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MARTHA FULCHER MONTGOMERY

200  
PRACTICES OF PREMARITAL AND MARITAL COUNSELING

BY CLERGYMEN IN GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

by

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This study was concerned with the clergymen in Greensboro in their role of premarital and marital counselor. An interview schedule in the form of a questionnaire was pretested and presented to 48 clergymen randomly selected from the 1960 Greensboro Ministers' Fellowship Directory. The project was designed to: (a) identify the type of church the clergyman served in terms of the environment in which he counseled, the background of the clergyman, especially in terms of his own preparation and readiness for counseling; (b) describe the clergyman's methods of serving families as marital and premarital counselor; (c) report the needs which the minister sees as being beneficial to himself in his own counseling practices.

Pertinent results of the study were: (1) There appeared a trend toward more consistent premarital counseling and opportunity for more marital counseling in larger churches and in congregations consisting mainly of sales and white collar people.

(2) The majority (70%) of the clergymen counseled all engaged couples. Recent seminary graduates most consistently counseled all engaged couples. There was a trend toward more active marriage counseling by seminary graduates and those clergymen who studied above seminary level.

(3) Methods used by clergy to acquire counseling techniques were in rank order: personal reading of books and journals, attendance at church workshops, lectures, and short courses at nearby centers. Formal

courses most helpful in counseling role were: pastoral theology, marriage and family life courses, general psychology and sociology.

(4) Those men whose counseling techniques were either psychologically-oriented or a combination of psychologically and traditionally-oriented were more active in counseling than those whose counseling was more traditionally-oriented.

(5) Areas of information most frequently discussed by clergymen in premarital counseling were: religion in the home, communication between family members, symbolism and meaning of ceremony, and finances. Those topics less often discussed were: sexual adjustment, home backgrounds, family planning and birth control.

(6) Problems most frequently brought to the clergymen in marital counseling were: drinking, sexual adjustment, finances, and in-laws and parents. Those less often of major concern were: home backgrounds, religion in the home, religious differences, children, and family planning and birth control. It is indicative that some of these areas less frequently or never discussed in premarital counseling were those areas most frequently brought as marital problems to the minister.

(7) More than two-thirds of the clergymen had used community resources for referrals in premarital counseling, and about two-fifths in marital counseling, primarily the physician.

(8) Many clergymen did not consider themselves competent in marriage counseling, especially depth problems.

(9) Methods other than counseling used by clergymen to promote good family life were: sermons, major emphasis during Christian Family Week, Sunday School curriculum, and young peoples' organizations.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

A larger proportion of the population of the United States is married now than ever before. The number of men and women who were married during the year 1956, for instance, was reported to be 3,500,000. In that same year (1956) there were 400,000 divorces and annulments, with approximately 100,000 more husbands deserting, without legal benefits, their wives and families. There are no statistics which report the number of couples who suffer from a psychological divorce, that is living under the same roof, but living together unhappily.

Statistics indicate that the rate of dissolution of marriage is highest in the third year and declines to less than one per cent in the eleventh year. Marriages of teenagers are notably less enduring than those of older brides and grooms.

There are various persons or agencies to which a couple might turn for counsel in premarital guidance and when marital problems arise. Unfortunately, friends and relatives are often consulted and offer biased or unwise advice. Family welfare, other public agencies, family courts, professional people such as lawyers, doctors, and marriage counselors are called upon to counsel their clients and patients. Churches, in varying degrees of effectiveness, offer counsel and help to married partners in trouble. An increasing number of ministers,

priests, and rabbis are taking special training in pastoral counseling to enable them to be more understanding of marital problems and helpful in their solution. Dr. Hudson (1958) in quoting Mowrer, stated that today's 350,000 clergy in the United States are undoubtedly seeing more people "clinically" than all the psychiatrists, psychologists and psychoanalysts combined. Dr. Wood (1944, p.74) wrote:

Marriage counseling is an inescapable function of the pastor since he maintains standards of marriage, administers the sacraments, is called during family crises,.....and is involved in the attitudes and responsibilities of the members of the family throughout the total life span.

#### Theory and Growth of the Role of Minister-Counselor

The majority of marriages are still performed by clergymen, usually within the church or in some appointed place. The clergy has a distinct challenge in helping to prepare these people for marriage and at the same time to lay the groundwork or open lines of communication to the couple. If such lines of communication are opened, problems that appear after marriage might be brought to him by the couple. The effectiveness of the clergyman as pastoral counselor depends a great deal upon his church's definition of his role, his parishioners' role expectations, and his own abilities and training.

