Copyright Notice:

Commonwealth of Australia

Copyright Act 1968

Notice for paragraph 135ZXA (a) of the Copyright Act 1968

Warning

This material has been reproduced and communicated to you by or on behalf of Charles Sturt University under Part VB of the Copyright Act 1968 (the Act).

The material in this communication may be subject to copyright under the Act. Any further reproduction or communication of this material by you may be the subject of copyright protection under the Act.

Do not remove this notice.

Reading Description:


Reading Description Disclaimer:

(This reference information is provided as a guide only, and may not conform to the required referencing standards for your subject)
Over the last several decades, there has been a momentous debate sweeping across the world over the present health and future prospects of families. This debate has been especially intense in the United States, but during recent trips to Australia, South Korea, England, and South Africa, I learned that these countries have conflicts analogous to those in the United States.

These debates are about real issues. There are powerful trends affecting both advanced and underdeveloped countries that are changing families and undermining their ability to perform customary tasks. These trends are often called the forces of modernization. Of course, theories of modernization are now being extended by theories of globalization. However one refers to them — and they are distinguishable — these processes are having disruptive consequences on families in all corners of the earth. Older industrial countries have the wealth to cushion the blows of this disruption, but family upset throws economically fragile countries deeper into poverty. There are many sources of poverty in the world; family decline is one of them.

Of course, there are other sources of family disruption besides the forces of modernization and globalization. Wars, oppression, racial discrimination, and conflicts between cultures and religions are additional factors. The family disruptions of Bosnia and Afghanistan are fresh on our minds. Before that, there were the sad family tragedies of Vietnam, Cambodia, and apartheid South Africa. But this book is mainly about modernization and globalization as such. From time to time, however, we will see how these forces interact with political oppression, conflicts be-
between racial and ethnic groups, and collisions between alternative cultural and religious ways of life. There is no way to avoid the observation that a significant subtext of the world struggle between Western democracies and the new terrorism is the perceived conflict between modernity and certain family patterns in Islam and other religions that modernization is thought to threaten. This includes traditional privileges of men and women, their roles in and out of the home, their respective responsibilities to children, and the place of children in family and society.

Most social scientists now acknowledge that modernization, independent of factors such as wars and famine, can by itself be disruptive to families in certain ways. But many distinguished sociologists believe there is little that can be done to allay these negative consequences. The social forces producing them, they believe, are simply too deep and powerful to be stopped or changed. I do not share this view. I argue that much can be done, but only if we understand the task as a complex cultural work—one that is like weaving a richly designed tapestry containing many threads. The threads needed for this cultural task are religious, political, legal, economic, and psychological. No one perspective can accomplish alone what needs to be done. In addition, this cultural work must be worldwide in scope. Finally, because there is an inevitable religious dimension to this cultural task, I see it as a work of practical theology conceived as an international ecumenical endeavor. At least from the perspective of what the Christian churches and their theological disciplines can contribute, the field of practical theology may have the most to offer to this complex cultural work.

Central to this practical-theological work is the worldwide revival and reconstruction of marriage. Admittedly, this is a big idea. Some people will call it grandiose, perhaps hallucinatory. And, of course, I do not envision this renewal and reconstruction happening tomorrow. My point, rather, is this: the world disruption of families cannot be addressed solely with policies emphasizing jobs, education, and the economic liberation of women—the favorite strategies of the United Nations, the World Council of Churches, and other international agencies. It is true that such strategies are essential, but more is needed. Without this “more,” economic and development strategies can go awry. This additional emphasis should entail a culturally sensitive reconstruction of marriage and the roles that males and females play in this institution. I am calling for a new international practical-religious dialogue (indeed, practical-theological dialogue) between the major world religions designed to place the matter of marriage before the world community. Later in this book, I will outline a method for conducting this dialogue in a manner that preserves the core identities of various world traditions yet also effects real reconstruction. This book will not, however, conduct this full practical conversation, but it will investigate and illustrate its possibility. The actual dialogue itself requires other real voices speaking about and for the other religions. I have assigned myself the task of giving voice to the possible contribution of Christianity. Even then, it will be primarily a Christianity viewed from the eye of liberal Protestantism.

A Brief Definition of Practical Theology

Since I am taking a practical-theological perspective on these world family transformations, I need to give some hint as to how I envision that discipline. Practical theology, as I view it, begins theological reflection with concrete questions in social and cultural life—questions that confront both church and society. Practical theology acknowledges that the very task of defining such issues and questions is itself a major intellectual undertaking. To define a major social issue, practical theology first views it from the angle of the grand themes of the Christian faith such as creation, the fall, redemption, and sanctification. But it also should employ the social sciences in a subordinate way to refine its grasp of empirical facts and trends that shape the issue at hand. After a preliminary definition of the issue is achieved through careful description, practical theology should then bring the issue into a more historically critical dialogue with the central themes—the classics, as Hans-Georg Gadamer would call them—of the Christian faith. It tries to retrieve these symbols in search of orientations and answers to the practical issue at hand. The question then becomes: Do we really understand these symbols and what they imply for our preliminary problem? And is what they imply actually true and useful?

This is an exercise in what the philosophers Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur call understanding or verstehen—a concept that I will explain more fully during the course of this book. Let me say this now: the exercise of understanding should be conceived of as practical through and through. As Gadamer has said, a concern with “application” informs...
the understanding process from the beginning and is not something added at the end. Within the context of practical theology, the goal of understanding anything, even the classic religious and philosophical texts of the past, is from the start to create strategies of practical response.

