

THE EFFECTS OF A PARTIALLY STRUCTURED
MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT WEEKEND PROGRAM
ON COUPLES' PERCEPTION OF
MARITAL COMMUNICATION AND ADJUSTMENT CHANGES

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Education

Degree

Memphis State University

William Kenneth Meadors

May, 1994

To Nancy, a special gift from the Lord;

"you are the fairest of them all."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my deepest appreciation and gratitude to the following people who have been unselfish in placing their wisdom, knowledge, and skills at my disposal.

Dr. Robert Crawford was my advisor who has been a true professional in every sense of the word. He has been very supportive and helpful to me throughout this project by providing me with expert leadership as well as encouragement. He exhibited kindness and sensitivity, but at no time did his feelings compromise his demand for quality and substance in scholarly pursuit.

The members of my committee (Dr. Burl Gilliland, Dr. Richard James, Dr. Ernest Rakow, and Dr. Dennie Smith) were gracious in their support of my dissertation endeavor. They were always there with a helping hand to offer their expertise while demanding academic excellence. I want to thank them for the time spent on the committee. They all are names that I will be proud to have associated with my dissertation project. My special thanks to Dr. Richard James who was extremely helpful in the early stages of this project in helping to guide me through the tedium of research design. He never compromised his demand for excellence, but was very supportive of me.

My mother and father, William Henry and Evie Thompson Meadors, provided me with a value system that has brought me through some difficult times in life. They are not here to enjoy this moment with me, but I will be eternally grateful to them for providing me a solid basis for life.

My brother, Dr. Raymond Meadors, encouraged me to reach my fullest academic potential. He provided a model for me to aspire to in the field of counseling and marriage enrichment.

My wife, Nancy, has been my strongest supporter in every endeavor in which I have undertaken. She has been my closest friend and companion for over 34 years. Her strong faith, love, and tender loving kindness has always been a source of strength, encouragement, and inspiration to me. She deserves much credit for any success I may have ever experienced. May we have 34 more years together.

ABSTRACT

William Kenneth Meadors, for the Doctor of Education degree in the Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology and Research at Memphis State University. May, 1994.

TITLE: THE EFFECTS OF A PARTIALLY STRUCTURED MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT WEEKEND PROGRAM ON COUPLES' PERCEPTION OF MARITAL COMMUNICATION AND ADJUSTMENT CHANGES.

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Robert L. Crawford, Ed.D.

Marital communication and marital adjustment measurements were taken from an experimental group consisting of 15 married couples in a marriage enrichment program. The results were compared with results derived from 15 couples who were on a waiting list to attend a future marriage enrichment program.

Twelve hypotheses were generated which stated that participants of the marriage enrichment experiment would experience a significant increase in their level of marital communication and marital adjustment.

The treatment for this study was a 3-day residential workshop experience. The program contained a didactic and experiential approach presented from a Christian perspective and was designed to strengthen the marriage relationship.

Dependent variables used in this study were measured utilizing two instruments: (a) the Marital Communication Inventory (MCI) and (b) the Marital Adjustment Test (MAT). The main statistical treatment applied was the multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) repeated measures design. Tukey's honestly significant difference (HSD) procedure was used as a *post hoc* analysis when significance was found. Subjects of the treatment group were tested two days prior to the marriage enrichment program, immediately following the program, and finally six weeks after the program. Control group subjects were tested two days before the experimental group treatment and six weeks later.

The results indicated that the marriage enrichment program had a significant positive effect on

marital communication and marital adjustment immediately following the enrichment experience.

Experimental group participants maintained a statistically significant increase of marital communication over time (six weeks after the program). The level of marital adjustment failed to show a sustained statistically significant increase over the same period of time.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Definition of Marriage Enrichment	3
Marriage Enrichment as an Alternate Approach to Marital Improvement	4
Objectives of Marriage Enrichment	5
..... Group Effects of Marriage Enrichment	6
Target Population of Marriage Enrichment	7
Need for Study	9
Purpose of Study	11
Contribution of the Study	13
2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	14
Marriage Enrichment Programs	14
Religious-based Programs	15
Major Secular Programs	21
Other Secular Programs	23
General Outcomes of Marriage Enrichment	27
Criticisms of Marriage Enrichment Research	28
Summary	29
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	31
Assumptions Concerning the Enrichment Program	31
Subjects	32
Program	33
Instrumentation	34
Marital Communication Inventory	34
Marital Adjustment Test	36
Research Design	37
Data Collection	38
Research Questions and Hypotheses	39

Research Question 1	40	
Hypothesis I		40
Hypothesis II		40
Hypothesis III		41
Research Question 2.	41	
Hypothesis IV		41
Hypothesis V		41
Hypothesis VI		41
Research Question 3	41	
Hypothesis VII		42
Hypothesis VIII		42
Hypothesis IX		42
	Research Question 4	42
Hypothesis X		42
Hypothesis XI		42
Hypothesis XII		43
Definitions	43	
	Statistical Analysis of Data	44
	Limitations of the Study	45
4. RESULTS	46
	Marital Communication	50
Research Question 1	50	
Hypothesis I		50
Hypothesis II		50
Hypothesis III		50

Research Question 2	54	
Hypothesis IV		54
Hypothesis V		55
Hypothesis VI		55
Research Question 3	59	
Hypothesis VII		60
Hypothesis VIII		60
Hypothesis IX		60
Research Question 4	64	
		Hypothesis X 64
		Hypothesis XI 64
Hypothesis XII	64	
Post Hoc Analysis of Selected Items of Marital Adjustment Test.....		66
5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS		74
Summary	74	
Conclusions	77	
Recommendations		82
REFERENCES		88
APPENDIXES		94
A. Human Subjects Review Procedures		95
B. Informed Consent Form.....		99
C. Letter to Experimental Group		102
D. Letter to Control Group		105
E. Six-week Follow-up Letter to Experimental Group.....		108
F. Six-week Follow-up Letter to Control Group.....		111

G.	Marriage Enrichment Workshop Program.....	114
H.	Marital Communication Inventory	130
I.	Marital Adjustment Test	137
VITA	141

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
1.	Demographics of Experimental and Control Group Participants.....	49
2.	Marital Communication Pretest, Posttest, and Follow-up Means and Standard Deviations for Experimental Group Participants	52
3.	Analysis of Variance Summary of One Between One Within Repeated Measures Design for Experimental Group Participants with Marital Communication as the Dependent Variable	53
4.	Marital Communication Pretest and Follow-up Means and Standard Deviations for Experimental and Control Group Participants	56
5.	Analysis of Variance Summary of Two Between One Within Repeated Measures Design for Experimental and Control Group Participants with Marital Communication as the Dependent Variable	58
6.	Marital Adjustment Pretest, Posttest, and Follow-up Means and Standard Deviations for Experimental Group Participants	61
7.	Analysis of Variance Summary of One Between One Within Repeated Measures Design for Experimental Group Participants with Marital Adjustment as the Dependent Variable	62
8.	Marital Adjustment Pretest and Follow-up Means and Standard Deviations for Experimental and Control Group Participants	65
9.	Analysis of Variance Summary of Two Between One Within Repeated Measures Design for Experimental and Control Group Participants with Marital Adjustment as the Dependent Variable	67
10.	"Agreement on Ways of Dealing With In-laws"	69
11.	"Agreement on Handling Family Finances"	69
12.	"Agreement on Demonstrations of Affection"	69
13.	"Agreement on Sex Relations"	71
14.	"Feelings on Sex Relations"	71
15.	"Sexual Intercourse Physical Reactions"	73
16.	"Sexual Intercourse As an Expression of Love and Affection"	73
17.	Marital Happiness	73

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Within the framework of the family is reflected the rapid change that characterizes our modern society (Diskin, 1986), and the need for marriage enrichment services has been heightened by sociological changes in our culture (Garland, 1983). These changes have marked the move from traditional to companionship marriage, with its basis in intimacy, equity, and flexible interpersonal interactions and has changed the requirements for effective performance in marriage (Mace, 1987). As the institution of marriage changed, so have the skills necessary to function effectively within the marital relationship. Traditional marriages based upon functional and integrated work roles of the spouses have given way to expectations of companionship between partners (Diskin, 1986).

Dinkmeyer and Carlson (1986a) stated that the need for marital enrichment is greater now than at any time in history, and this need has been accelerated because of the move toward democratic relationships. Mace (1987) described this move as a change in marriage from a one-vote to a two-vote system. This system offers a better relationship, but it is more difficult to manage, and consequently, there are many failures.

A very significant factor in the growth of marriage enrichment programs has been the alarming frequency with which marriages dissolve (Krug & Ahadi, 1986). O'Leary and Smith (1991) stated that marriage has emerged as an important topic in psychology over the last decade for several reasons, but one of the most important is a concern about the divorce rate in the United States and its effects on the quality of life. The divorce rate in the United States is now about 50%, and the United States now has the highest divorce rate among major industrialized countries of the world (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1991).

Marital discord and divorce are associated with a variety of psychological and physical disorders among adults and are known to have deleterious effects on children (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990). Depression and suicide among adolescents and young adults are at an all-time high in the United States, and one reason postulated for these increases is the change in family structure with its attendant high rates of marital dissolution (O'Leary & Smith, 1991).

Mace (1985) reported that the maintenance of the social order in a community is dependent upon the quality of relationships in the families that make up the community, and the quality of family relationships is determined by the quality of the marriage that initiates the family. Therefore, the alleviation of marital problems could have far-reaching consequences for the well-being of spouses, their families, and society at large.

Divorce statistics which suggested that one out of two marriages will dissolve as a result of the marriage experience (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1991) does not mention the large numbers of marriages which continue even though unhappiness and lack of satisfaction abound. These data make one aware that even though half of the marriages in our society survive, the quality of those marriages is often not good, and some of them are rather poor. Many marriages survive in spite of the fact that one or both partners are unhappy (Olson, 1990).

Findings about marriage failure also indicate that individuals are rarely prepared for the challenges of marriage. Given the expectation of a

loving companionship, which is widespread today, marriage has become a complex and difficult task for almost all couples and an impossible task for some (Mace, 1985). The challenge now is to make resources widely visible and to help the couples become more motivated and to become involved in moving toward a bright, enriched and energized marriage (Dinkmeyer & Carlson, 1986a).

Definition of Marriage Enrichment

Garland (1983) defined marriage enrichment as a term which refers to a philosophy of marriage and its functions, to an educational model of couple and group services offered by the helping professions, and to a number of specific programs for providing these services. Zimpfer (1988) saw marriage enrichment as a systematic effort to improve the functioning of marital couples through educational and preventive means.

The major focus of marriage enrichment programs is the improvement of married life. This improvement is described as enabling partners to become aware of the growth potential of the marriage by exploring and expressing thoughts and feelings with honesty and empathy. In addition, these programs help couples to develop and use the skills needed to relate together effectively, to solve their problems, and to resolve their conflicts (Garland, 1983).

Dinkmeyer and Carlson (1985) stated that an enriched marriage is contrasted with the marriage which experiences infrequent enthusiasm, energy, commitment, and mutual involvement. In an enriched marriage, each spouse has a feeling of personal worth and self-esteem with each being willing to cooperate in the give and take of the relationship. Dinkmeyer and Carlson (1985) described this system as being open, congruent, and cooperative.

Marriage Enrichment as an Alternate Approach to Marital Improvement

Since the 1930s, the standard strategy of mental health professionals in contending with marital dysfunction has been to treat couples in a clinical setting. Although some of the interventions developed for this purpose benefited distressed couples, there was a growing realization that this strategy was inadequate to stem the rising incidence of marital dysfunction. As a consequence, considerable energy has been devoted to the design and implementation of programs intended to prevent marital dysfunction before it occurs (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990).

Markman, Floyd, Stanley, and Storaasli (1988) stated that a viable alternative to treating the problems of divorce and marital distress is to provide preventive interventions while the couple is still happy or at least in the early stages of distress. In a preventive approach, it is best to intervene at times when couples are looking for habits and new skills to form (Markman, Renick, Floyd, Stanley, and Clements, 1993). Renick, Blumberg, & Markman (1992) stated that the primary prevention of marital distress differs from therapy in that it is based on the identification and intervention of variables most predictive of later distress as well as relationship satisfaction .

According to Mace (1987), there are currently two solutions being offered to deal with difficulties in marital relationships: education as information-giving, which is often not acted upon, and therapy, which can come too late to be effective. Mace (1987) believed that both systems should be retained, but a third process, marriage enrichment, applies our new knowledge preventively. Thus, the enrichment process became recognized as a model based on prevention rather than on strict therapeutics (L'Abate & Weinstein, 1987). Mace (1987) further added that this new approach promises to be more effective and is the "wave of the future."

Objectives of Marriage Enrichment

Chartier (1986) stated that the task of marriage enrichment is to equip couples with better insights, skills, and tools than they normally possess in order that they may appropriate the rewards a fully functioning companionship marriage has to offer. The main objectives of a marriage enrichment program can include: awareness of each person's own needs and expectations, awareness of the partner's needs and expectations, improved communication, enhanced problem-solving and negotiating skills, and increased overall adjustment, optimism, and satisfaction with the marriage (Zimpfer, 1988). Garland (1983) reported that marriage enrichment programs currently being provided to couples are a mixture of attitudinal and skills training experiences designed to achieve particular goals. These goals include increasing spouses' satisfaction with their relationship, improving partners' communication with one another, and resolving particular conflicting issues or crises in the relationship.

Group Effects of Marriage Enrichment

Marriage enrichment programs are typically conducted in groups, thus benefitting from the assembly effect, which builds cohesiveness and fosters the realization among participants that they are not alone in their struggles (Zimpfer, 1988). Some of these groups are highly structured, and some change with the experience of the leader or composition of the couples' group. There are group sessions with couple interaction, while some programs are designed so that the partners will only encounter each other. There are even leaderless group experiences intended to be guided by readings or cassette tapes made for this purpose (Diskin, 1986).

Zimpfer (1986) believed that in marriage enrichment a group of several couples derives special value from the sense of common purpose and cohesiveness provided by the assemblage of persons and their activities. Conversely, the group becomes the object of care by the participants, each giving attention to the needs of the group and assuming a sense of responsibility for the welfare of the whole. Hof and Miller (1981) concluded that the group setting provides a temporary and safe learning environment through which trust can grow and from which support can be drawn. In addition, couples have the opportunity to observe alternative models of relating and to give and to receive appropriate feedback.

Target Population of Marriage Enrichment

Generally, marriage enrichment services are considered most appropriate for couples who are committed to their marriages and who are not in the midst of marital crisis. These services are designed to "make good marriages better" (Garland, 1983). The typical participants for whom marriage enrichment was originally intended were married couples who had no real conflicts, who perceived their marriage as basically healthy, and who wanted to further enliven and make fuller their relationship (Zimpfer, 1988). The assumption was that if happily married couples could be provided with appropriate skills and growth experiences, not only would their immediate marital satisfaction be heightened, but they would be able to resolve future developmental crises without resorting to divorce. Therefore, the designated target population consisted of couples who had what they perceived to be fairly well-functioning marriages and who wished to make their marriages even more mutually satisfying (Powell & Wampler, 1982).

Although the working assumption of marriage enrichment programs was that participants have satisfying, well-functioning marriages, some research suggested that this assumption was not entirely correct (Krug & Ahadi, 1986). Powell and Wampler (1982)

compared men and women participating together in marital enrichment with control subjects and found that consistent patterns of personality differences emerged. Enrichment participants were less adjusted, less caring, and more hostile than non-participant controls. From these results, Powell and Wampler (1982) concluded that there were some important ways in which men and women who participated in marriage enrichment differed from the general population. Enrichment participants appeared to be generally less well adjusted and more dysfunctional in their interpersonal relationships than the general population.

In recent years, there has been a further expansion to include couples who were experiencing severe difficulty and dysfunction intrapersonally, interpersonally, or both (Zimpfer, 1988). Albeit, L'Abate and Weinstein (1987) indicated that enrichment programs should not be used for relationships that are extremely disturbed and chaotic. However, Gross (1988) reported that his long-term involvement with marriage enrichment programs produced documented cases of fragmented marriages being restored through participation in marriage enrichment programs.

Guernsey, Guernsey, and Cooney (1985) concluded that since it is difficult to find couples and families "not at risk", enrichment programs should not be sharply distinguished from prevention programs but rather viewed as belonging at the lower end of the at-risk continuum, not off the continuum entirely. Any specific program may define as its target population couples anywhere or everywhere on a continuum of strength or satisfaction. Powell and Wampler (1982) presented a similar continuum and argued that marriage enrichment appealed mostly to people who perceived at least some dissatisfaction and expressed the need for improvement in their marriages.

Need for Study

The rapid changes that characterize our modern society are reflected within the framework of the family (Diskin, 1986). The need for marriage enrichment services has been heightened by these sociological changes (Garland, 1983). Perhaps the greatest contribution to these changes has been the escalating divorce rate, which affects, not only the marital couple, but also the family and society as a whole. Society reflects the quality of the family, and the family reflects the quality of the marriage (Mace, 1985). Seeing the importance of the marital relationship to the family as well as society, there appears to be a need to add to the quality of the marital relationship and to help deter an escalating divorce rate.