Interest in the field of counseling is increasing among the clergy. Wynn and Fairchild (1961) in their study of ministers and laymen in the United Presbyterian Church found that ministers considered their function as pastoral counselor one of their two greatest contributions to family stability, the other being their ministry of preaching.

By 1954 many of the theological schools had professors with clinical backgrounds in counseling and family life on their teaching staffs. The American Association of Theological Schools had appointed a permanent committee on clinical pastoral education. Hiltner (1965) in a discussion of religion and psychiatry since 1954, presented the development of pastoral counseling centers. Some of these were simply special services of a local church, while others were operated by denominations, councils of churches, or in affiliation with medical schools or social agencies. Some of the better known training centers were: the Institute of Advanced Pastoral Studies, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan; Philadelphia Family Studies and Marriage Council; American Foundation of Religion and Psychiatry, New York; and the Menninger Foundation, Topeka, Kansas. In North Carolina was the Department of Pastoral Care, Bowman Gray Medical School, in Winston-Salem.

Clinebell (1964) discussed the significance and emergence of pastoral counseling as a specialty. By "specialist" the author meant any clergyman whose primary focus of professional functioning was counseling. He suggested that minimally the pastor should (a) have seminary training; (b) have advanced (post-seminary) training, clinical and academic, in pastoral counseling or in one of the other counseling disciplines; and (c) hold the ministry as his primary professional identity.

Some influences leading to the growth of the minister-counselor specialization were: (a) wide-spread interest in mental illness and health; (b) the trend toward specialization in society due to increasing complexity of professional knowledge; (c) the gap between the few

counselors and large number of people needing help; (d) increasing number of seminary students who, receiving some training in counseling were aware of the need for more training; and (e) many churches now have the budgets to employ multiple staffs and to engage a person as professional counselor.

Clinebell (1965, p.18) supported the future of the specialty of pastoral counseling. He said pastoral counseling should contribute significantly to the enriching of the church

.....through the enhancement of the church's resources for helping and healing broken lives; through the development of a network of new training centers where parish ministers and those preparing for specialized counseling ministries may increase their arts of counseling; and through the discovery, by means of effective research of new methods of both individual and group counseling.

#### Importance of the Study

Research supported the statement that the presence of religious faith and practice was closely associated with marital success. Most often at least one member of the couple who comes to the clergyman has grown up in the church which he serves, or is in some way affiliated with that church. Although many couples think that the pastor, as minister of the church and as recipient of an honorarium, is duty-bound to perform the marriage ceremony, the clergymen themselves think they have the prerogative to agree or refuse to marry the couple. For some clergymen, the willingness of the couple to engage in premarital counseling is a prerequisite to his performing the ceremony. In marital counseling other factors are involved. The married couple or one of its partners who come to the clergyman with problems may initiate the counseling sessions. Their willingness to do so may depend largely upon

the availability of the clergyman, his warmth and assurance as a friend and confidante, and his attitude toward marriage counseling.

Because of the clergyman's place at a strategic point in the lives of his parishioners, and because of the present rise in the interest in pastoral counseling, indications are that further research concerning the minister-counselor is greatly needed.

#### Statement of the Problem

This research project was concerned with the clergymen of Greensboro, North Carolina in their role of premarital and marital counselor.

#### Purpose

Purposes of the study were threefold. It was an attempt to:

- (a) identify the type of church the clergyman served in terms of the environment in which he counseled, the background of the clergyman, especially in terms of his own preparation and readiness for counseling;
- (b) describe the clergyman's methods and ways of serving families as the marital and premarital counselor;
- (c) report the needs and aids the minister sees beneficial in his own counseling practices.

#### Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined as:

Premarital and marital counseling may be perceived as a profession engaged in by people of many disciplines who have had special training, including internship, in handling marital problems. This type of

counseling may also be thought of as an activity carried on by people from various disciplines, with or without specialized training.

Marital counseling begins when one or both members of a couple come to a counselor for help in resolving tension-producing difficulties. It is the process whereby professional skills and experience, within the context of an understanding and accepting face-to-face relationship, are brought to the assistance of the spouses as they seek to communicate verbally and emotionally, and as they learn to choose courses which will lead to some resolution of their problems.