Furthermore, the style of practical theology I practice believes that strategies of action should be critically grounded; that is, those who advance them should be willing to debate, give reasons for their plausibility, and criticize alternative proposals. Practical theology, as viewed in this book, is nurtured by faith and tradition; it is, as is all theology, born out of confession. But it also strives, in both the inner rhythms of ecclesial life and its witness to the public world, for the persuasiveness of good reasons that can be critically defended. In short, my question will be this: Does Christianity have anything to say about modernization and globalization, especially as these forces affect families?

Modernization, Globalization, and the World Situation of Families

Of course, not all changes wrought by modernity are negative to families. In fact, many of them are very positive. Higher incomes for large numbers of families must be seen as a plus. Better health and longer lives for millions are goods that are universally affirmed. But these positive consequences are unevenly distributed; at the same time that modernization pulls many into a better material life, others lose ground. The new educational and economic possibilities for women that often accompany modernity are also promising, but they do not always convert into concrete benefits. Improvements for some women are frequently accompanied by negative consequences such as the mounting impoverishment of millions of mothers and their children due to abandonment, divorce, and non-marital births; the increased violence of youth; new forms of coerced prostitution; and the growing absence of fathers from their children. This last issue will be a major focus of this book and investigated theoretically and philosophically in Chapters Four and Five.


The World Situation of Families

It will be my argument that the usual benefits of modernization in the form of better education and more jobs for both men and women must be supplemented by the worldwide revival and reconstruction of the institution of marriage. Notice that my argument will not pit modernization _against_ marriage but will be about having both modernization _and_ marriage. Some people will accuse me of wanting it all. Many people say that we cannot have both. It must be one or the other. Such people believe that the world, like some allegedly dull-witted politicians, cannot walk and chew gum at the same time. Marriage, they will insist, belongs to a premodern age. To some extent I agree with these criticisms. Modernization and marriage cannot coexist unless modernity is in some ways curtailed and marriage is in many ways redefined.

Because of the complexity of world family transformations, I will avoid getting lost in the details. I will begin by reviewing the theories of three outstanding sociologists — William Goode, David Popenoe, and Alan Wolfe — who are attempting to describe and assess the worldwide metamorphoses of family life. Although social scientists aspire to objectivity, these three can be distinguished more by their philosophical and ethical assumptions than their empirical facts. Furthermore, in reviewing the thought of these three sociologists, I will not become preoccupied with overly refined distinctions between modernization and globalization. Modernization is generally defined, following Max Weber, as the spread of technical rationality into various domains of life. Some theorists, including Weber, have seen this as a deterministic process that augurs for the triumph of science, the narrow rationalization of all of life (Weber’s “iron cage”), and the final defeat of religion. The German social theorist Jürgen Habermas has complicated the theory of modernization; he argues that technical rationality can take the form of either market economics or bureaucratic control. In either case, modernity is generally thought to flow from the West and the North to other countries of the world in the Southern and Eastern parts of the globe.

There is much recent preoccupation in the press and among intellectuals with this first type of globalization — the spread of capitalism in the form of free trade between nations and the unrestricted flow of capital and labor across national boundaries. It is better, I contend, to con-
MARRIAGE AND MODERNIZATION

cieve of capitalism, especially in the form of the fashionable neoliberal economics, as just one expression of technical rationality. Bureaucratic rationality, in the form of either welfare policies or harder kinds of socialism and Marxism, is also a form of modernization that can take on global proportions, indeed global ambitions. These two kinds of modernization have technical rationality in common, i.e., the belief that the efficient use of powerful technical means in the form of either business procedures or government bureaucracies can increase our individual and collective satisfactions.

But the inevitability of modernization as the triumph of technical rationality can be overstated. It is certainly not the only form of globalization. And modernization as technical rationality, although real, is not as inevitable and deterministic as some have thought. There is, as Arjun Appadurai has argued, another form of globalization that is aided by but distinguishable from the worldwide spread of technical rationality. This is the move of cultural influences across the world in all directions. Some of these cultural movements, although by no means all, are actually resisting technical rationality even though, to a significant extent, they are communicated by it. Some see this resistance as a kind of “reflexive globalization” that is greatly aided by the rise of modern forms of electronic communication. But whether a form of resistance or a product of spontaneous cultural creativity, these currents are often thought to flow from the West through American movies, television (HBO and MTV), and news media (CNN and Fox). But increasingly the cultural flow is moving from the rest of the world back to the West in the form of art, music, fashions, immigration, and trade. Even as I write, Hamid Karzai, the interim leader of Afghanistan, has recently swept into Washington, D.C., and New York City wearing his green cape and gray fur cap, dazzling alike the media, fashion designers, and their potential patrons. It is just a matter of months, I wager, before men and women in the U.S. will be wearing look-alike capes and hats. Interest among Western women in some modified version of the exotic and mysterious burkha, in spite of its association with the oppression of women under the Taliban, is also likely to develop.


Robertson, “Globalization,” p. 27.


10. Appadurai, Modernity at Large, 3, 15.


The World Situation of Families

This form of globalization is a product of the human imagination rather than the blind forces of technical rationality. It is fed by the images of electronic media (television, movies), but the imagination itself uses them to preserve and recreate identity. The imagination can work to halt or redirect the march of modernity in its more mechanical and rationalistic forms. The imagination creates new centers of locality and solidarity. These new localities are not necessarily territorial; they are more phenomenological products of the imagination that may spread across the boundaries of neighborhoods and nations in all kinds of directions. Appadurai uses the concept of imagination in much the same way that I will use the concept of phronesis or practical reason. It is the human capacity to synthesize received images and present experience with the inherited classics of the past. Imagination and practical reason are reconstructive abilities of humans, not likely to be destroyed by the forces of modernization in the form of spreading technical reason. The imagination, according to Appadurai, can give rise to “micro-narratives” — alternative stories to modernity’s dominant narrative about the inevitability of progress wrought by the unfolding victory of what the Greeks called techne.