There is a growing realization that the strategy of remediation which has been provided by traditional marriage counseling is inadequate to curtail the rising incidence of marital dysfunction. Couples seldom seek marriage counseling until the relationship has deteriorated almost beyond repair. By that time one or both parties are so hurt and discouraged that it is a major task to sustain the necessary motivation to repair the damage. Therefore, considerable energy needs to be devoted to the design and implementation of programs intended to prevent marital dysfunction before it occurs (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990).

Marriage enrichment can be described as a systematic effort to improve the functioning of marital couples through educational and preventive means. The enrichment concept emanated from the belief that prevention is more effective and less costly than the cure of problems after they have emerged. Therefore, a preventive intervention seems more feasible than that of remedy. The preventive approach focuses on growth rather than pathology, and a good interpersonal relationship facilitated by effective communication is necessary for marital growth.

The challenge of a preventive marriage enrichment program is to make resources available to acquire and to use skills necessary to relate together effectively, to solve problems, and to resolve conflicts (Garland, 1983). The main objectives of a marriage enrichment program include awareness of needs and expectations, improved communication, enhanced problem-solving and negotiating skills, and increased overall adjustment and satisfaction with the marriage (Zimpfer, 1988). The assumption is that if married couples with no serious dysfunctions can be provided the appropriate skills and growth experiences, not only would their immediate marital satisfaction be heightened, but they would be able to resolve future developmental crises.

Outcome studies are needed to provide evidence of effectiveness which can be understood by the allied health profession as well as the educated lay public.

Well-conducted outcome studies make the dissemination of effective techniques and approaches easier by providing proper documentation (Beach & O'Leary, 1985).

However, the status of marriage enrichment research reflects a minimal degree of verifiable, successful outcome. This deficiency in adequate outcome research makes it important to institute research designs which permit the delineation of valid outcome results.

Common methodological flaws pervade studies in the literature. Two distinct problems identified are the lack of control groups and inadequate follow-up (Hammonds & Worthington, 1985). These flaws prevent the studies of marriage enrichment from satisfying the demands of scientific rigor, and these deficiencies are addressed in the research design of the present study.

Purpose of Study

This research study was designed to determine whether a particular didactic-experiential marriage enrichment program from a Christian perspective had a positive effect on the communication and marital satisfaction/adjustment of the participants. A comparison of the results was made between an experimental group and a control group. Each group consisted of married couples who saw themselves basically as having good and effective marriages, or at least their relationships were not seriously dysfunctional.

A quasi-experimental design which McMillan & Schumacher (1989, p. 323) termed as a nonequivalent pretest-posttest control group design was utilized with a six-week follow-up for both experimental and control group participants. Participants for the marriage enrichment workshop were solicited through churches as well as mailing lists and radio and newspaper advertisements. Those on a waiting list awaiting a future marriage enrichment experience served as a control group. With a control group and a six-week follow-up integrated into the study, two of the reported weaknesses in the literature were addressed (Hammonds & Worthington, 1985).

One of the objectives of this marriage enrichment program was to teach skills of communication so that individuals would have the tools to express their feelings, to make their points clear, to listen with empathy, and to be attentive to non-verbal communication. Other objectives included setting goals for marriage, understanding sex roles, learning how to resolve conflicts, and learning practical ways to build intimacy. The enrichment model was a growth and educational one presented as an intervention instrument in the marriage relationship and was presented from a Christian perspective.

Contribution of the Study

Much of the marriage enrichment research reported in the literature was religiously-based. Most of these research projects were developed in a specific homogenous group setting, such as a particular church, religious school, or some other religious organization. The present study represented a Christian-based approach, yet it was designed to appeal to a broader base of various sectors of the religious community. This broader base was sought by utilizing various means of promotion, crossing denominational lines.

This research study addressed two deficiencies in the literature: a lack of an adequate control group and the utilization of a follow-up. The control group was made up of those who were interested in participating in a future marriage enrichment retreat. A six-week follow-up was conducted to measure the lasting effects of the program intervention. The results of this study will add to the field of marriage enrichment research and sought to verify that an enrichment program that teaches specific marital skills will continue to be very important in the enhancement of married and family life.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The dramatically increased divorce rate in the United States since World War II has led many religious institutions to initiate group efforts to enhance marriage relationships. Concurrently, the helping professions were promoting the human potential movement, which included self-help and paraprofessional help (Hammonds & Worthington, 1985).

Marriage enrichment as offered by the secular helping professions differs in some respects from marriage enrichment as it has developed in church settings. The church-related marriage enrichment movement is more a philosophy than a methodology for human services. Historically, the church has supported the family as an institution. Marriage enrichment as it comes from the church represents the concerned response of religious groups and their leaders to changes in modern family life. The helping professions seem to be more concerned with methodologies, offering marriage enrichment services designed to enhance people's ability to communicate within and derive satisfaction from their marriages (Garland, 1983).

Marriage Enrichment Programs

Since marriage enrichment programs provide skills and models for partners in their search for a new kind of relationship, different types of programs have evolved to aid in the search. Even though many programs used different approaches and addressed different issues, a study conducted by Worthington, Buston, and Hammonds (1989) identified two primary components in marriage enrichment programs. These two components were: information (about marital life) and discussion (with other couples or with a counselor). Results of the study showed that information had little apparent effect on couples, but discussion in groups improved couples' marriage satisfaction and their sexual and intellectual intimacy throughout the study relative to couples not receiving group discussion. Improvement was thought to be due to the group discussion, heightening couples' attention to how they use their time as a couple.

Religious-based Programs

The church has been very active in the marriage enrichment movement, with Marriage Encounter being one of the earliest expressions (Gallagher, 1975; Hof & Miller, 1981). An outgrowth of the Christian Family Movement, Marriage Encounter was brought to the United States in 1967 by fifty Spanish couples who conducted weekend "retreats" across the country with U. S. priests. Since the first weekend held in Spain in 1962 by Father Calvo, the movement has split into three divisions: Worldwide Marriage Encounter (WME), National Marriage Encounter (NME), and Encuentro Conjugal (only in Spanish-speaking countries). The basic philosophy and content of the weekend of the three programs remained the same. The major difference was found in the organization itself and the amount of emphasis placed on conjugal dialogue (focus on and expression of inner feelings to one's partner). WME is more dogmatic, structured, and organized, placing much emphasis on daily dialogue of participants in follow-up. NME is more liberal and ecumenical, placing less emphasis on daily dialogue (Becnel & Levy, 1983).

Silverman and Urbaniak (1983) gave the following brief description of a Marriage

Encounter weekend:

Marriage Encounter (ME) is a brief, highly structured couples-centered program designed to help participating couples learn techniques of communication and to experience each other as fully as possible during the process. There is an emphasis on the opportunity for participants to be together as a couple, away from normal routines, commitments, and pressures, in an atmosphere of seclusion and leisure. There is no sharing of marital experiences between couples or in the total group, except by the leadership couple. This couple working with a trained religious leader, makes several presentations to the entire group. Afterward, the couples, in the privacy of their own rooms, write down their personal reflections on a variety of personal, interpersonal, and spiritual issues. Following the writing, each partner reads what the other has written, and each encourages the other to verbally develop and further describe the written feelings in an attempt to experience each other more fully at an affective level. The specific dialogue process is practiced repeatedly throughout the weekend (p. 42).

To determine characteristics of Marriage Encounter participants, Silverman and Urbaniak (1983) presented some descriptive data. Silverman and Urbaniak (1983) concluded on the basis of the self-reported information gathered that Marriage Encounter's assertion that the program is for couples with a fairly well-functioning relationship but who wish enhancement held true for this sample. Specifically, the great majority of the couples in this sample viewed their marriages as above average to excellent on the selected variables and definitely perceived themselves as being involved in Marriage Encounter to enrich an already stable relationship.

In another study by Becnel and Levy (1983), participants from two encounter weekends were allowed by WME to be examined for proposed effects. Another group of future WME participants was examined as a control. The results of the data analysis indicated that, except for focusing ability, the WME experimental group did not

significantly change compared to the no treatment control group on the variables of sex-role identity, self-disclosure, and marital need satisfaction. However, there was a significant difference in "finding meaning in life", indicating that WME program partners may experience existential shifts toward purposeful living. Becnel and Levy (1983) concluded that the ability to focus on feelings could allow one to examine one's life in terms of meaning.

Doherty and Walker (1982) conducted an exploratory study to investigate the relation between participation in Marriage Encounter and subsequent marital or family distress. There was a segment of participants who emerged from their Marriage Encounter weekend, either immediately or later, damaged and in need of assistance. The reported most troublesome feature of the Marriage Encounter weekend was its intensity. The program was designed to create rapid change in a marriage by inducing open communication on sensitive marital issues and by dramatically altering a couple's expectations for marriage.

Doherty, Lester, and Leigh (1986) reported that even though therapy itself can also create dramatic changes, there still remains a fundamental difference between therapy and Marriage Encounter. In therapy, therapists are trained to assess couples before intervening, to diagnose trouble when it occurs in therapy, and to respond by trying to prevent further deterioration of the marital relationship. Marriage Encounter, on the other hand, provides no systematic way to detect or deal with marital distress before, during, or after the weekend, other than telling couples they are free to talk to the clergy during the weekend (Doherty, Lester, & Leigh, 1986).

The study by Doherty et al. (1986) examined interview and essay data for 50 married couples who had the most positive or most negative reactions in a larger sample of participants in Marriage Encounter weekends. According to the findings of the study,

about 1 in 8 couples (12.3%) were strongly affected by Marriage Encounter, with about half of this number harmed and half helped. The majority of those strongly affected either way were distressed prior to the weekend. Beyond that, the rest of the couples experienced moderately beneficial weekends or no effect at all.

In an earlier study, Lester and Doherty (1983) conducted a retrospective survey to determine how couples felt about their Marriage Encounter experience an average of four years later. Results of the study showed that 80% of the couples reported a totally positive experience. The most frequently cited positive aspect of the program was the "dialogue" or communication technique designed to encourage the expression of feelings. The most frequently cited negative effect was that needs were identified on the weekend but were not subsequently fulfilled, resulting in greater frustration for the respondent. Lester and Doherty (1983) concluded on the basis of this study that Marriage Encounter was viewed as a helpful experience by most couples, but a significant minority of couples may have experienced negative consequences of the program.

Witteman and Fitzpatrick (1986), who presented themselves as communication scholars, were interested in evaluating Marriage Encounter because it advertised itself as a communication intervention program. They found that the program devoted no time to the teaching and modeling of specific communication and problem-solving skills. While team leaders talked about their marriages, they were not disclosing about specific communication interactions that had taken place in their relationship, and they did not model effective marital communication.

Focus on personal awareness, individual growth and development, and interpersonal relationships while adopting a religious-spiritual attitude are becoming more common. Kvernén (1983) developed an 8-hour seminar on growth that was based on Bible concepts and relevant psychological concepts to encourage personal growth.

Participants, who were volunteers from a Christian congregation, were compared with a no-treatment control group from a church Sunday school class. Significant results favoring the seminar participants were found on 7 of 11 rating scales including a Self-Esteem Scale, Purpose in Life Scale, and several other scales developed for the study.

Strozier (1981) evaluated the effects of the basic model of the National Marriage Enrichment System of the Southern Baptist Convention with couples who professed that faith. The results were inconclusive, although at least one finding (change on the Relationship Change scale) favored the treatment over a non-treatment waiting group. No difference was found between experimental participants and controls on marital communication or dyadic adjustment over a 5-week follow-up.

Another study of marriage enrichment among Southern Baptist couples was conducted by Strickland (1982). In this treatment, a retreat setting was used, and the program was based on principles of the Bible and Southern Baptist values regarding the quality and stability of marriage. Strickland (1982) compared a social-exchange marriage enrichment strategy with the Southern Baptist model. Retreat participants were found to differ significantly from controls at the post-test and 6-week follow-up, with the social exchange model effecting the greater improvement.

A research study utilizing a true experimental design to measure the effectiveness of a marriage enrichment program was conducted by Meadors (1989). Marital communication and marital adjustment measurements were taken from an experimental group of 45 married couples and compared with the results derived from 25 couples who were on a waiting list to attend a future marriage enrichment program. The sample population sample was taken from those who supported a large national Christian television ministry and Christian Retreat Center (Heritage, U. S. A.). The results indicated that the marriage enrichment program had a significant positive effect on marital

communication and marital adjustment as measured immediately after the program. The level of communication and adjustment showed sustained statistically significant increases over a six-week period.

Major Secular Programs

Hammonds and Worthington (1985) reported that the best known programs in marriage enrichment were the Couples Communication Program (Miller, Nunnally, & Wackman, 1979); the Association of Couples for Marriage Enrichment (ACME) program (Mace & Mace, 1975); the Conjugal Relationship Enhancement (Guerney, 1977); the Pairing Enrichment Program (Travis & Travis, 1975); and the Structured Marital Enrichment Program (L'Abate & Weinstein, 1987). Zimpfer (1988) did a comprehensive review of marriage enrichment research which included the major programs, and he concluded the following:

1. The Conjugal Relationship Enhancement Program was the most commonly investigated, and with generally positive results, especially on the outcome of marital adjustment.

2. The outcomes of the Couples Communication Program were positive in the relationship skills (communication) realm over the short term, but were less clear over a follow-up period.

A more recent major program in marriage enrichment is Training in Marriage Enrichment (TIME) (Dinkmeyer & Carlson, 1984). Dinkmeyer and Carlson (1986b) described TIME as an educational program designed to help married couples learn the skills they need to build a loving, supportive relationship. In TIME groups, couples develop skills that enable them to enrich their marriage and to deal with particular challenges that they experience. Couples define the marriage they want and develop and

retain the skills to maintain that relationship. Participation in a TIME group does not imply that a couple has an ineffective marriage or marriage problems. Rather, a couple's participation is an indication that they want to grow and desire to strengthen their relationship.

Mattson, Christensen, and England (1990) conducted a research to assess the effectiveness of the TIME program. A treatment-nontreatment, pretest-posttest design was used. The treatment group received the eight-week TIME training program while the nontreatment group received no treatment for the eight weeks. The results indicated that TIME did have a positive effect on the treatment group's perceptions about changes in their marriages as measured by the Marital Self-Evaluation (Dinkmeyer & Carlson, 1984), the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976), and the Relationship Change Scale (Guerney, 1977). The treatment group and nontreatment group were significantly different on Marital Self-Evaluation, the consensus subscale of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, and the Relationship Change Scale. Pretest and posttest scores for the treatment group were also significantly different in the areas of Marital Self-Evaluation, Marital Communication, and Dyadic Adjustment. The Relationship Change Scale was given only posttreatment to both groups.

Other Secular Programs

Hammonds and Worthington (1985) conducted a research study in which participants volunteered for either an ACME-type marital enrichment discussion group or an assessment-only control group. Initially, couples in this brief marriage enrichment group were more dissatisfied with their marriages and reported poorer communication than those in the assessment only condition. However, the enrichment group raised their level of marital satisfaction to equal that of the control group at post treatment and at follow-up.

The treatment resulted in continued increases in verbal communication, finally resulting in a higher mean for the treatment group at follow-up than that of the control group. Though statistical regression to the mean and "placebo" effects were reported as possible contributions to the improvement, the group apparently had a beneficent effect.

Ford, Bashford, and DeWitt (1984) examined three approaches to marital enrichment to determine if predictors of client gains could be identified empirically. Direct training of spousal communication skills, observation of videotaped simulations of direct training, and bibliotherapy with telephone contacts were the three approaches, and a wait-list control group was evaluated. Prediction of outcome was more robust for the three trained groups than for the wait-list group. Changes in clients' communication behaviors were not well predicted, leading to the conclusion that behavior changes are more a function of systematic skills training for all clients.

Floyd and Floyd (1987) described a Cognitive-Emotional-Behavioural Marriage Enrichment Retreat, which attempted to enhance the quality of an already good marriage by assisting spouses to develop both improved intrapersonal and interpersonal skills of communication. Participants were involved in both didactic and experiential activities which taught the individual to dispute beliefs or self-talk which caused strong adverse emotions. Also, Cognitive-Emotional-Behaviour therapy taught that humans tend to exaggerate and generalize in ways which are destructive to one's emotional well-being. Floyd and Floyd (1987) concluded that the primary difference between this enrichment weekend and other approaches resulted from the introduction of a rather structured framework which was applied within an educational model.

An outcome study of a structured marital enrichment program conducted by Gingras, Adam, and Chagnon (1983) revealed that this program was effective in improving marital adjustment, communication, and certain problem-solving skills. The results of the

study showed that a positive awareness of one's expectations and of the marital relationship seemed to be particularly important to couple functioning. The role of communication skills and of negotiation training were not as clear. One particular trend that emerged was that negotiation skills seemed more useful for seriously dysfunctional couples.

Improvements were maintained for a one-year follow-up.

Cleaver (1987) investigated the effectiveness of teaching communication skills to married couples by means of a structured videotape. Two groups of married couples were taught the relevant communication skills. The experimental group was taught the skills using the videotape. Pre-, post-, and follow-up measures were taken. A significant improvement in taught skills for both groups was found. Even though both methods appeared to be effective, the follow-up measures indicated that the effect of the videotape was more lasting over a period of 2 months. One advantage of such findings is that a less qualified person could serve as a facilitator of a marriage enrichment intervention with the use of the video.

The Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP) assumes a primary prevention focus in working with couples and maintains that improving the skills couples have for handling conflict greatly reduces the levels of marital distress and divorce. The program consists of 5 sessions designed to teach couples effective communication and conflict management skills. The central messages in PREP are that constructive handling of disagreements can prevent later distress and that couples can change their communication behavior and take control of the conflicts (Renick, Blumberg, & Markman, 1992).

Markman, Renick, Floyd, Stanley, and Clements (1993) reported the results of a 4- and 5-year follow-up evaluating the effects of PREP. The intervention program appeared to give couples a significant advantage in communication and conflict management up to 4

years later. Specifically, intervention couples showed greater use of communication skills, greater positive affect, more problem-solving skill, and more support and validation than did control couples. They also showed less withdrawal, less denial, less dominance, less negative affect, less conflict, and less overall negative communication than did control couples at the same time. By the 5-year follow-up, the groups generally were not significantly different on these dimensions except for communication skill usage by men and a trend on negative escalation. Markman et al. (1993) stated that this attenuation of statistical effects may have been due to attrition on sample size, as well as the possibility of the diminishing effect of the intervention over time.

The Creative Marriage Enrichment Program (Hof & Miller, 1981) shares three theoretical roots that are common to many marriage enrichment programs. First, there is an empathic environment in which participants can freely express their feelings and experience increased self-acceptance. Secondly, there is the behavioral emphasis on enabling participants to learn and practice specific skills they can use to change their own behavior. Thirdly, there is an emphasis on the use of group process to provide an environment in which various curative and growth factors can be experienced.

General Outcomes of Marriage Enrichment

Comprehensive reviews of various marital enrichment programs concluded that outcomes are generally positive, especially for joint and for structured approaches. Enrichment programs dealing specifically with communication have been most convincingly demonstrated to be effective (Gingras, Adam, & Chagnon, 1983). In a thorough and exhaustive study of the enrichment field by Giblin, Sprenkle, and Sheehan (1985), it was indicated that the average person who participated in enrichment was better off following intervention than 67% of those who did not. Giblin et al. (1985) discovered

that couples involved in various approaches to marital enrichment reported a positive impact upon relationship quality. This conclusion appeared to be true with non-distressed as well as distressed couples.

While a substantial association between marital communication and marital satisfaction has been demonstrated in much previous research, Barnes, Schumm, Jurich, and Bollman (1984) suggested that previous research has overlooked the possibility that positive regard might be able to explain much of that association. In a study of two samples from Kansas of predominantly white, middle-class couples, Barnes et al. (1984) compared the effects of controlling regard in the marital communication/marital satisfaction relationship with the effects of controlling communication variables in the regard/marital satisfaction relationship. The results indicated that marital communication variables of empathy and congruence did not explain variations in marital satisfaction as effectively as did positive regard. Barnes et al. (1984) suggested that this finding could have important implications on how marital communication training programs are designed and implemented, since most programs are based on a rather simplistic theoretical model of the relationship between marital communication and marital satisfaction.

Zuo (1992) reported on a study which examined the reciprocal relationship between marital interaction and marital happiness with a three-wave panel study of a national sample of married persons. The overall finding supported the hypothesis that there existed a positive reciprocal relationship between marital interaction and marital happiness. This relationship held for both men and women. It was also found that the strength of the impact that interaction and happiness have on each other varied with marital duration.

Criticisms of Marriage Enrichment Research

Hammonds and Worthington (1985) stated that marriage enrichment research has been criticized on several methodological grounds, including the failure to include control groups, over reliance on participant self-report or trainer assessment, and lack of follow-up assessments. In short, little is known about what actually happens in any particular marriage enrichment group and about what factors are responsible for beneficial effects of the group.

Worthington et al. (1989) reported that marriage enrichment programs have been shown to be effective for many couples, but no research has investigated components of marriage enrichment. Further, there has been little explicit theorizing about what effective marriage enrichment is and how it might be measured. Each approach measures what it teaches, with most measures being global self-reports of happiness, marital adjustment, or consumer satisfaction. Worthington et al. (1989) proposed that a multidimensional approach to assessment is needed in investigating marriage enrichment programs. Furthermore, marital adjustment or satisfaction should not only be addressed, but there should also be an investigation of intimacy, communication, and conflict resolution. In addition, both self-report and behavioral measures should be used.

Summary

Marriage enrichment can be described as a systematic effort to improve the functioning of marital couples through educational and preventive means. This model emanated from the belief that prevention is more effective and less costly than the cure of problems after they have emerged.

Numerous programs for marriage enrichment have been developed both by the religious and secular segments of the population. The major programs which emerged

were Marriage Encounter (Gallagher, 1975), the Relationship Enhancement Program (Guerney, 1977), and the Couple Communication program (Miller et al. 1979).

Marriage enrichment programs are typically conducted in groups, thus benefitting from the assembly effect, which builds cohesiveness and fosters the realization among participants that they are not alone in their struggles. In addition, participants may benefit from the effects of modeling.

The target group for which marriage enrichment was originally designed consisted of married couples who had no real conflicts and perceived their marriage as basically healthy. Recently, this notion has been challenged, suggesting that participants were somewhere between those whose marriages were totally satisfying and those who were dysfunctional enough to seek for therapy. There has also been an expanded awareness that marriage enrichment programs could be beneficial to newly-weds and even dating couples.

The results of marriage enrichment are mixed, depending on who is doing the reporting. However, Zimpfer (1988) reported that an extension of Hof and Miller's (1981) research review supported their optimism about the use of marriage enrichment. From a research point of view, there are several methodological weaknesses. Yet, in the words of Mace (1987), marriage enrichment appears to be the "wave of the future."

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The focus of this chapter is on the description of the subjects and the setting of the study. Assessment and treatment procedures are discussed, and the rationale for selecting the instrumentation used in this study is described. The chapter is concluded with a description of the design of the study, the research questions and hypotheses, and the statistical analysis. The research study focused on the comparison of communication and marital adjustment between an experimental group and a control group, with measures taken at pretest, posttest, and follow-up.

Assumptions Concerning the Enrichment Program

The following assumptions are made concerning this study:

1. There is no limit to marital growth; a good marriage can be made better.
2. Good marital communication will lead to better marital adjustment or satisfaction.
3. Resolution of marital conflicts can lead to better communication.
4. Communication skills can be taught.
5. Conflict resolution skills can be taught.
6. A combination didactic-experiential approach is superior to either a didactic approach or experiential approach taken singularly.
7. Behavior and perception can begin to change over the span of a 3-day retreat program.

Subjects

Participants in the marriage enrichment weekend were solicited through contacts with area pastors. Letters and brochures were sent to 75 pastors in the Atlanta area encouraging them to make the marriage enrichment weekend known to their parishioners. Presentations were also made to separate meetings of the Cartersville, Georgia Ministerial Alliance, the Woodstock, Georgia Ministerial Alliance, and the Jasper, Georgia Ministerial Association. Additionally, a presentation was made to a meeting of 25 counselors/therapists of the AlphaCare Christian Therapy Services organization, and brochures were made available to all six of AlphaCare's Atlanta-area offices. Announcements were made on several area radio stations in addition to advertisements placed in four area newspapers.

Prospective participants were asked to register with an understanding that limited facilities were available. Fifteen couples who registered became the experimental group that participated in the enrichment weekend. Twenty other couples had shown interest and inquired about the retreat, but for one reason or another were not able to participate at the assigned time. Fifteen couples were randomly selected from this group and were asked to serve as a control group with the promise of a future marriage enrichment weekend.

A second marriage enrichment weekend program was conducted six months after the first weekend to accommodate those on the waiting list. This weekend served only the purpose of fulfilling the promise to accommodate those who were not able to participate in the first weekend but were willing to serve as the control for the experimental group of the first weekend. There were only six couples who actually participated.

The first weekend retreat was conducted in early Spring, while the second one was conducted in early Fall. Both retreats were conducted at the Burnt Mountain Baptist

Assembly Retreat Center, owned and operated by the Atlanta-area association of Southern Baptist Churches, and was located in a picturesque setting in the North Georgia Mountains near Jasper, Georgia. The facilities included a modern 33-room motel with separate dining and convention halls nearby. Participants paid a fee which covered the costs of two nights lodging as well as the cost of all meals from Friday evening until Sunday afternoon.

Program

The weekend marriage enrichment program was designed and facilitated by the researcher (See Appendix G). The program was partially structured using a combination of didactic and experiential methods and was examined by three experts in the field of marriage enrichment to determine its appropriateness for the research. These same experts examined the testing instruments to determine their correlation to the program. The researcher and his wife were the presenters and facilitators of the program.

The general format for the marriage enrichment experience was designed to develop communication skills that enrich the marital relationship. Enhancement of the participants' ability to be accommodating in meeting their mate's personal needs was cultivated throughout the workshop. The workshop was three days in duration, beginning with an introductory session on Friday evening. The second day's activities focused on goal setting for the marriage, role expectations, communication skills, conflict resolution, and intimacy. The activities of the third day included ways of communicating love, the spiritual aspects of a marriage, important life stages and events which might affect a marriage, and a final conclusive session which included an evaluation of the workshop.

Instrumentation

Marital Communication Inventory

The first dependent variable represented the measurement of perceived communication by participants of the experimental group and the control group. The instrument used to measure marital communication was the Marital Communication Inventory (MCI) (Bienvenu, 1970) (Appendix H). This instrument was developed to give spouses a better insight into the degree and patterns of communication in their marriage. The inventory consisted of 46 questions concerning how each spouse perceived different family functions. A different but comparable form was used for husbands and wives.

Bienvenu (1970) formulated items for the MCI from a review of the literature and from his own experiences in marriage and family counseling. In a study of 172 married couples, Bienvenu used the chi-square test to show that 45 of 46 items discriminated between the upper and lower quartiles at the .01 level of confidence with one degree of freedom. One item discriminated at the .05 level.

Evidence of the validity of the MCI was offered from data derived from a study of two groups of 23 subjects each (Bienvenu, 1970). The first group was receiving marital counseling; the second group was without apparent marital problems, but was comparable to the first in terms of age, length of marriage, and education. The Mann-Whitney U test was utilized to establish validity, and Bienvenu (1970) found a significant difference ($U=117, p = .01$) in marital communication in favor of the group with no apparent problems.

Using the Spearman-Brown Prophecy formula, Bienvenu (1969) reported a split-half correlation coefficient of .93 on the scores of 60 subjects. In a study of 20 couples, Rappaport (1971) established a test-retest reliability coefficient of .94 by

comparing test-retest scores with a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PMC) formula (r). Rappaport (1971) hypothesized that the experimental group would improve in marital communication as measured by the MCI. This was strongly confirmed with a 3 X 2 analysis of variance with repeated measures ($F=19.86, p=.001$).

Marital Adjustment Test

The second dependent variable represented a measurement of perceived marital adjustment of experimental and control group participants. The instrument used to measure marital adjustment was the Marital Adjustment Test (MAT) (Locke & Wallace, 1959) (Appendix I). There was one single form for both husbands and wives. Scores ranged from 2 to 158. The higher the score, the better the marital adjustment.

Locke and Wallace (1959) established the validity of the MAT using 236 subjects, of which 48 were known to be maladjusted in marriage. The test clearly distinguished between the adjusted and maladjusted. The mean adjustment score for the adjusted marriage was 135.9, and the mean adjustment score for the maladjusted marriage was 71.7. Through the statistical properties of inference, the cut-off score of 100 was established on the MAT to differentiate between adjusted and maladjusted marriages.

Bruder (1972) found a test-retest reliability coefficient of .83 established for the control group when comparing the pretest and posttest scores of the MAT with the Pearson PMC formula. Bagarozzi (1985) stated that new instruments don't compare with the MAT because of the large number of validation and reliability studies in favor of the MAT. Bagarozzi (1985) reported a .90 split half reliability for the MAT.

Research Design

The strongest and most convincing arguments of the causal effect of the independent variable is provided by a true experimental design which controls for the most sources of internal invalidity (McMillan & Schumacher, 1989). However, there are circumstances by which a true experimental design is not possible or feasible. In that case, a quasi-experimental design may be utilized and provide a design that is stronger than a pre-experimental design.

The major obstacle in implementing a true experimental design is in the randomization of subjects. Because of the nature of this study, the researcher found it to be very difficult and impractical to obtain the necessary pool of participants from which an adequate random selection of participants could be obtained. This conclusion was drawn after an extensive effort was made in the recruitment of participants through newspaper and radio advertisements, mailings to individuals as well as pastors and churches, and personal presentations to ministerial associations and counseling professionals. Therefore, a nonequivalent pretest-posttest control group design was utilized with a six-week follow-up administered to both experimental and control participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 1989, p. 323).

Pretests measuring levels of marital communication and marital adjustment were administered to both experimental and control groups. Posttests measuring the same two variables were administered only to the experimental group to determine if there were any significant effects of the weekend intervention. No posttests were given the control group. The administration of the follow-up tests measuring communication and adjustment was to determine if there were lasting effects of the marriage enrichment program by measuring the differences between the experimental and control groups.

Data Collection

The participants of the experimental and control groups were sent a letter by the researcher asking for their voluntary participation in this present study (Appendixes C & D). The purpose of the study was explained, and confidentiality was assured in protecting their identity. Included with the letter was an Informed Consent Form (Appendix B) as well as pretests of the MCI and the MAT. Instructions were given for husbands and wives to complete the pretests separately without collaboration. Each was asked to fill them out two days prior to the beginning of the marriage enrichment program. The experimental group participants were asked to bring all forms with them to the workshop, while the control group participants were asked to mail their forms back to the researcher in a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

At the conclusion of the marriage enrichment weekend, experimental group participants were instructed to complete the posttest for each inventory. They were asked to respond according to their present feelings and not to attempt to recall how they had responded previously. No posttests were administered to the control group participants.

The final instructions given members of the experimental group concerned a six-week, follow-up assessment in which the same forms of the MCI and the MAT were to be mailed to them. It was explained that this would enable the researcher to measure the "lasting effects" of the marriage enrichment experience. A letter (Appendix E) accompanied the inventories at the six-week date, and the forms were mailed back to the researcher in furnished envelopes.

The six-week follow-up inventories were also sent to the control group participants with a letter giving instructions for their completions (Appendix F). These inventories were returned to the researcher in provided stamped, self-addressed envelopes.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The general question to be answered by this research study is whether a partially-structured marriage enrichment program will have an effect on the marital communication and marital adjustment of program participants. In order to evaluate the weekend marriage enrichment program, specific answers were sought to the following questions:

1. Does marriage enrichment have an effect on the communication skills of individuals who undergo a week-end program?
2. Will the weekend marriage enrichment intervention have lasting effects on the perceived communication of the participants?
3. Does marriage enrichment have an effect on the marital adjustment of individuals who undergo a week-end program?
4. Will the weekend marriage enrichment intervention have lasting effects on the marital adjustment of the participants?

The following hypotheses as they relate to the four research questions were tested to determine the effect of the marriage enrichment weekend program:

Research Question 1

Does marriage enrichment have an effect on the communication skills of individuals who undergo a week-end program?

Hypothesis I. There will be no difference between participants of the experimental group from pretest to posttest to follow-up in their perceived ability to communicate thoughts, feelings, and intentions as measured by the Marital Communication Inventory.

Hypothesis II. There will be no difference between males of the experimental group from pretest to posttest to follow-up in their perceived ability to communicate thoughts, feelings, and intentions as measured by the Marital Communication Inventory.

Hypothesis III: There will be no difference between females of the experimental group from pretest to posttest to follow-up in their perceived ability to communicate thoughts, feelings, and intentions as measured by the Marital Communication Inventory.

Research Question 2

Will the weekend marriage enrichment intervention have lasting effects on the perceived communication of the participants?

Hypothesis IV. There will be no difference between participants of the experimental group and the control group from pretest to follow-up in their perceived ability to communicate thoughts, feelings, and intentions as measured by the Marital Communication Inventory.

Hypothesis V. There will be no difference between males of the experimental group and the control group from pretest to follow-up in their perceived ability to communicate thoughts, feelings, and intentions as measured by the Marital Communication Inventory.

Hypothesis VI. There will be no difference between females of the experimental group and the control group from pretest to follow-up in their perceived ability to communicate thoughts, feelings, and intentions as measured by the Marital Communication Inventory.

Research Question 3.

Does marriage enrichment have an effect on the marital adjustment of individuals who undergo a week-end program?

Hypothesis VII. There will be no difference between participants of the experimental group from pretest to posttest to follow-up in their perceived marital adjustment as measured by the Marital Adjustment Test.

Hypothesis VIII. There will be no difference between males of the experimental group from pretest to posttest to follow-up in their perceived marital adjustment as measured by the Marital Adjustment Test.

Hypothesis IX: There will be no difference between females of the experimental group from pretest to posttest to follow-up in their perceived marital adjustment as measured by the Marital Adjustment Test.