Premarital counseling is, in short, a type of preparation for marriage. It is a process through which a third person, the counselor, assists the engaged couple in developing abilities in resolving to some workable degree the problems that inevitably arise in their interpersonal relationships as they move toward marriage.

The American Association of Marriage Counselors defined marriage counseling - marital and premarital - as "a specialized field of family counseling, concerned with the interpersonal relations of the two partners, in which the client is aided to a self-determined resolution of his problem" (Johnson, 1961, p.2).

#### Limitations

The sample for this study was small. It is recommended that in further research larger samples be used so that more extensive statistical analysis may be carried out.

The researcher met with difficulty in trying to categorize the occupational levels of congregations as given by the clergymen. A better system of classifying this information is recommended.

Problems also arose in classifying the educational background of the clergymen. The range of Bible institutes and seminaries attended was large, and the curriculum differed greatly. (An enlightening study on church sect by Benton Johnson [1963] gives support to the difficulty of classifying churches.)

The researcher was faced with a problem in her literature search because many studies were parochial in nature and were not published outside of a particular denomination. Menges and Dittes (1965) emphasized that research method and report in the church was a frontier of knowledge in a field that had inadequate communication. Sociological and psychological journals carried few of the studies cited by the investigator. Some studies executed within a denomination were reported in their own journals or periodicals, with little description of the technicalities of their data. The author found very little research that had been done by Jewish or Roman Catholic groups, or about the rabbi or priest as counselor. Dr. Mordecai Brill, a rabbi specializing in marriage counseling at the American Foundation of Religion and Psychiatry, said in an interview with the researcher that he knew of no research in pastoral counseling done by Jewish groups, but knew of only those studies which included the Jew, Roman Catholic and Protestant in the sample.

Another problem for the researcher was that of semantics. As Douglas (1957) reported, the word pastor, for example, connoted counselor to the clergy but caller to laity.

### Organization of the Remainder of the Thesis

Chapter I has introduced the reader to the statement and purpose of the problem. A review of the literature found in Chapter II presents studies of counseling practices of clergymen as well as some manuals and handbooks written primarily for the minister-counselor. The interview schedule, pretesting, the group studied and methods of data collection and analysis are included in Chapter III.

Analysis of data, presented in Chapter IV is sectioned into four parts: demographic data concerning the clergy, data concerning the clergymen as premarital and as marital counselors, and self-described needs of the clergymen. In the final chapter, Chapter V, a summary of the study is given, the important findings, and recommendations for further study.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The main body of literature which was found in the field of marital and premarital counseling pertained to broad terms of the clergyman as minister-counselor. In section I is reported empirical research concerning the clergymen. Few studies pertain to the minister as counselor only, but mainly with the man in his many roles as clergyman, both as he sees these roles and as laymen see them. Section II introduces the reader to the few manuals or handbooks written for the parish clergyman who has obtained only a minimum of counseling techniques and knowledge in the area of marriage and family life. In the Foreword of Morris' (1965, p.viii) book, David Mace writes:

We now have a growing literature in the field of marriage counseling, but some of it is too technical for the minister who has had little orientation to the behavioral sciences. There is therefore great need for written material which will give ordinary parish ministers enough self-confidence to do creditable jobs, yet not enough to lure them out of their depths.

#### Studies of Counseling Practices of Clergymen

The only study concerning the rabbi and counseling was by Schnitzer (1958). A sample of 682 questionnaires was analyzed. The research was done in 1950. Most rabbis agreed on the importance of pastoral counseling roles, but showed little acceptance of the fact that counseling had already developed as an organized field of practice. Many were of the opinion that their education, which included no

specialized training in counseling, was adequate. Such training usually emphasized the role of a good preacher who was logical and persuasive. Since this study was completed, the Jewish seminarians have been urged to take courses in pastoral counseling and to read in the field.

Vivona (1960) studied some attitudes and practices of the clergy on marriage counseling. Using a sample of 151 Roman Catholic priests in the New York area, the researcher sent questionnaires to or interviewed the subjects. The findings included such information as: the typical priest averaged 2.7 marriage cases a month and considered three or less interviews per person or couple adequate. The priests avoided outside assistance but at times made referrals to a physician or psychiatrist. The counselors' theoretical approach, reported the author, was a combination of various counseling methods.