I appreciate Appadurai’s more generous view of globalization. But in this book I will employ both views, the narrower view of globalization as the rationalizations of modernity and the fuller view about our imaginative responses to these processes. Although most of the time I will use a nondeterministic version of the first view, there is a sense in which my entire constructive proposal is an illustration of the second. For I will be calling for the revival and the reconstruction of the institution of marriage as a crucial new imaginative response to the forces of technical rationality. I will be calling for the creation of new micro-narratives to counter modernity’s dominant message about the inevitable decline of marriage. I will be urging a new conversation between the various micro-narratives about marriage and family that can be found in the world’s religions. These religions’ stories about marriage have not been micro-narratives in the past, but they appear to many to be small and anemic in the present. This is true because they are not heard well and accurately either by their own adherents or the rest of the world. They are increasingly drowned out by the noisy narrative of technological expansion. But this situation can change.
William Goode: How Modernization Betrayed Families

William Goode is a leading figure in American sociology. In two massive books written thirty years apart, Goode fearlessly collected huge quantities of data and developed a theory to account for family change in places as diverse as Western Europe, the United States, Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa. In both of these books, he was using the concept of modernity in the first sense described above — modernization as technical reason with its offshoots in industrialization, urbanization, and increased mobility of labor and capital. In 1963, he wrote World Revolution and Family Patterns, which demonstrated the global movement away from extended-family patterns toward the convenient fit between industrialization and what he called the “conjugal” or “companionate” family. He thought that the West — especially England and northern Europe — had exported to the world a modernizing trend that joined a conjugal family pattern to a wealth-producing industrialization process. In nearly every country he studied, Goode found trends toward smaller families, more women working in the wage economy, more equality between husband and wife, more mobility, more education for both sexes (especially for women), and less control of extended family over the conjugal couple. This conjugal family pattern, he believed, had helped both to create and then to serve the emerging industrial order. Goode welcomed this new family form even though he acknowledged that there was no clear evidence that it would bring more happiness than older extended and patriarchal patterns. However, he did say,

I welcome the great changes now taking place, and not because it might be a more efficient instrument of industrialization, for that is irrelevant in my personal scheme. Rather, I see in it and in the industrial system that accompanies it the hope of a greater freedom: from the domination of elders, from caste and racial restrictions, from class rigidities. Freedom is for something as well: the unleashing of personal potentials, the right to love, to equality within the family, to the establishment of a new marriage when the old has failed. I see the world revolution in family patterns as part of a still more important revolution that is sweeping the world in our time, the aspiration on the part of billions of people to have the right for the first time to choose for themselves what they want.

Three decades later, when Goode wrote World Changes in Divorce Patterns (1994), his optimism about world trends toward the conjugal model had become tempered for all parts of the globe, including the areas of Northern Europe that gave this pattern its birth. The comfortable fit between this family form and industrialization that he described in 1963 was perceived as breaking down in the 1990s. He now saw industrialization and modernization as playing dirty tricks on the conjugal family, even in the West where their partnership once seemed to thrive. Modernity’s speed of change, its capacity to subdue intimate relations to the dictates of rational production, the mobility that it induces, and its tendency to move labor and capital around the world without respect for enduring human relations, have now made this old friend of the conjugal family pattern into a new enemy.

All Western and many non-Western societies are becoming what Goode calls “high-divorce societies.” Furthermore, he is aware that cohabitation and out-of-wedlock births have increased dramatically in Western societies and throughout the world. Hand-in-hand with these movements have been the growing poverty and declining well-being of significant percentages of women and children. This “feminization of poverty” has had negative social effects in wealthy countries, but it has had devastating consequences for poor ones. Goode joined Cambridge social historian Peter Laslett in holding that the conjugal family helped create industrialization and modernization and that for at least a couple

---

of centuries there had existed a compatible fit between them. Then suddenly, according to Goode, modernization turned and began devouring the conjugal family that helped give it birth. From one perspective, Friedrich Engels seems correct in his prediction that modernization in the form of a market economy would destroy families. Engels did not understand, I might add, that modernization in the form of bureaucratization would have an equally devastating impact, a point I will investigate below.

But, as Goode points out, there is no straight causal connection between modernization and the rise of a high-divorce and family-disruption culture. For instance, as Japan industrialized, divorce rates actually declined and family stability increased. In nineteenth-century Japan, a pattern of early marriage and patriarchy led married couples frequently to divorce, generally due to conflicts between bride and mother-in-law. This practice had few negative social consequences; the bride returned to her parents, generally had not conceived a child, and often got married a second time. But this custom of early marriage and early divorce came to an end due to government pressures. The restoration of the Meiji ruling family brought with it the marriage code of 1898; it discouraged divorce and instituted a patriarchal, samurai, and neo-Confucian marriage pattern. Governmental decree actually stabilized the family for decades during rapid Japanese industrialization, albeit along highly patriarchal lines.

Goode presents other examples of stable high-divorce societies. Most Islamic countries permit men to unilaterally divorce their wives even though the Qur'an actually discourages the practice and Islamic law also exacts financial penalties. In most cases wives will have their dowry returned to their control, and their fathers, brothers, and uncles generally rally to protect and save them from poverty and loneliness. Furthermore, most Islamic countries have been high-remarriage societies because of cultural values that define marriage as the only viable role for women. Goode nominates Sweden as a third model of a stable high-divorce and family-disruption society. Sweden's extensive system of social supp-

ports sustains divorced or never-married mothers, at least financially. It is clear that Goode envisions something like the Swedish stable high family-disruption system for all countries of the world to be they rich or poor, East or West, North or South.