Research Question 4

Will the weekend marriage enrichment intervention have lasting effects on the marital adjustment of the participants?

Hypothesis X. There will be no difference between participants of the experimental group and the control group from pretest to follow-up in their perceived marital adjustment as measured by the Marital Adjustment Test.

Hypothesis XI. There will be no difference between males of the experimental group and the control group from pretest to follow-up in their perceived marital adjustment as measured by the Marital Adjustment Test.

Hypothesis XII. There will be no difference between females of the experimental group and the control group from pretest to follow-up in their perceived marital adjustment as measured by the Marital Adjustment Test.

Definitions

Marriage Enrichment Program. A term used to describe a self-constructed program consisting of didactic presentations and group experiences designed to enhance a couple's communication, emotional life, and/or sexual relationship while fostering marriage strengths and developing marriage potential.

Weekend. The period of time from early Friday evening until late Sunday afternoon in which the marriage enrichment program will be presented.

Experimental Group. The group of married couples which has elected to participate in the marriage enrichment weekend.

Control Group. The group of married couples which indicated an interest in a future marriage enrichment weekend and were placed on a waiting list.

Communication. The process of transmitting and receiving information concerning one's thoughts, feelings, and intentions by means of verbal and nonverbal signs to another person.

Marital Adjustment. The presence of such characteristics in a marriage as a tendency to avoid or resolve conflicts, a feeling of satisfaction with the marriage and with each other, and the fulfilling of the marital expectations of the husband and wife.

Pretest. A test administered two days before the marriage enrichment weekend.

Posttest. A test administered immediately at the end of the marriage enrichment weekend.

Follow-up. A test administered six weeks after the marriage enrichment weekend.

Statistical Analysis of Data

Experimental group participants were administered the same inventory measuring marital communication at Pretest, Posttest, and Follow-up intervals. Therefore, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) design with repeated measures was utilized. A one between one within repeated measures design with marital communication as the dependent variable was used to test Hypotheses I, II, and III. The between factor was Gender (Male, Female), and the within factor was Time (Pretest, Posttest, Follow-up).

	Pretest	Posttest	Follow-up
Male			
Female			

A similar one between one within repeated measures design with marital adjustment as the dependent variable was used to test Hypotheses VII, VIII, and IX. For this design, the between factor was Gender (Male, Female), and the within factor was Time (Pretest, Posttest, Follow-up).

To test Hypotheses IV, V, and VI, a two between one within repeated measures design was used. The dependent variable was marital communication. Group (Experimental, Control) and Gender (Male, Female) were the between factors, and Time

(Pretest, Follow-up) was the within factor. A similar two between (Group, Gender) one within (Time) design with marital adjustment as the dependent variable tested Hypotheses X, XI, and XII.

		Pretest	Follow-up
Experimental	Male		
	Female		
Control	Male		
	Female		

Limitations of the Study

Interpretation of results must be made carefully because of the uncertainty of controlling for all threats to internal validity. The major threat to internal validity is in the selection of subjects. The greatest protection against threats to internal validity may be found in the randomization of participants to the experimental and control groups.

Caution must also be given to external validity. With the specificity of the group, namely that of motivated couples who volunteered for participation in the treatment, generalization would be limited to a similar motivated population. Glander, Locke, and

Leonard (1987) gave the following assessment concerning volunteerism:
Positive results must be interpreted in the context of the couples' voluntary participation in the workshop...they enrolled in a program to improve their relationships...and the interviews before the workshop revealed a minimum level of marital distress (therefore) some growth was expected (p. 89).

Volunteerism limits the generalization of the results to a similarly motivated universe.

There will always be the factor of motivation as the result of volunteerism, and this factor must be taken into consideration in such studies.

A second limitation that related to external validity may be found in the solicitation of participants through local ministers and churches. Conclusions drawn from participants of such samples would limit the generalization of results to similar religiously-inclined individuals, as one's personal faith would have to be a contributing factor in one's total experience.

A third factor related to the generalization of results would be the limitation of drawing conclusions of a long-term effect. It must be noted that a posttest administered immediately following the weekend program and one follow-up administered six weeks later could make it difficult to generalize results to longer-term marriage relationships. Therefore, one must be careful in concluding that there are long-term benefits based on the results of this study. It must be recognized that any lasting effects measured were for an arbitrary time of six-weeks, which is the most commonly reported follow-up period in the literature.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

A nonequivalent pretest-posttest control group design was utilized with a six-week follow-up administered to both experimental and control group participants to measure the effects of a marriage enrichment weekend on marital communication and marital adjustment. Responses gathered from the subjects were studied to determine if significant dependent variable changes occurred during the treatment interval between pretest, posttest, and follow-up assessment. Statistical analyses are presented for the four research questions and twelve hypotheses which investigated the effects of the weekend experience.

Results derived from subjects of the experimental group were compared with the results of subjects participating in an assigned control group. Sixty subjects, with a mean age of 39.4 ranging from 20 to 71 years, participated in the study.

The experimental group consisted of 30 subjects (15 married couples) which represented those who completed registration for the marriage enrichment weekend. The average age of the experimental subjects was 42.5 years. The average length of marriage was 16.6 years, with a high of 34 years and low of 1 year. There were 5 couples who had been married 25 years or longer. Four couples had been married 5 or less years. Twenty-one of the participants had never been divorced. The average number of children was 3.33, and the average education was 12.86 years with 6 having 4+ years of post high school education. Twenty-two participants rated his/her marriage above average, with 3 reporting excellent and 19 good. The number one reported problem of this group's marriages was "communication" with a "lack of quality time together" being the second most reported.

The control group consisted of 30 subjects (15 married couples) selected from a group of 40 subjects (20 couples) who had inquired into and expressed an interest in a marriage enrichment weekend but who had not followed through with registration. Their average age was 36.3 years. They had been married an average of 13.6 years, with a high of 30 and a low of 2 years. There was only one couple who had been married 25 or more years, while 2 couples reported being married 5 or less years. Only four individuals reported having been divorced (4 did not respond). The average number of children was 1.5, and the average educational level was 13.15 years. Four reported having an educational level of 4+ years post high school. Sixteen indicated above average marriages, with 9 responding that their marriage was excellent. The number one problem reported in these marriages was "lack of time together," and the number two reported problem was "communication difficulties." These problems were in the reverse order of

the report of the experimental group participants. Four individuals did not respond to the demographic questions of the inventory (See Table 1 for a summary of demographic information for experimental and control groups).

TABLE 1

DEMOGRAPHICS OF EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUP
PARTICIPANTS

Demographic Category	Experimental	Control
Marriage Rating		
Excellent	3	9
Good	19	7
Average	4	8
Below average	4	2
No response	0	4
Average Years Married	16.6	13.6
Been Divorced	9	4
Average Age	42.5	36.3
Average Number of Children	3.33	1.5
Average Education	12.86	13.15

Mean change scores were investigated for each of two dependent variables: marital communication and marital adjustment. The instrument used to measure communication was the MCI, and the MAT was the instrument used to measure marital adjustment. Both experimental and control group participants were administered pretests of both instruments. For the experimental group, mean change scores on marital communication and marital adjustment were observed at posttreatment and delayed posttreatment (six weeks) assessment periods. Mean change scores for the control group were observed only at the six-week follow-up.

Marital Communication

Research Question 1

Does marriage enrichment have an effect on the communication skills of individuals who undergo a week-end program?

Hypothesis I. There will be no difference between participants of the experimental group from pretest to posttest to follow-up in their perceived ability to communicate thoughts, feelings, and intentions as measured by the Marital Communication Inventory.

Hypothesis II. There will be no difference between males of the experimental group from pretest to posttest to follow-up in their perceived ability to communicate thoughts, feelings, and intentions as measured by the Marital Communication Inventory.

Hypothesis III: There will be no difference between females of the experimental group from pretest to posttest to follow-up in their perceived ability to communicate thoughts, feelings, and intentions as measured by the Marital Communication Inventory.

A one between one within repeated measures design with marital communication as the dependent variable was used to test Hypotheses I, II, and III. The between factor was Gender (Male, Female), and the within factor was Time (Pretest, Posttest, Follow-up).

From Pretest to Posttest to Follow-up, males had mean scores of 86.600 ($SD = 23.862$), 101.600 ($SD = 18.185$), and 99.867 ($SD = 18.875$). Corresponding female mean scores were 83.067 ($SD = 23.098$), 98.067 ($SD = 17.182$), and 92.067 ($SD = 18.152$) (See Table 2). The assumption of homogeneity of variance was accepted as reasonable (Box's $M = 6.60448$, $p = .442$).

As shown in Table 3, the interaction involving gender across time was not significant ($F = .45$, $p = .639$). Further, no significant difference was found between males and females ($F = .55$, $p = .465$), but a significant difference was noted across Time ($F = 18.04$, $p = .001$). Since there was no significant difference between Gender and a significant difference across Time, the marginal columnar means were analyzed (from Table 2).

Pretest	Posttest	Follow-up
84.833	99.833	95.967

TABLE 2

MARITAL COMMUNICATION PRETEST, POSTTEST, AND FOLLOW-UP MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR EXPERIMENTAL GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Pretest	Posttest	Follow-up
---------	----------	-----------

	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Male	86.600	23.862	101.600	18.185	99.867	18.875
Female	83.067	23.098	98.067	17.182	92.067	18.152
Total Participants	84.833	23.144	99.833	17.475	95.967	18.622

N = 15 for each cell.

TABLE 3

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE SUMMARY OF
 ONE BETWEEN ONE WITHIN REPEATED MEASURES DESIGN
 FOR EXPERIMENTAL GROUP PARTICIPANTS WITH
 MARITAL COMMUNICATION AS THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Source	Deg. Freedom	Mean Sq.	F	P
Gender	1	552.54	.55	.465
Error	28	1005.61		
Time	2	1819.51	18.04	.001
Gender by Time	2	45.51	.45	.639
Error	56	100.83		

These columnar means represented Pretest, Posttest, and Follow-up means of total participants (males and females combined). Tukey's honestly significant difference (HSD) procedure was used to discover which means were significantly different. Mauchley's Sphericity Test revealed a violation of the assumption of homogeneity of covariance among the measurements ($W = .67565, p = .005$). Therefore, in order to use Tukey's HSD procedure, the degrees of freedom were adjusted by multiplying them by the Greenhouse-Geisser epsilon (in this case, $\epsilon = .75509$). Tukey's HSD was calculated to be 8.90 (Three groups; $df = 44$ (adjusted), $N = 30$; $MS_w = 100.83, q = 3.43$). Any difference between two means exceeding the Tukey HSD would be significant. Therefore, it was determined that significant differences existed from Pretest to Posttest as well as from Pretest to Follow-up. The decrease from Posttest to Follow-up was not significant. From these results, it was concluded that experimental group participants did show a significant increase in marital communication immediately after the weekend experience, and this increase was sustained over a six-week period. These results led to the rejection of Hypothesis I, while Hypotheses II and III failed to be rejected.

Research Question 2

Will the weekend marriage enrichment intervention have lasting effects on the perceived communication of the participants?

Hypothesis IV. There will be no difference between participants of the experimental group and the control group from pretest to follow-up in their perceived ability to communicate thoughts, feelings, and intentions as measured by the Marital Communication Inventory.

Hypothesis V. There will be no difference between males of the experimental group and the control group from pretest to follow-up in their perceived ability to

communicate thoughts, feelings, and intentions as measured by the Marital Communication Inventory.

Hypothesis VI. There will be no difference between females of the experimental group and the control group from pretest to follow-up in their perceived ability to communicate thoughts, feelings, and intentions as measured by the Marital Communication Inventory.

Hypotheses IV, V, and VI were tested to determine if the marriage enrichment weekend program had a significant effect after a six-week interval when comparing the experimental group with the control group. Pretest and Follow-up means of males and females of the experimental and control groups were analyzed by utilizing a two between one within repeated measures design. The two between factors were Group (Experimental, Control) and Gender (Male, Female). The within factor was Time (Pretest, Follow-up). The means of experimental group males from Pretest to Follow-up were 86.600 ($SD = 23.862$) and 99.867 ($SD = 18.875$), respectively (Table 4). For control group males, the means of Pretest and Follow-up were 102.333 ($SD = 17.855$) and 104.733 ($SD = 16.127$). Experimental group female means of Pretest and Follow-up were 83.067 ($SD = 23.098$) and 92.067 ($SD = 18.152$). The means and standard deviations for control group females were: Pretest ($M = 102.400$, $SD = 19.581$)

TABLE 4

MARITAL COMMUNICATION PRETEST AND FOLLOW-UP
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR EXPERIMENTAL
AND CONTROL GROUP PARTICIPANTS

		Pretest		Follow-up	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Experimental	Male	86.600	23.862	99.867	18.875
	Female	83.067	23.098	92.067	18.152
	Total Experimental	84.833	23.144	95.967	18.622
Control	Male	102.333	17.855	104.733	16.127
	Female	102.400	19.581	106.267	13.776
	Total Control	102.367	18.412	105.500	14.757

N = 15 for each cell

and Follow-up ($M = 106.267$, $SD = 13.776$). The assumption of homogeneity of variance was accepted as reasonable (Box's $M = 16.06376$, $p = .090$).

All interactions involving gender across Time were non-significant ($F = .15$, $p = .703$; $F = .61$, $p = .436$) (See Table 5). There were no significant interactions involving Gender and Group ($F = .49$, $p = .485$, $F = .61$, $p = .436$). However, there was a significant interaction between Group and Time ($F = 4.79$, $p = .033$).

No significant difference was found between Gender ($F = .28$, $p = .599$), but a significant difference was found between Group ($F = 8.65$, $p = .005$). Also, there was a significant difference across Time ($F = 15.22$, $p = .001$). With a significant Group/Time interaction ($F = 4.79$, $p = .033$), the participant (male and female combined) means of the experimental group were compared with the participant (male and female combined) means of the control group from Pretest to Follow-up. The following means were taken from Table 4 and were examined:

	Pretest	Follow-up
Experimental	84.833	95.967
Control	102.367	105.500

TABLE 5

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE SUMMARY OF
TWO BETWEEN ONE WITHIN
REPEATED MEASURES DESIGN
FOR EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUP PARTICIPANTS
WITH MARITAL COMMUNICATION
AS THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Source	Deg. Freedom	Mean Square	F	P
Group	1	5494.53	8.65	.005
Gender	1	177.63	.28	.599
Group by Gender	1	313.63	.49	.485
Error	56	634.87		
Time	1	1526.53	15.22	.001
Group by Time	1	480.00	4.79	.033
Gender by Time	1	14.70	.15	.703
Group by Gender by Time	1	61.63	.61	.436
Error	56	100.31		

These means were examined by Tukey's HSD procedure. Tukey's HSD for Group was 17.11 (Four groups; $df = 87, N = 30, MS_w = 634.87, q = 3.72$). Only those differences between Groups which exceeded 17.11 would be considered significant. The control group Pretest mean was significantly higher than the experimental group Pretest mean (+17.534). The control group Follow-up mean failed to be significantly different from the experimental group Follow-up mean (+9.533). To find any significant change from Pretest to Follow-up, a difference between means must exceed Tukey's HSD of 6.8 (Four groups; $df = 87, N = 30, MS_w = 100.31, q = 3.72$). The difference of 11.134 between experimental Pretest and experimental Follow-up was significant. No significant difference was found between control Pretest and control Follow-up.

Based upon these results, Hypothesis IV was rejected. The conclusion was that when compared to the control group, the participants of the marriage enrichment weekend did show a significant increase in marital communication even after a six-week interval. Hypotheses V and VI failed to be rejected. Therefore, no conclusions could be drawn concerning differences between males and females.

Research Question 3.

Does marriage enrichment have an effect on the marital adjustment of individuals who undergo a week-end program?

Hypothesis VII. There will be no difference between participants of the experimental group from pretest to posttest to follow-up in their perceived marital adjustment as measured by the Marital Adjustment Test.

Hypothesis VIII. There will be no difference between males of the experimental group from pretest to posttest to follow-up in their perceived marital adjustment as measured by the Marital Adjustment Test.

Hypothesis IX: There will be no difference between females of the experimental group from pretest to posttest to follow-up in their perceived marital adjustment as measured by the Marital Adjustment Test.

A one between one within repeated measures design with marital adjustment as the dependent variable was used to test Hypotheses VII, VIII, and IX. The between factor was Gender (Male, Female), and the within factor was Time (Pretest, Posttest, Follow-up). The Pretest mean for males was 104.533 ($SD = 28.600$), and the Pretest mean for females was 114.467 ($SD = 33.346$). The Posttest mean for males was 130.800 ($SD = 22.527$), while the Posttest mean for females was 129.600 ($SD = 21.440$). Follow-up means for males and females were 131.933 ($SD = 25.686$) and 128.733 ($SD = 21.509$), respectively (See Table 6). The assumption of homogeneity of variance was accepted as reasonable (Box's $M = 5.89350, p = .518$). Also, Mauchley's Sphericity Test revealed no violation of the assumption of homogeneity of covariance among the measurements ($W = .96387, p = .608$).