Brown (1956) questioned clergymen concerning their role as premarital and marital counselor. These roles were defined as either secular or sacred. Secular counseling was considered an appeal to the counselee's rational thinking in terms of acting on their own intelligent behalf. Sacred counseling was defined as an appeal to the counselee's more irrational or emotional concern for those traditional patterns of doctrines, rituals and mores related to the family. Brown's findings included close association between the type of counseling, secular or sacred, and (a) the socio-economic level, (b) the educational level, and (c) social values of the congregation.

Cumming and Harrington (1963) designed a group of studies to discover how the task of controlling deviance in society was divided among various integrative agents and agencies. They examined the clergyman's

role as counselor with reference to its "articulation" with the whole deviance-controlling system. The clergyman's activities appeared to vary with the socio-economic characteristics of his congregation, rather than denomination, and with his own educational level. A clergyman whose educational level was concordant with most of his parishioners was involved in more counseling than those clergymen who were well above or below the educational level of their parishioners. The authors proposed that the effect on articulation between clergy and agencies was produced by certain strains, some of which inhibited the development of a system of divided labor between clergymen and other deviance-controlling agents, particularly social workers.

Clergymen who collaborated with other deviance-controlling agencies reported more counseling and more types of problems brought to them in counseling than those who had less to do with other agencies. The researchers also found that the clergyman referred more clients to other agents or agencies than he received and he used more agencies than used him. This imbalance, concluded the authors, was related to both the readiness of the average person to approach a clergyman for help, and the tensions between clergymen and some other supporting and controlling groups.

Cumming and Harrington (1963) reported that their own studies showed that the clergyman ranked with the doctor as the first contact made outside the kinship and friendship circle during the onset of mental illness. They quoted Eaton (1961, p.54):

Clergymen are close to many people during crucial periods of the life cycle...For those who know they need help the clergy is accessible without a waiting list or an intake worker to screen applicants. And going to a clergyman does not require a self-admission of helplessness on the part of the client.

McCann's (1962) survey included 166 Protestant ministers, 45 Roman Catholic priests, and 80 rabbis. The respondents were asked to state what they thought was the most important aspect of their ministry in contributing to the emotional and spiritual growth of their parishioners. Preaching was given first place, closely followed by counseling. Other significant aspects of their ministry, in descending order, were pastoral visitation, worship, church fellowship, teaching and the personality attributes of the clergyman. McCann reported that, though counseling was considered very effective in pastoral services, the respondents criticized their capacity and adequacy as persons, their training and their experience.

Nameche (1958) interviewed a stratified random sample of 100 Protestant ministers. He found that urban and suburban ministers counseled on the average of 3.76 hours a week and rural ministers slightly less. Other data indicated the average number of counseling sessions for each counselee was four, lasting on the average of 55 minutes. Nameche classified the clergymen in terms of conservative, moderate and liberal. The moderate Protestant group did by far the most counseling, the liberal second, and the conservative third. About two-thirds of the clergymen counseled less than two hours a week, one-third counseled between two and nine hours a week, and a few (mainly the theologically moderates) spent ten to twenty-two hours a week in counseling.

The respondents ranked counseling fourth in relation to time spent in pastoral activities, while they ranked counseling third in importance. Ministers of churches in the lower socio-economic strata did

relatively more counseling than their colleagues in churches of higher income, educational and occupational groups. The size of the church, the adequacy of the staff, the location of the church and other such demographic factors were not related to the amount of counseling being done.

Nameche (1958) categorized counseling problems brought to the clergymen and found marriage and family was rated first. In this category a large percentage of the problems involved alcoholism, sex, and infidelity. Religious and spiritual problems were low in frequency.

Pastors in the more conservative denominations reported less difficult problems brought to them in counseling, while pastors of more liberal denominations reported moderately difficult problems. The "middle Protestant Orthodox" pastors reported having most difficult problems. The author stated that reasons for this might have been the parishioner's differing ideas of the role and responsibilities of the clergy, and socio-economic differences. (The liberal groups were mainly higher on the socio-economic ladder.)

Nameche (1958) studied the effect of training in counseling and psychology on the minister's work as counselor. He found that the average minister had about three under-graduate courses and two seminary courses in psychology. About 30 per cent had done graduate work in psychology, one half had had no formal counseling instruction, and one-fourth of the respondents had one seminary course in pastoral counseling. Almost all of the men who had received formal counseling instruction had done so at the seminary level. In evaluating their own academic study of psychology (not pastoral) 71 per cent reported it highly valuable,

19 per cent moderately valuable, and ten per cent of no value. In appraising their seminary training in pastoral counseling, 66 per cent reported it highly inadequate, eight per cent moderately adequate, and 26 per cent adequate.