Goode's Thesis and the Case of Africa

In Goode's 1963 book, his thesis about the weakening of the extended family pattern appeared to apply even to sub-Saharan Africa. More recent research from South Africa seems to confirm that the conjugal couple has made headway in the southern parts of Africa. Some sociological surveys suggest that even among native Africans, the values of a faithful, monogamous, and gender-equal partnership is the type of marriage more and more being desired. But the forces of modernization may be undermining it even before it can become stabilized. Even in remote tribal areas, traditional agricultural and herding societies have tended to give way to unevenly developing urban and industrial intrusions. Male mobility to urban centers in pursuit of jobs has weakened the control of the extended family. This has produced more single-mother homes, less supervision of the young, and the decline of authority of the tribal system. When women enter the wage economy, the traditional prerogatives of males are threatened, often evoking both psychological rage and physical retribution on their wives and girlfriends. In a famous incident in Qwaqwa in 1984, four hundred unemployed men raided an industrial park, stoning and chasing away the women employees.

In South Africa, as is the case in many parts of the world, the strains on families caused by industrialization, modernization, and now globalization were further aggravated by racial discrimination, unfair economic practices, and war. The dislocations of modernization and globalization are never completely disconnected from racial and political strife. In fact,
the two interact and intensify one another. As Henrietta Moore writes, "The history and legacy of apartheid have resulted in a specific configuration of capital, labor supply, sectoral development and economic and political privilege." Moore, in her introduction to a series of articles in the journal *African Studies* (1994), is perfectly aware of the strains that modernization places on kinship patterns. In her remarks about apartheid, she is inviting us to think about both modernization and political injustice and how they interact.

Although a professor at the London School of Economics, Moore also points out that the problems of South African families are not just economic. Financial strains raise fundamental cultural questions about the nature of masculinity, the grounds of dignity and self-worth of both men and women, and the nature and value of the institution of marriage itself. With regard to marriage, Moore reports that there is emerging among sub-Saharan women a new reluctance to marry, and this in a society where virtually all women traditionally have wed. This new reluctance by women to marry "seems linked to their inability to control resources within conjugal unions. . . . To a certain extent, in conditions of the kind present in Qwaqwa, marriage undermines women's security rather than improving it. This is the exact opposite of an earlier situation in Africa." Even though the demise of the South African apartheid regime has brought to power a new government that has enacted the principle of universal social security and family benefits, this safety net has not been successful. Small grants, insufficient administrative structures, and a social-support system constrained by national development goals dictated by neoliberal economics have resulted in huge portions of the poor still being excluded. This illustrates the difficulties with Goode's belief that the solution to world family disruption is the extension of the Nordic welfare system to all societies, rich or poor. This might help, if the poor countries of the world could afford it, but it will not be enough. And, for the most part, poor countries cannot afford such a system at the level needed.

Several scholars in addition to Goode have argued that family patterns in southern Africa are distinctive when compared to Europe and Asia. This is part, although not all, of the reason why families there have had difficulties with the forces of modernization. In many African groups, bride price traditionally paid by the groom generally went directly to the family of the bride and was seldom held in reserve for her in case of divorce, desertion, or the death of a husband. And the custom of dowry, widely used in other parts of the world to endow the bride, was generally not practiced in southern Africa. These cultural patterns, along with the practice of polygyny, left wives quite vulnerable and often forced them into deep economic need and dependence. This was especially true in agricultural situations where the mother and her children frequently lived separately from the husband and worked her individual plot of land for food.

Polygyny and the absence of bride endowment may have been at one time socially functional, in spite of their difficulties for women. But the twin forces of modernization and urbanization induced huge numbers of husbands to migrate to cities for employment with the expectation that their wife, or wives, would earn most of their living back in the village on their plots of land. Under these circumstances, the influence of the extended family declined. This often led to a rapid increase in both monogamous and polygynous informal unions that were not well supervised by the more cohesive communities that existed in premodernizing sub-Saharan Africa. This contributed to the poverty of women and children and, as is now widely understood, the more recent spread of HIV and AIDS.

---


30. There is a debate among African social scientists as to whether the extended family has declined in influence or simply now takes a different form, one less intergenerational between grandparents, children, and grandchildren to one more a matter of interdependence between siblings. Isak Neihaus reports, "studies on Southern Africa have recorded intense levels of marital instability and domestic disorganization." He goes on to say that although this is true, it obscures what has taken the place of the conjugal couple. He "suggests that cooperative relations between siblings have become a central principle underlying household formation." I must confess that although it is better to have some form of kinship than little or nothing at all, the sibling pattern is bound to weaken both care for the elderly and care for the very young. It is an admirable strategy for survival but hardly a normative direction for the future. Yet, even as a transient adaptive strategy, it is interesting to note the importance of consanguinity in this pattern, a point that will become more significant as the argument of this book unfolds. See "Disharmonious Spouses and Harmonious Siblings," *African Studies* 53, no. 1 (1994): 116.

31. For discussions of African family patterns, modernization, and the AIDS crisis, see
MARRIAGE AND MODERNIZATION

Part of what accounts for the difference historically between southern African and northern European families in their response to modernization is this: at the same time that the power of the extended family was declining in Europe, a cohesive conjugal couple was gradually taking its place. The rise of the conjugal couple differentiated from extended family also paralleled the emergence of an affluent industrial system that both strained this new family form yet also economically supported it. In Africa, the conjugal couple was less ready and able to fill the gap of the weakened extended family. Furthermore, the stresses of modernization in Africa were mediated by the realities and oppressions of colonization. In 1963, Goode believed that southern Africa would gradually move toward the conjugal pattern. This move, in fact, has been tentative, problematic, and fragile.