There was no significant interaction involving Gender across Time (Table 7). No significant difference was found between males and females ($F = .05$,

TABLE 6

MARITAL ADJUSTMENT PRETEST, POSTTEST, AND
FOLLOW-UP MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR
EXPERIMENTAL GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Pretest	Posttest	Follow-up
---------	----------	-----------

	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Male	104.533	28.600	130.800	22.527	131.933	25.686
Female	114.467	33.346	129.600	21.440	128.733	21.509
Total Participants	109.500	30.939	130.200	21.616	130.333	23.335

N = 15 for each cell

TABLE 7

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE SUMMARY OF
 ONE BETWEEN ONE WITHIN
 REPEATED MEASURES DESIGN
 FOR EXPERIMENTAL GROUP PARTICIPANTS WITH MARITAL
 ADJUSTMENT AS THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Source	Deg. Freedom	Mean Sq.	F	P
Gender	1	76.54	.05	.825
Error	28	1528.97		
Time	2	4312.68	17.94	.001
Gender by Time	2	375.54	1.56	.219
Error	56	240.40		

$p = .825$). Since there was no significant difference found between males and females, the individual cell means could not be analyzed. However, a significant difference found across Time ($F = 17.94, p = .001$) allowed the analysis of the marginal columnar means. The following means were taken from Table 6:

Pretest	Posttest	Follow-up
109.500	130.200	130.333

These columnar means represented Pretest, Posttest, and Follow-up means of total participants (males and females combined). To determine which means were different, Tukey's HSD procedure was used. Tukey's HSD was calculated to be 6.29 (Three groups; $df = 58, N = 30, MS_w = 240.40, q = 3.40$). Any difference between a pair of means exceeding 6.29 would be significant. A significant difference was found between Pretest and Posttest as well as between Pretest and Follow-up. The increase from Posttest to Follow-up failed to be significant. Therefore, it was concluded that the marriage enrichment weekend did have a significant effect on the perceived marital adjustment of experimental group participants, and this effect remained intact over a six-week follow-up period. Based upon these results, Hypothesis VII was rejected, while Hypotheses VIII and IX failed to be rejected.

Research Question 4

Will the weekend marriage enrichment intervention have lasting effects on the marital adjustment of the participants?

Hypothesis X. There will be no difference between participants of the experimental group and the control group from pretest to six-week follow-up in their marital adjustment as measured by the Marital Adjustment Test.

Hypothesis XI. There will be no difference between males of the experimental group and the control group from pretest to six-week follow-up in their marital adjustment as measured by the Marital Adjustment Test.

Hypothesis XII. There will be no difference between females of the experimental group and the control group from pretest to six-week follow-up in their marital adjustment as measured by the Marital Adjustment Test.

In order to test Hypotheses X, XI, and XII, a two between one within repeated measures design was utilized. Group (Experimental, Control) and Gender (Male, Female) were the between factors, while Time (Pretest, Follow-up) represented the within factor. Marital adjustment was the dependent variable. The means for males in the experimental group were: Pretest ($M = 104.533$, $SD = 28.600$) and Follow-up ($M = 131.933$, $SD = 25.686$) (See Table 8). Experimental Group female mean scores were as follows: Pretest ($M = 114.467$, $SD = 33.346$) and Follow-up ($M = 128.733$, $SD = 21.509$). For control group males, the Pretest mean was 118.800 ($SD = 26.058$) and the Follow-up mean was 129.133 ($SD = 24.724$). For control group females, the means were as follows: Pretest ($M = 119.867$, $SD = 23.452$) and Follow-up ($M = 131.133$,

TABLE 8

MARITAL ADJUSTMENT PRETEST AND FOLLOW-UP MEANS
AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR EXPERIMENTAL AND
CONTROL GROUP PARTICIPANTS

		Pretest		Follow-up	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Experimental	Male	104.533	28.600	104.933	28.686
	Female	114.467	33.346	114.8733	33.509
	Total Experimental	109.500	30.939	109.0333	30.335
Control	Male	118.800	26.058	119.9133	26.724
	Female	119.867	23.452	119.1133	23.115
	Total Control	119.332	24.364	119.0133	24.530

N = 15 in each cell.

$SD = 16.115$). The assumption of homogeneity of variance was accepted as reasonable (Box's $M = 6.68471, p = .714$).

As may be observed from Table 9, there were no significant interactions noted involving any factors. Specifically, the following interactions were non-significant: Group by Gender ($F = .02, p = .878$); Group by Time ($F = 3.38, p = .071$); Gender by Time ($F = 1.25, p = .269$); Group by Gender by Time ($F = 1.66, p = .203$). A significant difference was found across Time ($F = 33.57, p = .001$), but there were no significant differences found between Gender ($F = .17, p = .682$) or between Groups ($F = .65, p = .422$). All that can be concluded from these results is that there was a difference between the columnar means of Pretest and Follow-up across Groups, which makes any information derived concerning the effectiveness of the program on marital adjustment inconclusive.

Post Hoc Analysis of Selected Items of Marital Adjustment Test

Further comparisons were made between husbands and wives of the control and experimental groups by analyzing selected items from the Marital Adjustment Test. The extent of agreement or disagreement of the spouses on four items were examined. For these items, the respondent was asked to state the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between him/her and his/her mate. The possible responses were "always agree," "almost always agree," "occasionally disagree," "frequently disagree," "almost always disagree," or "always disagree." For the sake of item analyses, comparisons were made between

TABLE 9

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE SUMMARY OF
TWO BETWEEN ONE WITHIN
REPEATED MEASURES DESIGN FOR
EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUP PARTICIPANTS WITH
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT AS THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Source	Deg. Freedom	Mean Square	F	P
Group	1	696.01	.65	.422
Gender	1	180.07	.17	.682
Group by Gender	1	25.21	.02	.878
Error	56	1064.51		
Time	1	7505.01	33.57	.001
Group by Time	1	755.01	3.38	.071
Gender by Time	1	279.08	1.25	.269
Group by Gender by Time	1	371.01	1.66	.203
Error	56	223.58		

husbands and wives of the experimental group for each item. Agreement responses (the first two responses) were combined.

The first item examined was "ways of dealing with in-laws." Sixty percent of the husbands reported agreement with 20% responding that they and their spouses always agreed. This compared to 73% of wives who were in agreement with their husbands, with 20% always agreeing. After six weeks, 87% of both husbands and wives were in agreement, with 47% of both always agreeing (See Table 10).

The second agreement/disagreement item concerned "handling family finances." On the pretest, 73% of husbands agreed with their wives concerning finances with 27% of husbands always agreeing. Sixty percent of wives agreed with their husbands as reported on the pretest with 20% always agreeing. After six weeks, 100% of the husbands reported that they agreed with their wives (47% always agreed). The six-week follow-up showed that 87% of wives agreed with their husbands (33% always agreed) (See Table 11).

Agreement on "demonstrations of affection" was the third item examined. Pretest results showed that 53% of the husbands considered themselves to be in agreement with their wives with 13% always agreeing. For wives, 53% also reported agreement with 13% always agreeing. Eighty-seven percent of husbands and 80% of wives indicated agreement on demonstrations of affection after the six-week interlude. Twenty percent of husbands always agreed while 40% of wives always agreed (See Table 12).

TABLE 10

"Agreement on Ways of Dealing With In-laws"

Follow-up	Pretest			
	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives
Agree	60	73	87	87
Always Agree	20	20	47	47

TABLE 11

"Agreement on Handling Family Finances"

Follow-up	Pretest			
	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives
Agree	73	60	100	87
Always Agree	27	20	47	33

TABLE 12

"Agreement on Demonstrations of Affection"

Follow-up	Pretest			
	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives
Agree	53	53	87	80

Always Agree	13	13	20	40
--------------	----	----	----	----

For the fourth item, agreement on "sex relations" was analyzed. Pretest responses of husband showed that 60% of husbands believed that they were in agreement with their wives (20% always agreed). This was in contrast to 80% of wives who reported agreement, with 20% always agreeing. After six weeks, 87% of husbands agreed compared with 93% of wives who agreed. Here, 53% of husbands always agreed with 47% of wives always agreeing (See Table 13).

Three additional items relating to sex were examined. The first question was, "What are your feelings on sex relations with your mate?" The possible responses were "very enjoyable," "enjoyable," "a little enjoyable," "tolerable," and "not enjoyable at all." For the purpose of this analysis, the first two responses were combined and came under the category of "enjoyable." Eighty percent of husbands initially reported that their sex relations with their mates were enjoyable with 67% reporting that they were very enjoyable. For wives, 87% indicated that their sex relations with their husbands were enjoyable with 53% reporting that they were very enjoyable. At the six-week follow-up, 93% of husbands and 100% of wives said that sex relations with their spouses were enjoyable. Seventy-three percent of husbands said that the experience was very enjoyable, while 67% of wives indicated that theirs was very enjoyable (See Table 14).

The second question concerning sex was, "During sexual intercourse, are your physical reactions satisfactory?" Responses included "very," "somewhat," "a little," and "not at all." For comparisons, the first response was considered. Additionally, the second two were combined and were referred to as "somewhat." Sixty-seven percent of husbands reported on the Pretest that their reactions were

TABLE 13

"Agreement on Sex Relations"

Follow-up	Pretest			
	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives
Agree	60	80	87	93
Always Agree	20	20	53	47

TABLE 14

"Feelings on Sex Relations"

Follow-up	Pretest			
	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives
Enjoyable	80	87	93	100
Very Enjoyable	67	53	73	67

very satisfactory with 33% reporting "somewhat." The wives were very consistent, reporting identical numbers as their husbands. However, after the six-week follow-up period, 80% of husbands reported very satisfactory response (20% somewhat) while 73% of the wives said that their reactions were very satisfactory (27% somewhat) (See Table 15).

"Is sexual intercourse between you and your mate an expression of love and affection?" was the third question concerning sexual responses. The possible responses were "always," "almost always," "sometimes," and "almost never." For comparison considerations, the first two responses were combined. The Pretest results indicated that 80% of the husbands perceived sexual intercourse as being an expression of love and affection as compared to 87% of the wives. Six weeks later, 93% of the husbands and 100% of the wives stated that sexual intercourse was an expression of love and affection (See Table 16).

The final item analyzed and compared between husbands and wives both at Pretest and Follow-up concerned the perception of marital happiness (Table 17).

Respondents were asked to report the degree of happiness, everything considered, of their present marriage. The scale line was a continuum from "very happy" to "very unhappy," with points representing "happy" and "average" in between. On the pretest, husbands reported the following: 33% very happy, 33% happy, and 33% average. The report for the wives was: 40% very happy, 27% happy, and 27% average. After six weeks, the following represented the husbands' report: 60% very happy, 33% happy, and 7% average. For the wives, the report was: 53% very happy, 20% happy, and 27% average.

TABLE 15

"Sexual Intercourse Physical Reactions"

Follow-up	Pretest			
	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives
Very Satisfactory	67	67	80	73
Somewhat Satisfactory	33	33	20	27

TABLE 16

"Sexual Intercourse As an Expression of Love and Affection"

Follow-up	Pretest			
	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives
Always or Almost Always	80	87	93	100

TABLE 17

Marital Happiness

	Follow-up		Pretest	
	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives
Very Happy	33	40	60	53
Happy	33	27	33	20
Average	33	27	7	2

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Since the 1930s, the standard strategy adopted by mental health professionals in contending with marital dysfunction has been to treat couples therapeutically. Although some of the interventions developed for this purpose benefitted distressed couples, there was a growing realization that this strategy was inadequate to stem the rising incidence of marital dysfunction. In many instances, therapy came too late to be effective.

Information-giving was offered as an alternative solution in dealing with marital difficulties. Oftentimes, no action was taken to the given information. Consequently, considerable energy has been devoted to the design and implementation of programs intended to prevent marital dysfunction before it occurs. This preventive approach became known as marriage enrichment and is sometimes referred to as "experiential education." A common format of marriage enrichment is to apply new knowledge or skills to actual life situations through participation in a group setting.

The marriage enrichment movement over the past two decades has focused on teaching marriage partners interpersonal skills to help make the transition from traditional marriage to one which has greater emphasis on companionship and intimacy. Marriage enrichment makes full use of knowledge and new skills which facilitate couple interaction. A major goal of the marriage enrichment approach is to present a model for enhancement and to reach couples before serious problems develop. The specific task of marriage enrichment is to equip couples with better insights, skills, and tools than they normally possess in order that they might reap the rewards of a fully functioning companionship marriage. The main objectives of a marriage enrichment program may include:

awareness of each person's own needs and expectations, awareness of the partner's needs and expectations, improved communication, enhanced problem-solving and negotiating skills, and increased overall adjustment and satisfaction with the marriage.

The incidence of divorce is at an all-time high, and this has represented an alarming statistic for those who are concerned about the well-being of the family. This concern is especially addressed by many church leaders. It has been the assumption of the researcher as well as others in the field that most individuals go into marriage without the necessary skills that will enable them to communicate effectively and to constructively deal with conflicts. A purpose of this present research program was to address these deficient skills and to provide the training necessary to ensure a higher level of communication and marital satisfaction.

The present research project presented a marriage enrichment program combining didactic and experiential approaches in teaching communication and other skills necessary for a well-adjusted, intimate, companionship marriage. The specific purpose of the research was to determine if a particular marriage enrichment program devised and coordinated by the researcher would have a positive effect upon individuals who participated in a weekend retreat setting. The results would contribute to the field of research in the area of marriage enrichment, which has not been particularly prolific in the last three or four years. As a general rule, previous research projects have not utilized adequate control groups. Additionally, these research projects have lacked utilization of follow-up assessments. This research project sought to further address both of these issues.

Marital communication and marital adjustment were the dependent variables measured in the study. The effects of the marriage enrichment experience were studied to determine if the marriage enrichment program intervention influenced the participants' perception of change in marital communication and marital adjustment. Pretests and

posttests were administered to experimental group participants, and a six-week follow-up was utilized to measure lasting effect. A control group consisted of those who were interested in a future workshop experience. Control group participants were administered a pretest and six-week follow-up to compare with the results of the experimental group.

Measurable changes in the experimental group were compared with the measurable changes in the control group, utilizing multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) repeated measures procedures. Marital communication was measured by the Marital Communication Inventory (MCI), and marital adjustment was measured by the Marital Adjustment Test (MAT). Both marital communication and marital adjustment significantly increased as a result of participating in the weekend retreat experience. The increase of marital communication from Pretest to Posttest was sustained at the six-week interval at a high level of confidence ($p = .001$). Results concerning the long-term effect of the program on marital adjustment were inconclusive.

Conclusions

One of the major deficiencies in the literature of the marriage enrichment movement is the lack of scientific rigor through the implementation of a true experimental design. This design necessitates randomization of participants for assignment to either the experimental or control group and helps to ensure equal distribution of individual differences between participants of the experimental and control groups. This is a way to help protect from most threats to external validity. However, there are times when the randomization of subjects are near impossible or at least impractical. In such cases, a quasi-experimental design may be used. A nonequivalent pretest-posttest control group design was utilized in this research with a six-week follow-up administered to both experimental and control participants. MANOVA repeated measures designs were used

to deal with differences between subjects. Variability due to differences between subjects can be eliminated from the experimental error through the usage of such designs.

In the literature, there are still some lingering questions concerning the attributing factor of the program itself toward better marital communication and marital adjustment. It could be justifiably hypothesized that there are many contributing factors that may lead to a positive experience. In this research project, a positive experience was verified by increased perception of communication and marital adjustment at the conclusion of the weekend retreat. A major factor could well have been the environment itself, a secluded setting with a weekend away from the everyday routines of life. This environment provided the opportunity for participants to spend quality time with their spouses for the purpose of focusing on their relationship. Focusing on one's relationship is a factor which should be recognized as a very viable one and should be taken into consideration in any effort designed to help strengthen and to enhance the marital relationship. Perhaps any effort to concentrate or to focus on the marital relationship could have similar positive results, as any attention to learning new skills designed to enrich the relationship could prove to be beneficial.

Some of the difficulties encountered in this research may well be typical of any effort to promote the marriage enrichment idea, namely the generation of an adequate sample necessary to ensure scientific rigor. The results of this research indicate that possibly most people still are not willing to seek out help unless there is an urgency to do so. This urgency could be precipitated by some crisis or at least the awareness of the distinct possibility that one could arise.

A consensus that seemed to surface in the course of this research project was the pervading attitude that either there was no particular need to seek out help or else the relationship had already deteriorated to the point that seeking such help would not be especially beneficial. One of the strengths of the marriage enrichment concept is to seek

for enhancement skills while there is still sufficient resolve on the part of both marital partners to do so before a serious crisis does arise. It still appears that there is a great need for educating the general populace concerning the importance of attending to the enhancement of the marital relationship before crises arise. Educational efforts should be toward emphasizing that attending a marriage enrichment seminar or workshop is not an admission that something is drastically wrong; it simply indicates that the participants desire to make a "good marriage better." The church may very well continue to be the most important place to foster this concept, especially when the targeted population is the Christian community.