Nameche (1958) asked the respondents: "If training in premarital counseling were made available in this area now, say, involving an afternoon a week for two or three months, would you be interested in such training?" Sixty-seven per cent answered yes, while ten per cent answered they needed no more training. Other respondents answered time would not allow it.

The purposes of the vast study by Fairchild and Wynn (1958) were: (a) to discover the valid picture of the minister's way of serving families both directly and in collaboration with laymen; (b) to discover the readiness of pastor and church to move into certain areas of education for family life; (c) to tap some selected attitudes and opinions which could subsequently be compared with those of laymen on the same subjects.

Findings pertinent to this particular study were:

(a) The clergymen ranked pastoral counseling first when asked to assess the value of the pastoral services to parish families. Visitation in parish homes and preaching on family life subjects came next. The range of hours per week spent in counseling was from one to forty hours, with a median of five hours per week spent counseling personal problems. Rural pastors did little "clinical" pastoral counseling.

(b) One out of four ministers felt unqualified to discuss sexual relations with couples planning marriage. Fourteen per cent would not

discuss problems of parent-child relationships and family discipline.

(c) Three out of four respondents relied heavily upon providing literature in his premarital work. From the responses on the questionnaire, the researchers concluded that the pastor did not usually discuss the material with the couple. The pastors' favorite interview guide was the marriage ceremony itself.

(d) They cited similar findings as Cumming and Harrington (1963) as to the lack of cooperation and communication between the church and social agencies.

(e) Pastors differed widely in the topics they considered appropriate to discuss in premarital counseling. Two out of three pastors found no difficulty discussing religious responsibilities, religious backgrounds, and the symbolism and meaning of the ceremony. One-half of the respondents discussed topics about the interpersonal relationships of engagements and marriage. One out of four spoke of planning for parenthood, housing, or in-law relationships. Less than half of the 1,000 pastors in the sample considered family background information, anticipated economic arrangements, and sex attitudes proper for discussion in premarital interviews.

(f) The clergymen were asked to rank ten functions in the order of those they would most like to improve through special training if given the opportunity and time. Counseling ranked first, followed by leadership training, preaching and sermon preparation.

(g) Seventy-eight per cent of the clergymen expressed the attitude that their seminaries failed to give them adequate preparation for the ministry to families. Preferences for courses in seminaries were

general pastoral psychology and counseling, family counseling, advanced clinical work, general education, and church administration, in that order.

Orso (1949) reported that of 260 Lutheran ministers, 46 per cent always held premarital conferences with couples; 36 per cent did occasionally. The "chief considerations" in the interviews were discussed as follows: (a) church membership by 92.7 per cent of the respondents; (b) family altar, 63.5 per cent; (c) expectations from marriage, 63.5 per cent; (d) common interests, 61.2 per cent; (e) differences of opinions, 57.3 per cent; and (f) role of forgiveness, 50.4 per cent. Less than 50 per cent of the clergymen who counseled with couples discussed any phase of sex.

Morris (1957) studied a group of married couples who had participated in premarital counseling sessions with their pastor to find out if they adjusted sooner than couples who had not. The couples were questioned as to their happiness in areas of sex, finance, social activities, in-laws, religion, and mutual friends. They were to list the length of time, up to ten years required for adjustment in these areas. The results were compared to those of a control group who had not participated in premarital counseling. Morris found there was not sufficient evidence to support the hypothesis that couples participating in premarital counseling adjusted sooner in marriage, but that premarital counseling was effective in helping couples make happy marriages.

Fairchild (1964) wrote that the average pastor does not have many occasions for premarital interviews, thus giving him little opportunity to develop the skill of premarital counseling. Other

factors contributing to the variety of premarital interviewing patterns were the age of the pastor, the use of specialized resources in the community and specific training in counseling.

The Clergyman's Own Role Expectations and the Layman's Role Expectations of the Clergy

The researcher found several studies concerning role expectations. Pastoral duties were discussed in categories of: administrator, organizer, pastor, preacher, priest and teacher. Within the categories many activities were enumerated.

