR 130	--	1-4	Questionnaire # (0001 . . . husband) (1001 . . . wife)
VAR 131	--	5	Card # (3)
			IMPORTANCE OF VALUES - RETROSPECTIVE CONT'D
VAR 132	20e	6	
VAR 133	20f	7	
VAR 134	20g	8	
VAR 135	20h	9	
VAR 136	20i	10	
VAR 137	20j	11	
VAR 138	20k	12	

VARIABLE	QUESTION	COLUMN	DESCRIPTION AND CODE
			IMPORTANCE OF VALUES - RETROSPECTIVE
VAR 139	201	13	none extreme 1 7
VAR 140	20m	14	does not apply = 0 NR = 0
			EFFECT OF ME - VALUES
VAR 141	21a	15	no change = 1
VAR 142	21b	16	changed = 2
VAR 143	21c	17	does not apply = 0
VAR 144	21d	18	NR = 0
VAR 145	21e	19	(When there are no checks,
VAR 146	21f	20	- mark 1 if 19 and 20 differ
VAR 147	21g	21	- mark 0 for all if all retrospective questions have been ignored.)
VAR 148	21h	22	
VAR 149	21i	23	
VAR 150	21j	24	
VAR 151	21k	25	
VAR 152	21l	26	
VAR 153	21m	27	
			SELF AWARENESS CHANGES
VAR 154	23	28	worse better 1 7 NR = 0

VARIABLE	QUESTION	COLUMN	DESCRIPTION AND CODE
VAR 155	24	29	SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE CHANGES worse 1 7 better NR = 0
VAR 156	25	30	FAMILY LIFE CHANGES worse 1 7 better NR = 0
VAR 157	26	31	COMMITMENT TO OTHERS worse 1 7 better NR = 0
VAR 158	27	32	OPEN-ENDED QUESTION category represen- ted = 1 category not repre- sented = 0 PHILOSOPHY Affirmation of marri- age as an important social institution.
VAR 159	27	33	Significant emphasis on the spiritual aspect of marriage.
VAR 160	27	34	CONTENT The emphasis on the

VARIABLE	QUESTION	COLUMN	DESCRIPTION AND CODE
			CONTENT
			effort involved in maintaining a good marital relationship.
VAR 161	27	35	The emphasis on directness and openness, and the value of marital communication.
VAR 162	27	36	The emphasis on marital strengths as opposed to individual weaknesses.
			FORMAT
VAR 163	27	37	The good quality of the general program format.
VAR 164	27	38	The provision of an uninterrupted opportunity to focus on the marriage relationship.
VAR 165	27	39	The provision of an opportunity for renewed commitment to the marriage.
VAR 166	27	40	The difficulty and importance of demands placed on the participants.
VAR 167	27	41	The unsatisfactory nature of specific program format areas.
VAR 168	27	42	The insufficient amount of time allowed for discussion between spouses.

VARIABLE	QUESTION	COLUMN	DESCRIPTION AND CODE
			PRESENTATION
VAR 169	27	43	The attractiveness of (and encouragement drawn from) the personal sharing approach of the leaders.
VAR 170	27	44	The attractiveness of the strong personal qualities of the leaders chosen.
VAR 171	27	45	The attractiveness of the physical atmosphere.
VAR 172	27	46	The strong appeal of the emotional climate established.
VAR 173	27	47	The insufficiency of leadership skills demonstrated by some leaders.
			RESULTS
VAR 174	27	48	Developed awareness of marriage as a developmental process.
VAR 175	27	49	Developed new optimism about the potential of marriage.
VAR 176	27	50	Developed an awareness that personal marital struggles weren't atypical.
VAR 177	27	51	Made already existing commitment to the marriage relationship stronger.
VAR 178	27	52	Received reaffirmation of the meaningfulness of own marital relationship.