There is also the awareness that many other factors are to be considered when seeking participants in such an enrichment experience. One factor is time, which often becomes the matter of priority. One of the most commonly reported problems in this research was that of "not having enough time for one another." There are many other competing events to make a demand on one's time, and it still takes a great amount of commitment to apply oneself to making the necessary effort for self-improvement and marital improvement. Time may well continue to be a huge factor in furthering the cause of marriage enrichment. Again, couples tend to act when there is sufficient concern to do so, and this includes "making time for one another."

As has been reported, couples tend to seek out help when there appears to be a legitimate reason to do so--the presence or prospect of a crisis. For this reason, further research may further verify that those who actually participate in such workshop experiences will have functional levels lower than those of non-participants. The participants of the experimental group of the present research project did initially show a significant lower level of communication than the participants of the control group. It is likely that those who did follow through to register after initial inquiry were indeed those who saw themselves basically as having a particular need to do so. Those who saw

themselves communicating at a higher level very well did not sense an immediate need to seek for further enhancement, even though they thought marriage enrichment was a good idea.

Marriage enrichment could prove to be very helpful to those who have more serious problems. In the early days of the marriage enrichment movement, emphasis was strictly upon those who had "good and strong marriages." In fact, it was thought that marriage enrichment was not for those who had serious problems. Indications are being shown that increasingly more attention is being drawn toward the inclusion of those who may be seen as having relatively serious difficulties in their relationship. As marriage enrichment programs evolved, practitioners and researchers reported positive change in all marital types from marriage enrichment participation. Gross (1988) reported a significant number of fragmented marriages benefiting from marriage enrichment and determined from follow-up interviews that the purported change in the marital relationship was substantiated. Garland (1983) maintained that marriage enrichment goes beyond the "dichotomy" between prevention and treatment to the belief that the process teaches people knowledge, attitudes, and skills which are potentially applicable to all marriages.

The goal of a marriage enrichment program should be to have a long-term effect. Feedback from marriage enrichment participants immediately after the workshop are important in determining the value of an enrichment experience. Most usually, this feedback will be positive, even though it may be short-term. Positive results obtained for any reason and for any length of time is certainly encouraging to continue pursuing longer lasting results. However, it appears that a much more extensive program should be implemented to effect greater lasting results, and this could come in the form of ongoing workshops and/or other training efforts. Even though a brief encounter can plant a seed which can germinate and grow through continued nurturing, there definitely is a need for follow-up efforts in augmenting the weekend experience.

The researcher is convinced that marriage enrichment is a tremendously important concept which has great merit as an alternative to marriage counseling, but conducting this project pointed out obstacles which researchers and implementers of programs in the field likely could face. Much research presently in the field of marriage enrichment appears to be religiously-based, and a great number of the dissertations reported are in association with religious institutions of higher learning. Most of these research projects have been developed in a specific homogenous group setting, such as a particular church or organization. This present study represented a Christian-based approach, yet with a broad base of appeal to various sectors of the religious community. The marriage enrichment experience was made available to a broader base by utilizing various means of promotion, crossing denominational lines. However, there appears to be some reluctance in the Christian community in crossing denominational lines without the sanctioning of church leaders. Therefore, it is important to work in close cooperation with churches and church leaders.

Though not a true experimental design with a totally randomized control group, this research closely approximated one by having a control group that represented similar interest in marriage enrichment as that of the experimental group. A follow-up assessment was utilized, which addressed another deficiency noted in the literature. There was an initial inequality of perceived communication skills between the experimental and control groups, but it should be noted that the experimental treatment did have an immediate impact upon marital communication and marital adjustment as well as a longer-term effect on the perceived marital communication of participants. These findings add further verification that such an intervention is a very important one in the improvement of married and family life.

Recommendations

The first recommendation offered by the researcher is to identify the most important topics in a program and devote more time and attention to them. The program utilized in the present research incorporated a number of pertinent topics of interest and value to the marital relationship. Collectively, these topics had a positive effect on the marital relationship, but only a minimal amount of time was given to each one individually. More attention could be given a specific skill such as communication. Lack of good communication skills is one of the most noted deficiencies reported in the marital relationship; therefore, the relationship could be greatly enhanced with additional attention and training. This additional time and emphasis could be given by working with homogenous groups, such as those couples from the same church or community. More emphasis could be placed on the selected topics through follow-up sessions on a weekly basis for a specified number of weeks. A six-week period could possibly be an optimal length of time.

Other skills to be covered with greater emphasis could include several others covered in the general weekend program such as intimacy and ways to express love for one another. Topics which were not emphasized a great deal during the weekend, such as dealing with decision-making, finances, in-laws, and children, could be followed up in special weekly sessions. These follow-up sessions would possibly be more attractive to those couples who may be experiencing some degree of difficulty in their relationship, particularly as the difficulty specifically relates to these designated topics.

Another recommendation would be to present selected topics in an advanced marriage enrichment retreat. The advanced marriage enrichment retreat could be conducted in a similar weekend retreat format as the initial one, three to six months later. This advanced retreat could also take the form of a "reunion" type retreat, which would enable couples who had a sense of bonding over the original weekend to assemble together again. The format could be more informal in nature, utilizing the guidelines of a support

group. Feedback from the retreats conducted by the researcher showed an interest in this concept. This follow-up retreat could also serve the purpose of reinforcing the skills and concepts introduced in the first retreat.

It is further recommended that an advanced retreat be conducted by inviting all previous participants of several earlier retreats. For those facilitators who conduct retreats on a regular basis, this plan would certainly be feasible and practical. This approach would allow participants to form a greater base of friendships which could serve as a future support network. Also, having a potential pool of participants from several earlier retreats would provide a greater probability of generating sufficient numbers to justify such an advanced retreat, as compared to inviting only one group at a time to return for a second retreat. As in the previous recommendation, greater attention could be to some of the more important areas of training such as communication and intimacy.

Still another recommendation is to offer a retreat that is shorter in duration. If the main purpose of a retreat is to introduce couples to an array of diverse topics, it is possible that the weekend could be shortened to just an overnight retreat. A shortened program could be a serious consideration in the recruitment of participants with higher costs related to longer retreats, including the extra cost of child-care accommodations for some couples, being an important factor. A longer retreat also takes these couples away from their children for a longer period of time, which is a great concern to many parents (though most couples could benefit by being away for a few days). Another consideration for a shorter retreat is in the solicitation of participants through churches where ministers are often reluctant to encourage regular attenders to miss their Sunday services. Cooperation with churches and pastors is of the utmost importance when working with the Christian community.

An additional recommendation is that facilitators of Christian marriage enrichment retreats work in close conjunction with the religious community. Based on the experience

of this present retreat, the Christian marriage enrichment movement could be better promoted and implemented through a strong cooperative effort between the facilitator and a specific church. This arrangement would make the enrichment program more relevant to the overall program of the church, and would most definitely incorporate the cooperation of the church leaders. This means of promotion would be in contrast to an independent effort, seeking to appeal to a broader spectrum of peoples across denominations. To have a broader appeal, a facilitator would have to be very well known to the general population, which may not be probable.

A recommendation for research would be to compare the results of different formats utilizing the same program. The research generated from this present weekend retreat was for a specific program in a specific environment (retreat center accommodations) for a specific length of time (Friday evening to Sunday afternoon). The same program could be used either in an over-night retreat setting, in a two-night retreat setting, or in a format of several sessions over a period of weeks. It would be interesting to know if there would be significant differences between retreats conducted for these varying lengths of time and for these differing formats.

It is further recommended that continuing efforts be made to implement a true experimental design. One of the major issues related to deficiencies in the field of marriage enrichment research is in the design of the research where there is a need for true randomized assignment of participants to experimental and control groups. Such design would ideally necessitate the recruitment of a minimum of 60 subjects, of which 30 would be randomly assigned to an experimental group and the 30 to a control group.

An additional recommendation is that further attention should be given to researching the differences between gender. Ideally, a pool of sixty couples (instead of 60 individuals) would be needed in analyzing differences between the sexes, thereby adding to the literature important research concerning such differences. Traditionally, it has been

assumed that wives show greater improvement in communication and marital adjustment, but further research may well point out that may no longer be true as there apparently is becoming a greater equality and less distinction between the sexes.

Another recommendation is to consider other means of measuring differences in marital communication and marital adjustment. A continuing concern in the field of marriage enrichment research, as well as other fields which utilize human subjects, is the usage of self-reporting inventories. To date, the Marital Communication Inventory (MCI) and the Marital Adjustment Test (MAT) are among the best inventories in the field in measuring marital communication and marital adjustment because of their reported reliability and validity. However, it is recommended that other measuring devices be devised and correlated with the present instruments in the field of marriage enrichment.

It is also recommended that other skills be identified and recognized which are highly correlated to a good marital relationship. To date, the majority of research focuses on marital communication, which is certainly a very important skill in leading to good marital adjustment and satisfaction. However, there may be other factors which could be just as important in contributing toward a happy and fulfilling marital relationship. Future research could identify such skills or factors which may lead to marriage enhancement.

A final recommendation concerns researching specific stages of the life cycle as they relate to marriage enrichment. These stages could include premarital, recently married, parenthood, middle age, and retirement. Programs need to be devised which teach specific skills in helping individuals to better adjust to each stage and to make the proper transition to the next stage. Every one of these stages could have a significant impact upon the quality of the marital relationship, and research is needed to substantiate the efficacy of such programs in leading to an enhanced marriage.

REFERENCES

REFERENCES

- Bagarozzi, D. A. (1985). Family measuring techniques. *The American Journal of Family Therapy, 13*(3), 66-71.
- Barnes, H. L., Schumm, W. R., Jurich, A. P., & Bollman, S. R. (1984). Marital satisfaction, positive regard versus effective communications as explanatory variables. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 123*, 71-78.
- Beach, S. R. H., & O'Leary, K. D. (1985). Current status of outcome research in marital therapy. In L. L'Abate (Ed.), *The handbook of family psychology and therapy* (vol. II) (pp. 1035-1072). Chicago: The Dorsey Press.
- Becnel, H., & Levy, L. (1983). A marriage enrichment program as a facilitator of focusing and finding meaning in life. *Family Therapy, 10*, 275-282.
- Bienvenu, M. J., Sr. (1969). *A counselor's guide to accompany a marital communication inventory*. Durham, NC: Family Life Publications.
- Bienvenu, M. J., Sr. (1970). Measurement of marital communication. *Family Coordinator, 19*, 26-31.
- Bradbury, T. N., & Fincham, F. D. (1990). Preventing marital dysfunction: Review and analysis. In F. D. Fincham & T. N. Bradbury (Eds.), *The psychology of marriage: Basic issues and applications* (pp. 375-401). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Bruder, A. H. (1972). Effects of a marriage enrichment program upon marital communication and adjustment. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 33*, 5317A. (University Microfilms No. 73-05,995).
- Chartier, M. R. (1986). Marriage enrichment. In R. F. Levant (Ed.), *Psychoeducational approaches to family therapy and counseling* (pp. 233-265). New York: Springer Publishing Co.
- Cleaver, G. (1987). Marriage enrichment by means of a structured communication programme. *Family Relations, 36*, 49-54.
- Dinkmeyer, D., & Carlson, J. (1984). *Time for a better marriage*. Circle Pines, MN: American Guidance Service.
- Dinkmeyer, D., Sr., & Carlson, J. (1985). TIME for a better marriage. *Individual*

- Psychology - Journal of Adlerian Theory-Research and Practice*, 41, 444-452.
- Dinkmeyer, D., & Carlson, J. (1986a). A systematic approach to marital enrichment. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 14(2), 139-144.
- Dinkmeyer, D., & Carlson, J. (1986b). TIME for a better marriage. *Journal of Psychotherapy and the Family*, 2(1), 19-28.
- Diskin, S. (1986). Marriage enrichment: Rationale and resources. *Journal of Psychotherapy and the Family*, 2(1), 111-125.
- Doherty, W. J., Lester, M. E., Leigh, G. (1986). Marriage encounter weekends: Couples who win and couples who lose. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 12, 49-61.
- Doherty, W. J., & Walker, B. J. (1982). Marriage encounter casualties: A preliminary investigation. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 10(2), 15-25.
- Floyd, D. S., & Floyd, W. A. (1987). A cognitive-emotional-behavioural enrichment retreat weekend. *Australian Journal of Sex, Marriage, and Family*, 8(4), 184-193.
- Ford, J. D., Bashford, M. B., & De Witt, K. N. (1984). Three approaches to marital enrichment: Toward optimal matching of participants and interventions. *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy*, 10, 41-48.
- Gallagher, C. (1975). *The marriage encounter*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Garland, D. S. R. (1983). *Working with couples for marriage enrichment*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Giblin, P., Sprenkle, D., & Sheehan, R. (1985). Enrichment outcome research: A meta-analysis of premarital, marital, and family interventions. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 11, 257-271.
- Gingras, M., Adam, D., & Chagnon, G. J. (1983). Marital enrichment: The contribution of sixteen process variables to the effectiveness of a program. *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy*, 9, 121-136.
- Glander, M. H., Locke, D. C., & Leonard, R. (1987). The marital satisfaction inventory: Evaluating the couple communication program. *American Mental Health Counselors Association Journal*, 12, 84-91.

- Gross, F. L. (1988). *Christians in torment*. Charlotte, NC: Christian Counsel Books.
- Guernsey, B. G., Jr. (1977). *Relationship enhancement*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Guernsey, B. G., Jr., Guernsey, L., & Cooney, T. (1985). Marital and family problem prevention and enrichment programs. In L. L'Abate (Ed.), *The handbook of family psychology and therapy* (vol. II) (pp. 1179-1217). Chicago: The Dorsey Press.
- Hammonds, T. M., & Worthington, E. L., Jr. (1985). The effect of facilitator utterances on participant responses in a brief ACME-type marriage enrichment group. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 13(2), 39-49.
- Hof, L., & Miller, W. R. (1981). *Marriage enrichment: Philosophy, process, and program*. Bowie, MD: Brady.
- Krug, S. E., & Ahadi, S. A. (1986). Personality characteristics of wives and husbands participating in marriage enrichment. *Multivariate Experimental Clinical Research*, 8, 149-159.
- Kvernen, D. R. (1983). An evaluation of a Christian growth seminar along selected dimensions of the self-concept. (Doctoral dissertation, University of North Dakota, 1982). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 43, 3813A.
- L'Abate, L., & Weinstein, S. E. (1987). *Structured enrichment programs for couples and families*. New York: Bruner/Mazel Publishers.
- Lester, M. E., & Doherty, W. J. (1983). Couples' long-term evaluations of their marriage encounter experience. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 9, 183-188.
- Locke, H. J., & Wallace, K. M. (1959). Short marital-adjustment and prediction tests: Their reliability and validity. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 21, 251-255.
- Mace, D. (1987). Three ways of helping married couples. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 13, 179-185.
- Mace, D. R. (1985). The marriage enrichment movement. In D. R. Mace (Ed.),

- Prevention in family services: Approaches to family wellness* (pp. 98-109). Beverly Hills: SAGE Publications.
- Mace, D. R., & Mace, V. C. (1975). Marriage enrichment--wave of the future? *Family Coordinator*, 24, 131-135.
- Markman, Floyd, Stanley, & Storaasti. (1988). The prevention of marital distress: A longitudinal investigation. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 56, 210-217.
- Markman, J. J., Renick, M. J., Floyd, F. J., & Clements, M. (1993). Preventing marital distress through communication and conflict management training: A 4- and 5-year follow-up. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 61, 70-77.
- Mattson, D. L., Christensen, O. J., & England, J. T. (1990). The effectiveness of a specific marital enrichment program: TIME. *Individual Psychology*, 46(1), 88-92.
- McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (1989). *Research in education: A conceptual introduction* (2nd ed.). Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company.
- Meadors, R. E. (1989). Marriage enrichment: An emerging specialty of prevention in the field of marital counseling. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 51/07A, 2270. (University Microfilms No. 90-32,212).
- Miller, S., Nunnally, E. W., & Wackman, D. B. (1979). *Talking together*. Minneapolis: Interpersonal Communication Programs.
- Olson, D. H. (1990). Marriage in perspective. In F. D. Fincham & T. N. Bradbury (Eds.), *The psychology of marriage: Basic issues and applications* (pp. 402-419). New York: The Guilford Press.
- O'Leary, K. D., & Smith, D. A. (1991). Marital interactions. *Annual review of Psychology*, 42, 191-212.
- Powell, G. S., & Wampler, K. S. (1982). Marriage enrichment participants: Levels of marital satisfaction. *Family Relations*, 31, 389-393.
- Rappaport, A. F. (1971). The effects of an intensive conjugal relationship modification program. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 32/11, 6571. (University Microfilms No. 72-13,917).