Blizzard (1955-1958) conducted a series of studies concerning the Protestant clergyman's professional self-image and the image of "practitioner" roles. A sample of 1,111 college and seminary-trained clergymen in local parishes represented 22 denominations. Almost two-thirds of the ministers studied reported that at least one out of four "people-oriented" role patterns were primary. These roles were: father-shepherd, interpersonal relations specialist, parish-promoter, and communication problem-solver. More than one-sixth checked two primary "idea-oriented" patterns: the evangelist and the priest.

Blizzard (1956) also studied a sample of 690 clergymen representative of the theologically trained American Protestant parish ministry. Blizzard gave six practitioner roles of the parish ministry which were ranked according to importance, effectiveness and enjoyment. Ministers also reported the number of hours spent each day on these activities and a description of their own adequacy of preparation for each role. The rank orders within each orientation were reported in this way:

(a) importance: preacher, teacher, pastor, priest organizer, administrator;

(b) effectiveness: preacher, pastor, teacher, priest, administrator, organizer; (c) enjoyment: pastor, preacher, teacher, priest, organizer, administrator. The amount of time spent in these roles were quite different: administrator, two-fifths of the day; pastor, one-fourth; preacher and priest, one-fifth; organizer, one-tenth; teacher, one-twentieth.

The traditional roles of preacher, teacher and priest were those in which ministers considered themselves most adequate. The need for more training was indicated for the more contemporary roles of pastor, organizer, and administrator. These newer roles involved the necessity for personal relationships with no patterns of behavior previously set by the denominations.

Blizzard (1958) in his study entitled "The Parish Minister's Self-Image of His Master Role," sought the following information: (a) give your description of a minister; (b) name the personality characteristics of a minister which seem to lead to effective ministry; and (c) describe aspects of a minister's conduct which seem to assure success.

Two factors emerged as elements of the master role. One was the ideological or theological dimension (the minister articulated the ideology of the church and his job as that of mediator, servant of God). The other was the functional dimension (the minister was "service-oriented," filling the needs of his people). Lutherans, Presbyterians and Protestant Episcopalians were stronger in expressing the theoretical or ideological aspects, while Methodists tended to see their role from the operational, functional point of view. Contradictions in

answers to effectiveness and successfulness gave evidence of the conflict in role expectation. The two most-mentioned criteria in each classification were: (a) effectiveness: character, outgoing personality, skill as a pastor-counselor, and (b) successfulness: general ability in practitioner roles, competence in denominational programs, and outgoing personality.

This researcher cited two studies of laymen's role expectations of the clergymen. In a large-scale survey of American Baptist laymen by Everett and Igawski (1961), data showed that the laymen listed in rank order these activities as duties of the minister: (a) preparing sermons, (b) counseling, and (c) calling. In another study Wood (1964) sought to show whether the role of parish priest as perceived by the clergy differed from the same role as seen by lay persons. His findings showed no significant differences between clergy and lay role expectations. His sample, however, consisted entirely of Episcopal clergymen and laymen of their churches who were well acquainted with the activities of the church.

#### The Clergyman and Advanced Study in Counseling

As described in Chapter I, more clergymen are seeking to further their clinical training in pastoral counseling by attending study centers. Goodwin and Dorfman (1965) sought ministers' evaluation of their training in marriage counseling. Their sample was 34 clergymen who had completed clinical training in counseling at the Philadelphia Training Center. Data did not support the claim that clergymen trained in counseling were lured from the active pastorate, perhaps to enter into private therapeutic practice. Of the 34 who answered the

questionnaires, 27 men were primarily engaged in religious vocations. Among the six whose primary employment was not church-related, three were in secular education, and three were counselors in non-religious agencies. Nearly 97 per cent of the respondents reported some current application of the specialized training in this area. Sixty-two per cent had an effective interest in family life education by teaching courses in it.

#### Manuals and Guidebooks for the Minister-Counselor

A great number of books have been written in the last twenty years by clergymen as well as other professionals in the area of marriage and family life. Some of these books were written primarily for the student or for those looking toward marriage. Respondents in this study reported the use of these books with couples in premarital interviews. The area of writing in pastoral care, pastoral theology or pastoral counseling has developed only recently. Books specializing in premarital counseling or marriage counseling for clergymen are few, but some are now available. Formerly pastoral theology leaned upon interpretation of Biblical teachings, traditions of religious institutions, and personal experience, but not scientific method. With the growth of the behavioral sciences and scientific investigation, writings in the field have used this information in providing more knowledge, techniques and skills in counseling.