VARIABLE	QUESTION	COLUMN	DESCRIPTION AND CODE
			0 RESULTS
VAR 179	27	53	Developed increased motivation to communicate effectively.
VAR 180	27	54	Developed more effective communication and problem-solving skills.
VAR 181	27	55	Facilitated breaking through of barriers to effective communication within the marriage.
VAR 182	27	56	Developed increased intimacy (i.e. trust, closeness, mutual understanding, mutual self-disclosure and sharing, forgiveness) in the marriage relationship.
VAR 183	27	57	Developed increased awareness of spouse's inner self.
VAR 184	27	58	Developed increased appreciation and enjoyment of spouse.
VAR 185	27	59	Developed increased spiritual awareness, growth and/or commitment in marriage.
VAR 186	27	60	Resulted in non-specific positive effect on the quality of the marriage relationship.
VAR 187	27	61	Developed personally (egs. increased sense of self-worth, self-awareness, self-acceptance).

VARIABLE	QUESTION	COLUMN	DESCRIPTION AND CODE
			RESULTS
VAR 188	27	62	Resulted in better quality of family life.
VAR 189	27	63	Resulted in meaningful social interaction (i.e. support, encouragement, friendship) because of common beliefs, values, needs, goals, etc. of ME participants.
VAR 190	27	64	Resulted in positive emotional experience with mate and all involved.
VAR 191	27	65	Resulted in frustration and/or disappointment.
VAR 192	27	66	Resulted in welcome but short-lived benefits to the marriage.
VAR 193	27	67	Developed understanding of benefits and/or enjoyment of service to others.
VAR 194	27	68	Resulted in limited (or no) change in the marital relationship that can be directly attributed to the ME experience.

APPENDIX E

DATA ANALYSIS

Frequency Tables

The Statistical Programs for Social Sciences (SPSS) program for frequency tables was used to determine the frequencies, percentages, means, number of valid cases and number of missing cases for the following variables:

- a) All demographic variables (VAR 003-021).
- b) Present and past priority variables (Question 14 and 15).
- c) Treatment effect on beliefs, attitudes and values (Question 21).
- d) Open-ended responses (Question 27).

Cross-Tabulations

The SPSS cross-tabulation program was used to compare the distributions of estimated treatment-effect scores (Question 13, 18, 23-26) between categories within the discrete demographic variables. Some continuous variables (i.e., time to return, age, years married) were recoded into categories and included in the analysis. Output included frequencies and percentages for each cell in the tables, row and column totals and percentages, number of missing cases, and the value and probability of chi-square for each set of two variables compared.

Pearson Correlations

The Division of Education Research (DERS) program, DEST 11, was used to calculate Pearson correlation coefficients for all continuous demographic variables and estimates of treatment effects (Question 13, 18, and 23-26).

output included means, standard deviations and number of valid cases for each variable. Correlation matrices were produced with demographic variables in rows and treatment-effect variables in columns. Values of each correlation coefficient and the corresponding probability were tabulated.

Means and Standard Deviations

Means and standard deviations were calculated for each item on all questions rated on the 7-point scale (Questions 11-13, 16-20, 23-26).

Significance of Difference of Means

The significance of the difference of means of corresponding past and present items was tested using an SPSS program for t tests with correlated samples (Questions 11 and 12, 16 and 17, 19 and 20).

Paired Husband and Wife Data

Data was sorted on VAR 004 (# of forms returned) and all data taken from forms returned by both husband and wife was separated from data taken from forms returned by one spouse only. Paired husband and wife data was grouped together. The following procedures were carried out with the paired husband and wife data:

Pearson correlations. The DERS program, DEST 11, was used to calculate Pearson correlation coefficients and corresponding probabilities for the following variables:

- a) Present-oriented items paired with parallel

pretreatment items for all respondents. (Questions 11 and 12, 16 and 17, 19 and 20).

b) Husbands' and wives' responses paired on parallel items for present-oriented variables (Questions 11, 16, 19) and treatment-effect variables (Questions 13, 18, 23-26).

Output included means, standard deviations and number of valid cases for each variable. The diagonal values of the correlation matrices were of primary interest for most variables.

Significance of difference of means. Significance of difference of male and female means for all continuous treatment-effect variables (Question 13, 18, 23-26) were calculated using t tests for independent samples.

Cross-tabulation. An SPSS program was used to cross-tabulate paired husband and wife scores for one particular item. A table was generated with husbands' scores in rows and wives' scores in columns. Each cell contained the frequency and percentage of paired husband and wife responses that corresponded to that cell.