- Renick, M. J., Blumberg, S. L., & Markman, H. J. (1992). The prevention and relationship enhancement program (PREP): An empirically based preventive intervention program for couples. *Family Relations, 41*, 141-147.
- Silverman, M. S., & Urbaniak, L. (1983). Marriage encounter: Characteristics of participants. *Counseling and Values, 27*(4), 42-51.
- Spanier, G. B. (1976). Measuring dyadic adjustment: New scales for assessing the quality of marriage and similar dyads. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 15*, 28.
- Strickland, J. H. (1982). The effects of two marriage enrichment retreat models on marital satisfaction. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 42/10*, 4305A. (University Microfilms No. 82-06,581).
- Strozier, A. M. (1981). The effect of a selected marriage enrichment retreat upon relationship change, marital communication, and dyadic adjustment (Doctoral dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1981). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 42*, 1592B.
- Travis, R. P., & Travis, P. Y. (1975). The pairing enrichment program: Actualizing the marriage. *Family Coordinator, 24*, 161-165.
- U. S. Bureau of the Census (1991). *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1991* (111th edition). Washington, DC.
- Witteman, H., & Fitzpatrick, M. A. (1986). A social-scientific view of the marriage encounter movement. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 4*, 513-522.
- Worthington, E. L., Jr., Buston, B. G., & Hammonds, T. M. (1989). A component analysis of marriage enrichment: Information and treatment modality. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 67*, 555-560.
- Zimpfer, D. G. (1986). The use of groups in religiously based helping relationships. *Counseling and Values, 30*(2), 154-168.
- Zimpfer, D. G. (1988). Marriage enrichment programs: A review. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work, 13*, 44-53.
- Zuo, J. (1992). The reciprocal relationship between marital interaction and marital happiness: A three-wave study. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 54*, 870-878.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW PROCEDURES

HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW PROCEDURES

Project Title, Principal Investigator, and Date

1. The title of the project is *The Effects of a Partially Structured Weekend Program on Couples' Perception of Marital Communication and Adjustment Changes*.
2. The principal investigator will be William Kenneth Meadors, doctoral student in the department of Counseling, Educational Psychology and Research at Memphis State University.
 - a. Campus address:

Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology and Research
Ball Educational Building
Room 100
Memphis State University
Memphis, Tennessee 38152
Telephone : 901/678-2841
 - b. Faculty research supervisor: Dr. Bob Crawford
 - c. Anticipated dates of data collection: Between April 1, 1993 and September 1, 1993

Description of the Research:

1. Statement of problem:

The purpose of the research is to determine the extent marriage enrichment enhances the communication patterns in a marital relationship. Do marriage partners learn to communicate more effectively as a result of participating in a marriage enrichment workshop?

2. Data collection methods:

Marriage enrichment workshop participants will be administered a pretest, posttest, and six-week follow-up test measuring marital communication and marital adjustment. Future participants on a waiting list will also be administered the same tests. Data from the pretest and posttest for the experimental group will be gathered

at the weekend workshop. The data for the control group will be mailed to the investigator. Follow-up tests for both experimental and control groups will be mailed to the investigator.

3. Nature of data to be gathered:

The data will be information gathered from the administration of instruments measuring marital communication and marital adjustment.

4. Instruments to be used:

- a. Marital Communication Inventory (Bienvenu).
- b. Marital Adjustment Test (Locke and Wallace).

5. Recruitment of participants:

Participants will be recruited through churches and ministerial alliances of the greater Atlanta, Georgia area.

6. Demographics of participants:

Participants will be married couples who perceived themselves as being relatively well-adjusted, but who wish to enhance their marital relationship through a marriage enrichment program. There will be no age limits. The goal is to obtain 30 couples.

7. The main incentive will be the offering of a program which can enhance a marital relationship. There will be no remuneration for participation. A six-week follow-up test will be administered. The results will be made available to those who inquire.

Risk

There are no anticipated psychological, social, legal, or physical problems. The workshop is designed to be a positive one, which is based on a didactic/experiential model and will emphasize the development of communication skills. There is always the possibility that disclosure of thoughts and feelings of a participant could be threatening to the spouse. The workshop will be conducted by the investigator, who is a doctoral student in counseling, and his wife. Additional help will be made available to anyone who develops a problem as the result of the workshop.

Benefit

It is assumed that the marriage enrichment workshop will have a positive effect in strengthening marital relationships through didactic presentations, group discussions, and experiential exercises. As the result of enriched marriages, it is assumed that families will be strengthened. Stronger families could mean a stronger community and society at large.

Consent Form

Participants will be required to sign a consent form which spells out the nature of the study, the potential risks, potential benefits, the guarantee of confidentiality, and the dissemination of the results. There will be no necessary debriefing procedure. There are relatively few if any potential risks involved, and no deception is necessary.

Future Risks

There are no anticipated future risks, because of the nature of the workshop. The workshop is designed to emphasize positiveness, and no significant disclosures are encouraged which could be potentially dangerous.

The only identifying mark on the inventories is the zip code and last four digits of the social security number. This is used so the subject in no way can be personally identified. The name will appear nowhere on the inventory. After results from the first, second, and third administrations of the inventory are gathered, the numbers will be obliterated. The name will not appear and will never be known. Information from the inventories is confidentially guarded.

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Marriage Enrichment Research
Conducted by
Kenneth Meadors
Memphis State University
Memphis, Tennessee
April 9, 1993

Marital Communication Inventory
and
Marital Adjustment Test

(1) The purpose of the research is to determine the extent marriage enrichment enhances the communication patterns in a marital relationship. Do marriage partners learn to communicate more effectively as a result of participating in a marriage enrichment workshop? Participants already registered for the workshop are asked to respond to a pre, post, and delayed post inventory to accumulate communication data. The duration of the subject's participation is six weeks.

(2) The only identifying mark on the inventories is the zip code and last four digits of the social security number. This is used so the subject in no way be personally identified. The name will appear nowhere on the inventory. After results from the first, second, and third administrations of the inventory are gathered, the numbers will be obliterated. The name will not appear and will never be known. Information from the inventories is confidentially guarded.

(3) Participation in this research is voluntary and no compensation or remuneration is offered.

(4) Answers to pertinent questions about the research and research subjects' rights may be obtained through contacting:

Kenneth Meadors
213 Old Cove Road
Jasper, Georgia 30143
(706) 692-9199

(5) The subject has the right to discontinue participation at any time, with no obligation.

(6) Results are available to subjects in aggregate or group form, and may be obtained through the address listed in Section Four.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Memphis State Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects. The Committee believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the Committee may be reached through the Graduate School, Memphis State University, Memphis, Tennessee 38152. The telephone number of the office is 901/678-2841.

I have read and I understand the procedure described above. I agree to participate in the research, and I have received a copy of this description.

Subject or authorized representative

Date

Researcher

APPENDIX C
LETTER TO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

Dear Friends:

I am contacting you as a preregistered couple for the upcoming Marriage Enrichment Workshop at Burnt Mountain Baptist Retreat Center in Jasper, on April 16-18. Besides being a therapist for AlphaCare Therapy Services, I am a doctoral counseling student at Memphis State University, Memphis, Tennessee. I am involved in dissertation research in the field of Marriage Enrichment, and I'd like to solicit your VOLUNTARY participation in responding to marital communication inventories in conjunction with the Marriage Enrichment Workshop. Your voluntary input in responding to the two (2) communication scales to be sent to you would add greatly to the validity of this research. It requires only a few minutes of your time, but your responses are vital in research of this nature.

The purpose of the project is to determine the extent Marriage Enrichment enhances the communication pattern in a marital relationship. Do marriage partners learn to communicate more effectively as a result of participating in a Marriage Enrichment Workshop? Your responses to the inventories help answer this question.

The following instructions will accompany the inventories sent to you prior to your coming to the workshop:

(1) Please fill out the two inventories TWO DAYS (on Wednesday, April 14) prior to the beginning of the Marriage Enrichment Workshop. Please bring them with you the first day of the workshop, which will be Friday, April 16, and I will collect them at that time.

(2) Respond to the inventories according to INSTRUCTIONS. Don't try to read more into them than they are asking. Respond according to the way you feel at the moment you are filling out the inventory; it doesn't have to be this way EVERY TIME.

(3) Do not collaborate or discuss your responses with your spouse. This can be done later! You do not need their input--you respond only as it applies to you personally at the moment.

(4) The only identifying mark on the inventories will be your zip code and the last four digits of your social security number. This is used so you will in no way be personally identified. Your name will appear NOWHERE on the inventories. On the last day of the workshop, I will ask you to fill out another copy of the inventory. I need the above identifying number so I will be able to match the results of the first inventory with the results of the second. Your name will not appear and will never be known. This information remains absolutely confidential. After all the results have been matched, the number will be obliterated.

(5) There is a brief 6-week follow-up response I will ask you to respond to, but I'll explain this at the workshop.

This should be an exciting piece of counseling research, and may I thank you in advance for being so kind to provide me with valuable data?

Cordially yours,

Kenneth Meadors, M. S., M. A.

APPENDIX D
LETTER TO CONTROL GROUP

Dear Friends:

I am contacting you as a possible couple for a future Marriage Enrichment Workshop. I am a doctoral counseling student at Memphis State University, Memphis, Tennessee. I am involved in dissertation research in the field of Marriage Enrichment, and I'd like to solicit your VOLUNTARY participation in responding to two (2) marital communication inventories. Your voluntary input will add greatly to the validity of this research. It requires only a few minutes of your time, but your responses are invaluable in research of this nature.

The purpose of the project is to determine the extent Marriage Enrichment enhances the communication pattern in a marital relationship. Do marriage partners learn to communicate more effectively as a result of participating in a Marriage Enrichment Workshop? Your responses to the inventories help answer this question.

You will be responding to the inventories at the same time as people in the Marriage Enrichment Workshop at Burnt Mountain Retreat Center, April 16-18, will be filling out identical inventories prior to their workshop experience. During the three day lapse, they will have participated in the workshop, and you will not have participated. I will be able to compare the results of both groups (the group you represent and the group participating in the workshop) and hopefully help answer the question concerning marital communication.

The following instructions will accompany the inventories sent to you:

- (1) Both husband and wife--on April 14--please fill out the inventories and send them back immediately in the stamped, self-addressed envelope. Respond to the inventories according to instructions. Answer them according to the way you feel at the moment.
- (2) Do not discuss your responses with your spouse while you are filling out the inventories. This can be done later! You do not need your spouse's input--you respond only as it applies to you personally.
- (3) The only identifying mark on the inventories will be your zip code and the last four digits of your social security number, so I ask you simply to write on the inventories your zip code and the last four digits of your social security number. This is used so you will in no way be personally identified. Your name will appear NOWHERE on the inventories. I need the identifying number so I will be able to match the results of each administration of the inventory. Your name will not appear and will never be known. This information remains absolutely confidential. After all the results have been matched, the number will be obliterated.

(4) There is a brief follow-up response I will ask you to respond to, and I will send a second set of inventories and instructions to you at that time, six weeks hence.

This should be an exciting piece of counseling research, and may I thank you in advance for being so kind to provide me with valuable data? I look forward to you participating in a future Marriage Enrichment Workshop.

Cordially yours,

Kenneth Meadors, M. S., M. A.

APPENDIX E

SIX-WEEK FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

Dear Friends:

Enclosed please find the communication inventories I told you would be sent six weeks after your involvement in the Marriage Enrichment Workshop at Burnt Mountain April 16-18. I appreciated your attendance at the workshop and was extremely grateful for your willingness to voluntarily participate in this current research. These inventories complete the process, and it is vital that you take the time to respond to the final administration of these forms; otherwise, the first two administrations will be virtually meaningless. Please take a few minutes of your time to respond to the inventories and return them to me immediately in the stamped, self-addressed envelope.

The purpose of this follow-up administration is to help determine the lasting effect of the marriage enrichment experience. Your responses add greatly to the validity of the present research and will help answer the research question related to "lasting effect."

The following instructions apply to responding to the enclosed inventories (the same guidelines that applied to the pre- and post-test administration).

(1) Respond to the inventories according to INSTRUCTIONS. Don't try to read more into the questions than they are asking. Respond according to the way you feel at the moment you are filling out the inventory; it does not have to be this way every time.

(2) Do not collaborate or discuss your responses with your spouse until after you have completed the inventories. You do not need their input. You respond only as it applies to you at the moment.

(3) The only identifying mark on the inventories will be your zip code and the last four digits of your social security number. This method is used so you will in no way be personally identified. Your name will appear nowhere on the inventories. After these inventories are matched with the first two, the numbers will be obliterated.

If possible, please fill out the inventories as soon as you receive them, or shortly thereafter. It would be difficult to know who has not returned theirs, and it is extremely important that everyone who filled out the inventories six weeks ago do so now. Otherwise, the research would not be complete.

Thank you again for your graciousness and enthusiasm in participating in this research. Best wishes for a long and rewarding marriage relationship.

Cordially yours,

Kenneth Meadors

APPENDIX F

SIX-WEEK FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO CONTROL GROUP

Dear Friends:

Six weeks ago I informed you that I would be sending another set of communication inventories to be filled out. This time has arrived, and you will find the inventories enclosed. Would you be so kind to respond to these inventories, for it only requires a few minutes of your time. Your voluntary input will add greatly to the validity of this study! These inventories complete the process, and it is vital for you to take a few minutes to respond to this final administration; otherwise, the first administration will be virtually meaningless. After you have filled out the inventories, please place them in the enclosed stamped envelope addressed to me. Your participation is so greatly appreciated.

The purpose of this follow-up administration is to help determine the "lasting effect" of marriage enrichment on workshop participants. I will be able to compare the results of the experimental group with the control group, the latter of which you are a part.

The following instructions apply to responding to the enclosed inventories (the same guidelines as in the first administration).

(1) Respond to the inventories according to INSTRUCTIONS. Don't try to read more into the questions than they are asking. Respond according to the way you feel at the moment you are filling out the inventory; it does not have to be this way every time.

(2) Do not collaborate or discuss your responses with your spouse until after you have completed the inventories. You do not need their input. You respond only as it applies to you at the moment.

(3) The only identifying mark on the inventories will be your zip code and the last four digits of your social security number. This is used so that you will in no way be personally identified. Your name will appear nowhere on the inventories. After these inventories are matched with the first two, the numbers will be obliterated.

If possible, please fill out the inventories as soon as you get them, or shortly thereafter, as it will be difficult to know who has responded. It is essential for the sake of the research to get a follow-up response from everyone who answered the first inventories six weeks ago. After the research is completed, the results will be made available to any of you who request it. Thank you for your consideration.

I will be looking forward to you participating in a future Marriage Enrichment Workshop. Thank you again for your kindness in participating in this study.

Sincerely yours,

Kenneth Meadors

APPENDIX G
MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT WORKSHOP PROGRAM

Marriage Enrichment Retreat

Schedule

Friday, April 16, 1993

4:00 - 7:00 P. M.	Registration	
7:00 - 7:45 P. M.	Dinner	
8:00 - 9:30 P. M.	Session 1	Commitment to Improvement 1. Welcome/Introduction 2. Establishing foundational concept of marriage enrichment. 3. Commitment to work on marriage. 4. Introduction of spouses.
10:00 P. M.	Couples to rooms	

Saturday, April 17, 1993

8:00 - 8:45 A. M.	Breakfast	
9:00 - 10:30 A. M.	Session 2	"Setting Goals in a Christian Marriage"
10:30 - 12:00 P. M.	Session 3	"The R & R of Healthy Marriage!" (Roles and Responsibilities of Marriage)
12:00 - 1:30 P. M.	Lunch	
1:30 - 3:00 P. M.	Session 4	"Can Anyone Hear Me--and Understand Me?" (Communication)
3:00 - 4:00 P. M.	Session 5	"Lord, Help! Life Is Hard in the Combat Zone--CONFLICT Is consuming Our Relationship!" (Conflict Resolution)

4:00 - 5:00 P. M.	Free time	
5:00 - 6:00 P. M.	Dinner	
6:00 - 7:30 P. M.	Free time	
7:30 - 9:00 P. M.	Session 6	"Romance and Intercourse: Which One Guarantees Relational Intimacy?" (Intimacy in Marriage)
9:30 P. M.		Couples to their rooms for a quiet and hopefully intimate evening with your spouse!

Sunday, April 18, 1993

8:00 - 8:45 A. M.	Breakfast	
9:00 - 10:30 A. M.	Session 7	"Love Is a Many Splendored Thing" (Language of Love: Ways Husbands/Wives Can Express Love)
11:00 - 12:00 P. M.	Session 8	"Enriching Our Marriage Through a Vital Spiritual Life" (Devotional service)
12:00 - 1:00 P. M.	Lunch	
1:00 - 2:15 P. M.	Session 9	"The Stress of Finances and Other Issues that Put a Strain on a Marriage"
2:15 - 3:00 P. M.	Session 10	"Conclusion and Evaluation of Workshop"

Everyone should be off the grounds by 4:00 P. M.

May God bless you, and have a safe trip home.

SESSION ONE

Required Time: 90 minutes

TOPIC: "Introduction and Commitment to Improvement"

SESSION GOALS:

1. Introduction and Welcome
 - a. To welcome participants and introduce them to weekend.
 - b. To introduce team workers.
 - c. To lay ground rules for weekend.
2. To establish foundational concept of marriage enrichment.
3. To seek commitment from participants for weekend.
4. To allow participants to introduce their spouses.
5. To encourage couples to relate to each other their expectations for the weekend.

PROCESS:

Step 1: (35 minutes)

Leader introduces team and welcomes participants to workshop and lays ground rules for the weekend including accentuating the positive.