Hulme (1962, p.13) wrote:

In our day the pastor has been greatly helped in this challenge (of counseling) by the personality and social sciences whose data have enlarged our understanding of the Word as it applies to these epochs. Some have found it difficult to relate the data of science to that of revelation on the basis that science is the word

of man while revelation is the Word of God...These sciences have all but revolutionized the pastoral approach to people with problems.

Three manuals on premarital counseling were found by the researcher written particularly for the clergy in non-clinical language, introducing the methodology of professional counselors in a parish setting.

Westberg (1958) promoted the philosophy of the pastoral ministry as centered about the family and its life from beginning to end. He related premarital counseling as an accepted part of the church's overall family life program. The purpose of his manual was to suggest ways in which discussions with the couple could be enriched.

Morris (1960) in his book based on his own research and experience, discussed many studies and writings in the established literature on marriage and family life. His manual was also a step-by-step guide for clergymen, citing many Protestant denominations' stands on basic issues such as sex, birth control, divorce, and "suggested attitudes" toward Roman Catholic - Protestant marriages and Jewish - Christian marriages.

Dick's (1963) manual was one in a series of volumes in the area of pastoral counseling. His book was either for the clergyman as counselor or the engaged couple as counselees. He suggested the use of his manual for group interviews, such as youth group discussions.

Three books were found which were written for the clergyman to use as guides in their marital counseling. Hudson (1963) wrote a technical manual which leaned heavily upon the newest skills in the counseling field, primarily the nondirective techniques introduced by Carl Rogers. Hudson indicated that he preferred the interpersonal competence approach, originated by Harry Stack Sullivan and adapted by

Foote and Cottrell. He further analyzed the interaction within families as consisting of the following six factors: freedom, autonomy, empathy, flexibility, creativity and trust. Hudson pointed out that for a successful marriage all of these components were necessary in one degree or another. The author suggested guidelines for the minister-counselor and acquainted the minister with insights into the personality problems and makeup of those who might come to him.

Morris (1965, p.xii) showed his concern with the theological as well as the psychological approach to marriage counseling when he wrote:

The minister as father-confessor can deal with moral problems in such a way as to bring the assurance of God's love and forgiveness to those burdened with guilt. And often it is guilt that stands in the way of good marital adjustment.

The Roman Catholic Church conducted Pre-Cana Conferences which were group counseling experiences. A manual was provided for these sessions, but was not available to this researcher. Cana Conferences were conducted for young married couples on various phases of married life.

Few major denominations offer to their clergymen some guidelines for their dealings with the premarital and married couples. The Methodist Church has such a manual. The Lutheran, Episcopal and Presbyterian denominations are others whose statutes prescribe procedure. Morris (1965) discussed these in his books.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

#### Construction of the Interview Schedule

In order that the data be collected in the most concise, clear and full detail, several interview schedules were first studied. The questionnaire used by Ruth Thompson (1960) concerning teenage marriage in North Carolina was studied for form. The researcher obtained a schedule used by Mrs. Ethel Nash (1959) for her study of physicians and their premarital counseling, which gave some important ideas for the questionnaire finally used. The interview schedule used by J. Kenneth Morris (1957) and that of Bruce Minton Brown (1956) were also evaluated. From these questionnaires and the literature read, the battery of questions for the interview schedule was compiled. This schedule was pretested and pertinent revisions were made. The pretest is discussed more fully under Pretest and Revisions.

#### General Characteristics of the Schedule

In the city of Greensboro, there were ministers having varied social and educational backgrounds and representing many denominations. In order to cover the large variety of questions, open end, choice and short answer methods were used. The information sought had to do with (a) the minister himself, such as age, geographic background, marital status, educational background, and his own seeking of information concerning the premarital and marital counseling fields; (b) the minister

as the premarital and marital counselor, his attitudes and practices; and (c) self-described needs and aids in family life education. A copy of the schedule may be found in the Appendix.

#### Pretest and Revisions

A pretest using the interview schedule was given to six Greensboro clergymen, randomly selected from the Directory of the Greensboro Ministers' Fellowship, but not in the sample itself. Those churches represented were two Presbyterian (one a Negro church in whose congregation were many professionals and technologists), a large Methodist church whose pastor was known in the city as a family counselor, a Church of God, a Congregational Christian, and a Pentecostal Holiness Church.