David Popenoe and Alan Wolfe

American sociologists David Popenoe and Alan Wolfe have reviewed these same trends. In ways similar to Goode, they analyze the forces causing them, but they propose vastly different solutions. Popenoe in his 1988 Disturbing the Nest: Family Change and Decline in Modern Societies measured family disruption in the United States and Sweden, with shorter forays into the low-divorce societies of New Zealand and Switzerland. Alan Wolfe in Whose Keeper? Social Science and Moral Obligation (1989) compared indices of family disruption in the United States and Sweden. Here are samples, and something of an updating, of the kinds of sta-

The World Situation of Families

tistics that worry Popenoe and Wolfe. Since the 1960s, the divorce rate has more than doubled in the United Kingdom, the United States, France, and Australia. During this same period, nonmarital births increased from 5 percent to 33 percent in the U.S., from 4 percent to 31 percent in Canada, from 5 to 38 percent in the United Kingdom, and from 6 to 36 percent in France. In the U.S., since 1960 the rate of out-of-wedlock births increased tenfold in the white community to 25 percent and increased three times in the black community, from 22 percent to a rate of 70 percent of all births today. The marriage rate in all advanced countries has declined significantly; there are fewer second marriages and more people live longer periods of their lives in the single state. In the United States, there has been a 30 percent decline in the marriage rate since 1960 and overall, there has been an 11 percent decline in the number of people over age 15 that are married. Much of this can be explained by later marriages and increased longevity. But some of this decline is due to increased lifelong singleness and cohabitation. Since 1960, there has been in the U.S. a drop of over 19 percent for men between ages 35 and 44 who are married and a drop of 16 percent for women between those ages.

The number of couples cohabiting has increased 8 times since 1970 in the U.S. Cohabitation is almost a universal experience in most northern European countries; only 7 percent of Swedes, 24 percent of Norwegians, 12 percent of the French, and 16 percent of the West Germans marry directly without cohabiting first. Studies show that cohabitation is much

37. Barbara Dafoe Whitehead and David Popenoe, “Who Wants to Marry a Soul Mate?: The State of Our Unions 2001” (Rutgers University: The National Marriage Project, 2001), p. 18. The marriage rate is measured by number of marriages per 1,000 unmarried women age 15 and older.
more unstable than marriage and correlates with higher divorce rates for couples who do go on to marry.41 Examinations of Swedish cohabiting couples with one child indicate that their dissolution rate is three times as high as it is for legally married couples with a child.42 Recent research has shown that in the U.S., a significant portion of births out of wedlock actually occur in cohabiting relationships; this suggests that the instability of cohabitation also contributes to the insecurity of the family environment for children.43 Statistics on divorce and cohabitation for African countries are more difficult to find, but the evidence that exists suggests that there are trends in these parts of the world similar to those of the West, and in some countries they have even more devastating consequences—this independently of the additional ravages of HIV and AIDS.

It is easy to find headlines in newspapers that read like this: "For Europeans, Love, Yes; Marriage, Maybe."44 "More and more European children are being born out of wedlock into a new social order in which, it seems, few of the old stigmas apply." The nonmarital birthrate is 49 percent in Norway, 62 percent in Iceland, and 31 percent in Catholic Ireland. Although the rate is only 9 percent in Italy, even there we are told that the "old rules are breaking down."45 It is interesting to see countries flirt with a more traditional pro-marriage policy but then back away. In the autumn of 1998, when I was giving the Cadbury Lectures at the University of Birmingham, the press was full of reports about the Green Paper on the family just released by Tony Blair's Liberal Party government. It contained several pro-marriage proposals, including suggestions that the state might do more with marriage education.46 The reaction to this initiative ranged from confusion and passivity to outright anger and rejection. Much of the latter came from cabinet members of the Blair government itself, some of whom had their own checkered history of divorce and out-of-wedlock parenthood. Recent reports indicate that, "The British government has all but abandoned that position, acknowledging in a recent position paper that there were many alternatives to the classic family structure."47

Increasingly, it appears, that "responsible parenting" is becoming both the cultural norm and the core of government policy in European societies, with less and less interest in whether it takes place within or outside of marriage. According to one news account, some British social scientists are predicting "marriage is doomed and will be virtually extinct within 30 years." Duncan White, head of Relate, an organization of 2,000 marriage counselors, believes that within thirty years, only one in five long-term couples will be married in Britain and that legal marriage will be rejected in favor of a "constellation" of relationships where couples have a series of long-term relationships with children from each.48 Although doubtless an exaggeration, such projections are being heard more frequently and should at least gain our attention.

In the face of such statistics and trends, sociologist Linda Waite and journalist Maggie Gallagher strike a very different tone. They conclude in their recent book The Case for Marriage (2000) that a couple's public and legal commitment to the formal institution of marriage appears in itself to contribute to the stability of the union.49 This point seems, for the most part, to have been lost in public conversations about the significance of marriage, both in the U.S. and in Europe. Furthermore, these authors summarize and extend the mounting evidence indicating that the deinstitutionalization of the family and the decline of marriage have alarming negative consequences for the well-being of women, children, men, and society as a whole. In the 1970s and early 1980s, American sociologists such as Jessie Bernard celebrated the new culture of divorce and nonmarriage as promising a future of creativity, experimentation, and freedom, especially for women.50 But by the late 1980s, research by feminist scholars Lenore Weitzman and Mary Ann Mason on the negative economic consequences of divorce for women cooled this earlier optimism.51 By the mid-1990s, reports by demographers such as Sara McLanahan and

42. Popenoe, Disturbing the Nest, p. 173.
48. Sarah Harris, "Marriage 'will be extinct in 30 years,' " Daily Mail, April 20, 2002.
Gary Sandefur showed that children in the U.S. not living with both biological parents were on average two to three times more likely to have difficulties in school, in finding employment, and in successfully forming families themselves. Income lessens these consequences, but only by 50 percent.