Leader gives short lesson on establishing the foundational concept of marriage enrichment and explaining the developmental stages and different types or categories of marriages which could be benefitted. Also covered is what can be expected from the workshop experience.

Step 2: (15 minutes)

The form *Husband and Wife to Each Other* is distributed and husbands and wives are encouraged to make a commitment to each other by signing the form.

Step 3: (30 minutes)

Distribute the form *Introducing My Spouse*. Allow time for each partner individually to fill out form, which will be used to introduce the spouse. Have husbands stand behind their wives, placing their hand on the wife's shoulder. He then introduces his wife, using the form as a guideline, in speaking positively and supportively of his wife. After the wives are introduced, they in turn introduce their husbands in like manner.

Step 4: (10 minutes)

Concluding remarks for the evening. Couples are encouraged to go to their rooms and for about 15-20 minutes to individually write down on a sheet of paper what each one expects from the weekend. Each spouse is then to verbally exchange these expectations with one another. Expectations should be realistic and should apply to possible changes in own self.

SESSION TWO

Required Time (90 minutes)

TOPIC: "Setting Goals in a Christian Marriage"

SESSION GOALS:

1. To help couples set several reachable and workable goals with regard to their marriage.
2. To discover ways to achieve the goals which the couples have set for themselves.

PROCESS:

Step 1: (30 minutes)

Leader gives a short review of the workshop and then gives an overview of the day's activities. A short presentation is made on setting goals in a marriage. **Step 2:** (15 minutes)

Husbands and wives work separately on their *Goal Setting* form. Encourage each to take the time to think through and write out the three goals he/she would like to work on in his/her marriage. (Husbands and wives should work independent of each other).

Step 3: (15 minutes)

When each person has completed his/her task of writing down the three goals, have the couples come together and choose three of the six goals they have written down. There will probably be some compromising as to which of the three the couple will work on. After each couple has decided on their three goals, they should begin to work toward some ways (means) of achieving their goals. Insistence is made that each couple cooperate by completing all of the questions on the form.

Step 4: (20 minutes)

All couples come back together to be prepared to share at least one goal with the rest of the group.

The leader may close this exercise by asking each couple to deposit their list of goals in a stamped legal size envelope provided by the leader. These envelopes are to be addressed by each couple and given back to the leader.

Inform the couples that they will receive their goals through the mail in approximately two to two and one-half weeks. Couples should be encouraged, however, to begin working as soon as possible on their goals.

SESSION THREE

Required Time: 90 minutes

TOPIC: "Understanding Male and Female Roles"

SESSION GOALS:

1. To discuss biblical roles of husbands and wives.
2. To help couples examine the rationales for some of the roles they have assumed.
3. To enable couples to explore some of their feelings regarding their roles in marriage.

PROCESS:

Step 1: (10 minutes)

Pass out *Your Role Concepts Comparison* forms for husbands and wives to complete individually. Collect them.

Step 2: (20 minutes)

Leader gives short lesson on the biblical roles of husbands and wives.

Step 3: (10 minutes)

Distribute the *Role Understanding* forms to each participant in the group. Go over the form with the group carefully, explaining how it should be completed. Make certain that you caution couples not to look on their spouse's form while completing the exercise. The leader may, therefore, encourage each person to fill out their form in privacy.

Step 4: (20 minutes)

When Step 3 has been completed, have each couple share (in privacy) their responses to the "role" form. Note: Columns 3 and 4 should be clearly distinguished from each other. When "criteria" is discussed in column 3, the person is being asked to

give an explanation and reason for their response on a particular item. But in column 4, the task is to get the person to relate the foundation for his belief on a particular response. For example, are they basing their response on what they believe the Bible teaches, a societal norm or a teaching of some respected authority on the subject?

Step 5: (20 minutes)

As couples re-assemble, allow about 20 minutes of group discussion. Every effort should be made by the leader to help couples discuss roles and relationships in an open and honest atmosphere. It should also be pointed out that roles have shifted and changed due to social, cultural and economic norms. Close the session with prayer.

SESSION FOUR

Required Time: 90 minutes

TOPIC: "Communication"

SESSION GOALS:

1. To give a short lesson on communication emphasizing the following:
 - a. Importance of communication.
 - b. Being congruent.
 - c. Nonverbal communication.
2. To point out the importance of respecting others perceptual views.
3. To conduct some listening activities.

PROCESS:

Step 1: (30 minutes)

Leader begins presentation on communication by reading *The Perils of Lack of Communication--The Wayside Chapel*. A short lesson is taught, pointing out the importance of being congruent-- to express what we are feeling or experiencing at the moment. Nonverbal communication, listening skills, and communicating for intimacy are also covered.

Step 2: (30 minutes)

Leader begins by showing perceptual transparencies in which more than one image could be perceived. A short discussion is conducted, pointing out how that two people can see the same situation differently and both be right. Couples are then handed a commitment form, *Respecting Another's Perception*, in which they are to make this commitment to each other.

Step 3: (20 minutes)

The form *Listening Quiz* is handed out. Individuals fill out the form, then come back together as couples to discuss them. Listening skills are then discussed in the whole group.

SESSION FIVE

Required Time: 90 minutes

TOPIC: "Conflict Resolution"

SESSION GOALS:

1. To teach a short lesson *Conflict Resolution* including the following points:

- a. Sources of conflict.
 - b. Areas of potential conflict.
 - c. Teaching an effective process of resolving conflicts.
2. To teach a short lesson on "How to Deal with Anger."
 3. To teach and to role-play specific skills in specific areas of conflict.

PROCESS:

Step 1: (20 minutes)

The leader teaches basic lesson *Conflict Resolution*.

Step 2: (20 minutes)

Leader teaches lesson on how to handle anger. Some practical approaches in responding to the emotion of anger are presented.

Step 3: (40 minutes)

A volunteer couple is asked to come forward to role-play a particular conflict situation (using a provided script). Each couple is given a problem in which it is to solve together using skills taught.

Workshop participants are given hand-outs which are designed to help determine whether a problem exists in each chosen area.

SESSION SIX

Required Time: 90 minutes

TOPIC: "Intimacy in Marriage"

SESSION GOALS:

1. To educate participants on the meaning of intimacy and that sex is God's idea.

2. To show how boredom in a marriage can impede a sexual relationship and intimacy.

3. To give practical ways on how to have a healthy sexual relationship and intimacy.

PROCESS:

Step 1: (20 minutes)

Leader gives an introductory teaching on intimacy, including the Biblical View of Sex (*The Spirituality of Sex*).

Step 2: (40 minutes)

Leader gives a short presentation *Saying Farewell to Boredom*.

Step 3: (30 minutes)

Female leader gives a presentation *Some Practical Ways to Have a Healthy Sexual Relationship and to Build Intimacy into Your Marriage*.

SESSION SEVEN

Required Time: 80 minutes

TOPIC: "Love Is a Many Splendored Thing" (Language of Love; Ways Husbands/Wives Can Express Love)

GOALS:

1. To introduce participants to the many English meanings of love and to show that the Greek helps to clarify the different meanings.
2. To give practical ways to develop romantic love.
3. To help participants to see that to develop intimacy and to effectively express love toward their spouses encompasses creating a safe environment to which one can feel he/she belongs.
4. To distinguish agape love from the other forms of love.
5. To present practical ways of staying in love.

PROCESS:

Step 1: (20 minutes)

Leader gives a presentation on *Five Ways to Love Your Spouse*.

Step 2: (20 minutes)

Presentation on *Romantic Love* including practical ways of developing romantic love. Presentation also includes how one can use his/her imagination effectively in a pure way in developing intimacy and expressing romantic love to his/her spouse.

Step 3: (10 minutes)

Presentation *The Gift of Belonging--Storge Love*.

Step 4: (10 minutes)

Presentation *Becoming Best Friends--Phileo Love*.

Step 5: (10 minutes)

Presentation *Agape Love* including an exercise to determine whether participants express themselves by agape love.

Step 6: (10 minutes)

Presentation of practical ways to stay in love.

SESSION EIGHT

Required Time: 60 minutes

TOPIC: "Enriching Our Marriage Through a Vital Spiritual Life"

SESSION GOALS:

1. To encourage couples to make Jesus Christ the Lord of their lives, marriage, and home.
2. To show the importance of worshipping and praying together as a couple and family.
3. To conduct a worshipful devotion.

SESSION NINE

Required Time: 75 minutes

TOPIC: "The Stress of Finances and Other Issues That Put a Strain on a Marital Relationship"

SESSION GOALS:

1. To deal with the subject of finances as a stressor which can put a tremendous strain on a marriage.
2. To deal with other issues which can come during the course of the marriage and can be stressful to the marital relationship.

PROCESS:

Step 1: (25 minutes)

To give a didactic presentation *The Stress of Finances*.

Step 2: (25 minutes)

To give a didactic presentation *Issues at Different Developmental Stages of Marriage*.

Step 3: (25 minutes)

To break group up into smaller groups to provide an opportunity for free discussion with group leaders concerning any unaddressed issue which is of concern.

SESSION TEN

Required Time: 45 minutes

TOPIC: "Conclusion and Evaluation of Workshop"

PROCESS:

1. Final remarks and conclusions are made by the leader.
2. The participants are asked to fill out evaluation form, including posttest of *Marital Communication Inventory* and *Marital Adjustment Test*.
3. A concluding prayer is offered for attending couples asking God's blessings upon their marriage.

APPENDIX H
MARITAL COMMUNICATION INVENTORY

A MARITAL COMMUNICATION INVENTORY¹

Female (Male) Form

		Usually	Some Times	Seldom	Never
1.	Do you and your husband (wife) discuss the manner in which family income should be spent?	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	Does he (she) discuss his (her) work & interests with you?	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	Do you have a tendency to keep your feelings to yourself?	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	Is your husband's (wife's) tone of voice irritating?	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	Does he (she) have a tendency to say things which would be better left unsaid?	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	Are your mealtime conversations easy and pleasant?	_____	_____	_____	_____
7.	Do you find it necessary to keep after him (her) about his (her) faults?	_____	_____	_____	_____
8.	Does he (she) seem to understand your feelings?	_____	_____	_____	_____
9.	Does your husband (wife) nag you?	_____	_____	_____	_____
10.	Does he (she) listen to what you have to say?	_____	_____	_____	_____
11.	Does it upset you to a great extent when your husband (wife) is angry with you?	_____	_____	_____	_____
12.	Does he (she) pay you compliments and	_____	_____	_____	_____

- say nice things to you? _____
13. Is it hard to understand your husband's (wife's) feelings and attitudes? _____
14. Is he (she) affectionate toward you? _____
15. Does he (she) let you finish talking before responding to what you are saying? _____
16. Do you and your husband (wife) remain silent for long periods when you are angry with one another? _____
17. Does he (she) allow you to pursue your own interests and activities even if they are different from his (her)? _____
18. Does he (she) try to lift your spirits when you are depressed or discouraged? _____
19. Do you fail to express disagreement with him (her) because you are afraid he (she) will get angry? _____
20. Does your husband (wife) know when you are displeased with him (her)? _____
21. Do you let your husband (wife) know when you are displeased with him (her)? _____
22. Do you feel he (she) says one thing but really means another? _____
23. Do you help him (her)

- understand you by saying how you think, feel, and believe? _____
24. Do you and your husband (wife) find it hard to disagree with one another without losing your tempers? _____
25. Do the two of you argue a lot over money? _____
26. When a problem arises that needs to be solved are you and your husband (wife) able to discuss it together in a calm manner? _____
27. Do you find it difficult to express your true feelings to him (her)? _____
28. Does he (she) offer you cooperation, encouragement and emotional support in your role (duties) as a wife (husband)? _____
29. Does your husband (wife) insult you when angry with you? _____
30. Do you and your husband (wife) engage in outside interests and activities together? _____
31. Does your husband (wife) accuse you of not listening to what he (she) says? _____
32. Does he (she) let you know that you are important to him (her)? _____
33. Is it easier to confide in a friend rather than your husband (wife)? _____

- | | | | | | |
|-----|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 34. | Does he (she) confide
in others rather than
in you? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 35. | Do you feel that in
most matters your
husband (wife) knows
what you are trying
to say? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 36. | Does he (she)
monopolize the
conversation very
much? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 37. | Do you and your hus-
band (wife) talk about
things which are of
interest to both of you? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 38. | Does your husband (wife)
sulk or pout very much? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 39. | Do you discuss intimate
matters with him (her)? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 40. | Do you and your husband
(wife) discuss your
personal problems with
each other? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 41. | Can your husband (wife)
tell what kind of day you
have had without asking? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 42. | Does he (she) fail to
express feelings of

respect and admiration
for you? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 43. | Do you and your husband
(wife) talk over pleasant
things that happen
during the day? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 44. | Do you hesitate to
discuss certain things
with your husband
(wife) because you
are afraid you might | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

- hurt his (her) feelings? _____
45. Do you pretend you _____
are listening to him _____
(her) when actually _____
you are not really _____
listening? _____
46. Do the two of you _____
ever sit down just to _____
talk things over? _____

¹Copyright 1968 Millard J. Bienvenu, Sr. All rights reserved.

Printed in the United States of America.

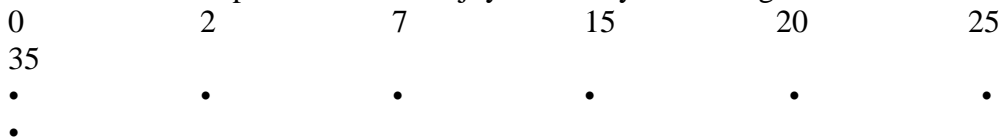
Published by FAMILY LIFE PUBLICATIONS

Box 6725, Durham, NC 27708

APPENDIX I
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST

MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST¹

1. Check the dot on the scale line below which best describes the degree of happiness, everything considered, of your present marriage. The middle point, "happy," represents the degree of happiness which most people get from marriage, and the scale gradually ranges on one side to those few who are very unhappy in marriage, and on the other, to those few who experience extreme joy or felicity in marriage.



Very Perfectly unhappy	Happy	
		Happy

State the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your mate on the following items. Please check each column.

AA=Always Agree, AAA=Almost Always Agree, OD=Occasionally Disagree,
FD=Frequently Disagree, AAD=Almost Always Disagree, AD=Always Disagree

	AA	AAA	OD	FD	AAD	AD
2. Handling family finances	5	4	3	2	1	0
3. Matters of recreation	5	4	3	2	1	0
4. Demonstrations of affection	8	6	4	2	1	0
5. Friends	5	4	3	2	1	0
6. Sex relations	15	12	9	4	1	0
7. Conventionality (right, good, or proper conduct).	5	4	3	2	1	0
8. Philosophy of life	5	4	3	2	1	0

9. Ways of dealing with in-laws 5 4 3 2 1 0
10. When disagreements arise, they usually result in : husband giving in 0 , wife giving in 2 , agreement by give and take 10 .
11. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together? All of them 10 , some of them 8 , very few of them 3 , none of them 0 .
12. In leisure time do you generally prefer: to be "on the go" _____, to stay at home _____? Does your mate generally prefer: to be "on the go" _____, to stay at home _____? (Stay at home for both, 10 points; "on the go" for both, 3 points; disagreement, 2 points)
13. Do you ever wish you had not married? Frequently 0 , occasionally 3 , rarely 8 , never 15 .
14. If you had your life to live over, do you think you would: marry the same person 15 , marry a different person 0 , not marry at all 1 ?
15. Do you confide in your mate: almost never 0 , rarely 2 , in most things 10 , in everything 10 ?
-

¹Locke, H., & Wallace, K. (1959). Short marital adjustment and prediction tests: Their reliability and validity. *Marriage and Family Living*, 21, 251-257.

Please answer these additional questions on Sexual Behavior²:

1. What are your feelings on sex relations with your mate?
 - a. very enjoyable.
 - b. enjoyable.
 - c. tolerable.
 - d. a little enjoyable.
 - e. not enjoyable.
2. During sexual intercourse are your physical reactions satisfactory?

- a. very.
- b. somewhat.
- c. a little.
- d. not at all.

3. Is sexual intercourse between you and your mate an expression of love and affection?
- a. always.
 - b. almost always.
 - c. sometimes.
 - d. almost never.

²Taken from Locke, H. J., & Williamson, R. C. (1958). Marital adjustment: A factor analysis study, *American Sociological Review*, 23, 562-569.

VITA

William Kenneth Meadors was born in Osceola, Arkansas on September 15, 1939. He attended elementary schools in Osceola and graduated from Frayser High School (Memphis, Tennessee) in May, 1957. He received the degree of Bachelor of Science in Mathematics from Memphis State University in May, 1961. He reentered Memphis State University in January, 1966 and in August, 1967 received a Master of Science degree in Mathematics. After teaching high school mathematics for several years, he became a high school counselor. His work in the field of education also included three years as a psychological examiner for a special school district in Missouri.

A Master of Arts in Education degree with a major in counseling was granted by Southeast Missouri State University in August, 1982. He returned to Memphis State University and received the degree Doctor of Education in May, 1994.

Presently, he is working as a family and marriage therapist as well as the Pastor of Living Word Church in Jasper, Georgia. His work in the field of family and marriage spans over two decades, both in counseling and pastoring.