These negative health and economic consequences of family disruption hold, with only minor variations, throughout the world wherever the relevant statistics exist and most likely even in places where the statistics do not exist. The most interesting base reality of these trends is the increasing distance, if not separation, of fathers from their children. Divorce, nonmarital births, and teen pregnancies not only correlate with and accentuate poverty; they correlate with a weaker if not completely absent relation with fathers. This means a loss of the financial contributions of the father. It also means a loss of other unique qualities such as conscience formation, the loss of mediation to offspring of the father’s “social capital” (the resources of his extended family, his friends, his other social contacts), a decline of trust in the reliability of the world, and even a loss of faith in the dependability of the mother herself. Income lessens these consequences, but only by so much.

Although these are the kinds of facts that worry Popenoe and Wolfe, they interpret them with different theoretical commitments. Popenoe accepts William Goode’s theory that modernization weakened first the extended family and then the conjugal family. But he also believes that cultural values such as expressive and utilitarian individualism, independent of the social processes of industrialization, are the main factors fueling family disruption. This leads Popenoe to see the world cure for family disruption in a massive cultural conversion; he envisions the possibility of a worldwide renunciation of predetermined individualistic aspirations and the birth of a new familism. Handling world family disruptions by imitating Sweden’s relatively stable high-divorce society, as William Goode would urge, is an option that Popenoe has considered but rejected as both economically unfeasible and culturally destructive.

Alan Wolfe rejects the Swedish alternative as well. He joins Popenoe in seeing the Swedish strategy as culturally destructive; it undermines marriage and family even as it attempts to save them. Wolfe uses the colonization theory of Jürgen Habermas to show how different expressions of modernization are almost identical in their negative effects on families. By coining the intriguing word “colonization,” Habermas and Wolfe are employing Max Weber’s concept of technical rationality, an idea that was central to Weber’s famous theory of modernization. Technical rationality, as I indicated above, is the use of means-end and control-oriented practices to guide the efficient production of wealth. Habermas’s metaphor of colonization suggests that all spheres of modern life have become dominated by the spread of technical rationality, even face-to-face interpersonal life in local communities, neighborhoods, and families.

Colonization theory, as I briefly mentioned earlier, teaches that technical rationality enters into daily life from two perspectives—the efficiency goals of the marketplace and the control goals of government bureaucracy. Both disrupt the face-to-face interactions of the “lifeworld” and the intimate spheres of marriage and family. From the market comes the increasing absorption of both men and women into the wage economy and the subsequent erosion of the time for and benefits from parenthood and stable marital relations. From state bureaucracy comes the control of the education of our children, the rise of the welfare state, its preempting of family functions, and its subtle encouragement of the transfer of dependencies from family to the state. Wolfe argues that Sweden is the leading example of colonization of the lifeworld from the perspective of government bureaucracy; the U.S. is the leading example of colonization from the perspective of market rationality. In the end, the results for families of these two forms of colonization are approximately the same—more divorce, more out-of-wedlock births, and the declining well-being of children affected by these trends.

Wolfe joins Popenoe in distrusting Goode’s great hope for a stable high-divorce society in the Swedish style for all parts of the world. Popenoe and Wolfe have more faith in the prospects of cultural change.
and reconstruction as the way to address the family issue. On this note, they differ from many family sociologists in the U.S. such as Larry Bumpass, Andrew Cherlin, and Frank Fuerstenberg, who acknowledge the sobering facts about family disruption but believe little can be done about it other than mitigating the pain of its consequences. Indeed, Popoenoe and Wolfe advocate a new moral conversation that would lead to a cultural rebirth of marital commitment, one tough enough and realistic enough to deal with the tensions of modernity.

The Neglect of Religion

Popoenoe and Wolfe are close to my vision of the need for a new cultural work, initiated principally from the communities of civil society, that would attempt to revive and reconstruct the institution of marriage. Their vision, however, is not fully developed. It does not give voice to the various sectors or spheres of societies that need to be included in this cultural work. And they both neglect the category of religion. This is not surprising. Many sociologists associate Judaism and Christianity with patriarchy and its harmful consequences for women. Or they join Wolfe in believing that secularization has rendered contemporary religious institutions impotent as centers of socially reconstructive moral discourse. Popoenoe hopes that religion can help stabilize the postmodern family, but makes little effort to develop a theory of how religious institutions can reconstruct cultural values pertinent to marriage and family. Indeed, it is true that when thinking about marriage from an international and multicultural perspective, the religious factor becomes all the more complex to take into account.

If the family issue is first of all a cultural issue, as Popoenoe and his colleagues believe, then religion, as it did in the past, must play a decisive role even today in the reconstruction of marriage and family ideals. This is true as well if one thinks about the reconstruction of marriage, not only in Western societies but wherever modernization has had an impact.

Here are a few generalizations, to be developed in later chapters, about the potential role of Christianity in the world revival and reformation of marriage. They apply mainly to how Christianity has affected family and marriage theory in Western societies, but they have implications for wherever Christian cultural and legal traditions have spread. These generalizations will show why Christianity, when rightly interpreted, is a major resource for the reconstruction of marriage and family theory for Western societies and, in dialogue with other religions, for other parts of the world as well. My efforts to outline the reconstructive possibilities of Christianity are not to suggest that it is the only religious resource for the modern world. It is, however, a major resource. I believe that parallel efforts to revive and reconstruct the marriage and family traditions of other religions are also possible, although I will not attempt this task in this book. I will, however, make probes that may prove suggestive.

As we will see in Chapter Three, early Christianity, especially pre-Pauline and Pauline Christianity, was a family revolution. It significantly qualified, although it did not completely dismantle, the honor-shame codes that dominated family and marriage in the Greco-Roman world. By honor and shame codes, I mean a family system in which free men gained honor through exhibiting the qualities of dominance and agency and were shamed if they lost these perceived virtues. Women, on the other hand, gained honor by restricting their lives primarily to the domestic sphere and submitting to male protection. They were shamed if they went beyond these boundaries or were violated by the intrusion of other males outside their family and clan. Christianity, we must remember, existed within a cultural context largely formed by a Roman Hellenism that was saturated by these honor-shame codes.

Although early Christianity never completely disconnected from these codes, it qualified them by celebrating male servanthood rather than male dominance, by applying the golden rule and neighbor love to relationships between husband and wife, by requiring males to renounce...
their sexual privileges with female slaves and young boys, and by elevating the status of women. As the American sociologist Rodney Stark has argued in his *The Rise of Christianity* (1997), pagan women flocked to early Christianity because of its stand against infanticide, its restrictions on divorce (which in antiquity worked to the disadvantage of women), and its demand that men be responsible fathers and faithful husbands. The famous Cambridge anthropologist Jack Goody argues that it was not only the Protestant Reformation that gave birth to the modern conjugal and companionate family, as Harvard historian Steven Ozment has argued. He believes that the seeds of what I will call the equal-regard marriage and family also go back to the value of the individual found in early Christianity and its emphasis on “inter-personal, rather than inter-group, bonds.”

This emphasis on the value of the individual influenced eleventh- and twelfth-century Roman Catholic canon law to make mutual consent between bride and groom the decisive factor defining marriage. This move functioned to elevate the status of the conjugal couple over the power, prestige, and control of the extended family. This development limited the power of fathers to arbitrarily give their daughters in marriage for political and economic gain. According to the historian David Herlihy, this emphasis on the integrity and sanctity of the conjugal couple led to the downfall of polygyny and the elevation of monogamy wherever Christianity spread. Although Luther and Calvin rejected the Roman Catholic idea of marriage as a sacrament of grace, they accepted most of the other accomplishments of Roman Catholic canon law on marriage, especially the emphasis on marriage as requiring mutual consent by bride and groom.

But Luther and Calvin added one important element that the societies influenced by the Protestant Reformation may be losing due to the increasing deinstitutionalization of marriage and family. Marriage, according to the Reformers, was understood as both a public and an ecclesial affair. It was for them first of all a natural good and a contribution to secular society and the earthly kingdom. Marriage had to be registered by the state and then could be blessed and sanctified by the church. Marriage for these Reformers arose out of the love and consent of a couple, but it needed completion by both state and church.

The Reformation move to make marriage a public institution requiring state registration gradually brought to an end the phenomena of clandestine or secret marriages. These marriages, although valid before the eyes of the Catholic Church, were unwitnessed by family, priest, or civil magistrate. Their validity rested on their mutual consent—a consent, however, that one member of the couple could later deny without public contradiction. Ever since the Reformation, religion and state in most Western-oriented societies have cooperated to perform a great cultural work in bringing order and coherence to marriage by making it a public institution as well as a personal, consensual, and religious one.

Not only did the Protestant churches develop both an ecclesial and public theology governing marriage, they contributed a rich and complex symbol system that applied to both tasks. The creation story of ancient Judaism is central to Christian marriage theology as well as foundational for much of the Western legal edifice covering marriage. The creation of Adam and Eve as male and female both carrying God’s image (Gen. 1:27), their equal responsibility for procreation and “dominion” (Gen. 1:28), God’s declaration that it is not good that Adam “should be alone” (Gen. 2:18), the statement that “a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh” (Gen. 2:24), and the reaffirmation and recontextualization of these classic scriptures within the gospel message of Jesus in Matthew 19:4–6—all these are the scriptures that time and again were interpreted by Catholic and Protestant theologians and even by jurists up into the twentieth century.

It would be wrong to credit these scriptures, and Christian interpretations of them, as the only source of the Western conjugal, public, and companionate marriage and family. To understand the complex synthesis of sources that went into a Christian theology of marriage makes it easier to dialogue with the marriage perspectives of other religious traditions. Christian marriage theology, as Christianity itself, is a complicated mixture of somewhat disparate elements. As we will see in Chapters Four and Five, Christian theology on marriage and family interacted with Aristotle’s naturalistic view of family as well as with Roman and German law. Roman Catholic canon law and St. Thomas Aquinas brought these
elements in the New Cultural Work

The cultural work needed to revive marriage must have several dimensions to it. No one approach, no one strategy, no one discipline or institution, can accomplish this task alone. There needs to be a new system of voluntary associations, both national and international, that coordinate these complex patterns of dialogue and intervention. These associations must see the reformulation of the ethics of marriage as fundamental to the process of reviving the institution of marriage. They would attempt to devise an interrelated philosophical, religious, economic, legal, educational, and psychological strategy to influence culture, religious institutions, public life, and even the law. They would be based on the best research available in these different disciplines, but the overall task would be practical and hermeneutic, i.e., a matter of understanding, as Hans-Georg Gadenamer would say, for the purposes of praxis.69 It would entail critically understanding not only distinctively Christian traditions but other major religious traditions as well. The various traditions would not be dismantled, but there would be a realistic assessment as to which of their elements can best cope with, restrain, and guide the forces of modernization. Something of a model for this interreligious reconstructive retrieval, with the amendments I would add, can be found in the Religious Consultation on Population, Reproductive Health, and Ethics, a project I review and assess in the last chapter.

Here are some of the elements that would go into this world practical-theological (or better, practical-religious) dialogue.

1. Research and reflection on Western religious heritages would be the first step for the practical theologian. But this research would be both appreciative and critical. It also would show how the various strands of its marriage heritage — Jewish, early Christian, Greek, Roman, Catholic, and Protestant — interacted not only with each other but with other philosophical, legal, and social traditions. Gradually other religions not identified with the Abrahamic traditions would be invited to participate in the dialogue and this task of critical retrieval. The divisive issues of homosexuality and abortion would not be eliminated but would not be center stage. The more tractable issues of fatherlessness, nonmarital births, the declining well-being of children and women, and the deinstitutionalization of marriage and family would be more central.

2. The Western marriage traditions would be not only understood but reconstructed and reformed. Certainly, the most central agendas would be to reconstitute marriage on nonpatrarchal grounds and to address the associated work and family issues that face all modern marriages. This is the intellectual task of creating what my colleagues and I have called a "critical familial" and "critical marriage culture," or what family social scientist William Doherty is presently calling a "critical pro-marriage" philosophy.70 These ideas refer to a pro-marriage perspective that requires gender equality both within the family and between the family and the public worlds of paid employment and politics. These concepts are elaborated more fully in Chapter Two in my comparison between the U.S. and South Korea and in Chapter Seven in my dialogue with feminism.

It may sound hopelessly utopian to think that either Christianity or other religions can be reconstructed to eliminate or soften patriarchy. For instance, leading feminist political theorist Susan Okin is extremely pessimistic about the potential in this regard of any of the world religions, especially Islam, to contribute to gender equality. But recent religious traditions are complex and contain significant themes emphasizing the equality and dignity of women. The themes are often obscured by the religious and cultural practices of these traditions in particular historic epochs.

3. This practical-theological inquiry can, I believe, provide theological rationales for why marriage must continue to be seen, as it has been for the last four hundred years, as an interest of the state as well as religion. The core of such a public theology can be found in Protestant covenantal theologies where the state is also seen as one of the members of the marital covenant. Catholic subsidiarity theologies also had ways of understanding theologically why the state should be invested in families and marriage. In Chapters Six and Seven, I will define and discuss both covenant and subsidiarity theory as they apply to the institution of marriage. I should bring the two models of covenant and subsidiarity together. Marital arrangements need the protections, accountability, and public supports that the state has provided over the last few centuries. Young people should be helped to understand and appropriate why the state can be a friend of marriage, just as it is a friend of the possibility of driving an automobile safely, having clean water to drink, and having good schools to attend. I will contend that marriage is a public institution as well as a deeply meaningful personal and spiritual relationship. In keeping with this, the state should find ways to reward marriage, support the child-


73. An attempt to bring the two models together can be found in Don Browning et al., The Cambridge Companion to Christian Ethics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

74. Browning et al., From Culture Wars to Common Ground, ch. 11.

world pursue their reproductive destinies apart from the supports of marriage. Coping with work and family issues will take vastly different forms in different parts of the world. But in all parts of the globe, work and family issues must be addressed as a key illustration of the challenge to families that comes from what Habermas has called the colonization of the lifeworld by the systems world.

5. In Chapter Eight, I will show why marriage education, as one among a variety of strategies, is a requirement for the development of a critical marriage culture. Marriage education should begin in secondary schools. This is another reason why the state must be a partner in the reformation and revival of marriage. There are new curricula now available that help youth navigate the increasingly hazardous years of searching for an appropriate mate. These curricula also begin preparing young people for the institution of marriage. No one part of society can make such educational programs become fully successful. They must be established on a complex cooperative process supported by church, school, state, and market. They must be informed by critically tested marital ideologies and the best social science research to determine what actually helps. In addition to careful education about the spiritual meaning of marriage, church, synagogue, and mosque must also do their share of education for marriage communication. Knowing how to do marriage communication and use scientifically tested premarital inventories such as PREPARE or FOCUS should be skills possessed by all ministers, priests, and rabbis and eventually by religious leaders of the other religions throughout the world. At the same time, these materials should be adapted, and in many cases are being adapted, to new cultural and religious contexts. The powerful marriage theologies of the different major religions help ground marital commitment. But amidst the turmoil of modern life, such commitment needs to be buttressed with well-internalized skills in interpersonal relations, conflict management, and what Jürgen Habermas calls "communicative competence." Furthermore, skills and commitment must be reinforced by interacting marriage-supportive institutions.

Chapter Nine will conclude the book with a review and critical analysis of five world strategies for addressing the global crisis of families. The United Nations, the World Council of Churches, the Howard Center, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Religious Consultation on Population, Reproductive Health, and Ethics all have major analyses and solutions for the emerging problems of families in the world. Only two of these global strategies — the Howard Center and the Roman Catholic Church — address the decline of marriage in any significant way or see the renewal of marriage as part of the solution of world family disruption. And neither of these take the reconstruction of marriage and the agenda of "critical familialism" with sufficient seriousness.

In conclusion, let me simply repeat my central message. The forces of modernization and globalization are ambiguous for the institutions of marriage and family. They bring benefits, but they also can be destructive. But human beings in their freedom and culture-making capacities have the ability to harness and control these modernizing forces. They have the ability to reform and revive marriage as both a public institution and an institution envisioned as an ecumenical, interfaith, intersector, worldwide dialogue. The discipline of practical theology should be a key initiator of this dialogue.