From this pretest only a few minor changes in word choice and order of questions were made. Those clergy pretested, when asked to evaluate the questionnaire, made no further recommendations for major changes in the instrument.

#### The Group Studied

Greensboro, North Carolina was an unusual city for its size in that there were five recognized institutions of higher learning, three of these being church-related institutions. In 1960 the city had over two hundred churches, with two hundred thirty-five clergymen and agents listed in the Directory of Churches and Related Agencies, sponsored by the Greensboro Ministers' Fellowship. Greensboro is typical of the "Bible Belt" in that, while major denominations and faiths were prevalent, there were also churches that would be classified as sect groups.

Manufacturing, especially in textile and apparel products, machinery, food and kindred products were the major industries in the city. Of the male population the largest groups were operatives, craftsmen, foremen and kindred workers, clerical and kindred workers, managers, officials and proprietors, salesworkers, and professional, technological and kindred workers, in that order. Of the female population employed, most were involved in clerical and kindred work, or were operatives. In order followed professional and technological occupations and private household workers, which were predominantly Negro. Sales ladies also formed a large group in the labor force. Greensboro, according to the 1960 census, had a population of 119,574 persons; 88,444 were classified as white, 30,817 as Negro, and 313 as other races. The median population per household was 3.35. The median income for families in Greensboro was \$5,845. For persons twenty-five years and older, the median years of school completed was 11.7 years. An example of the mobility of Greensboro residents was that 58,555 persons out of 105,626 persons over the age of five lived in a different house in 1960 than they did in 1955.

Married couples numbered 25,737. Persons classified as married "comprise both those who have been married only once and those who remarried after having been widowed or divorced. Persons in common law marriages are stated as married, and persons whose only marriage had been annulled as single." (Census Tracts, p.4) Separated persons, numbering 4,183 in the census, were classified as married. The census gave only the number of divorced people as 2,074, with no other information given about them.

### Selection of the Sample

In order to obtain as representative a sample as possible, 60 ministers were selected by using a Table of Random Numbers and the Directory of Churches and Related Agencies. This number was included so that at least 50 clergymen would be in the study: 50 subjects and ten alternates. Although efforts were made to contact 58 clergymen, only 50 were interviewed, two of those being dropped later because the persons interviewed could not be classified as clergymen. One church had combined with another, and four clergymen declined to participate. Another, a woman, was leaving for an extended trip and was out of town during the period of interviewing. One clergyman lived in Reidsville, and another in Yanceyville, though they served churches in Greensboro. These were not contacted for an interview. Two others could never be reached by telephone, though the researcher tried unsuccessfully several times. The sample, therefore, consisted of forty-eight clergymen, representing the major Protestant faiths, various sect groups, the Roman Catholic Church and the Jewish faith, as recorded in Table 1.

### Characteristics of the Churches in the Sample

Almost one-third of those churches represented in the study were of the Baptist denomination. The next largest groups were Methodists and Presbyterians in that order. The remainder were scattered among fifteen different denominations. Eight churches were Negro congregations with Negro ministers, all Protestant. (Table 1)

Table 1

## Distribution of Clergy by Denominations

Church	Number	Per cent
Baptist	15	31.3
Methodist	7	14.6
Presbyterian	6	12.5
A.M.E. Zion	2	4.2
Holiness	2	4.2
Jewish	2	4.2
Lutheran	2	4.2
Nazarene	2	4.2
Assembly of God	1	2.1
Christian and Missionary Alliance	1	2.1
Congregational Christian	1	2.1
Disciples of Christ	1	2.1
Episcopal	1	2.1
Friends	1	2.1
Moravian	1	2.1
Roman Catholic	1	2.1
Salvation Army	1	2.1
Seventh Day Adventist	1	2.1
	<u>48</u>	<u>100.3</u>

Active membership of the churches was determined by the clergymen according to their church rolls, and classified in various categories.

(Table 2)

While two churches had a membership of less than one hundred, half of the sample had between 100 and 500 members. Two churches had active memberships of more than two thousand. (No effort was made to define the term "active".)

Table 2

Clergymen Serving Congregations with Memberships  
of Less than 100 to 2,000 and over

Active Membership	Number	Per cent
Below 100	2	4.2
100-199	10	20.8
200-350	10	20.8
351-500	7	14.6
501-750	9	18.8
751-1000	4	8.3
1000-2000	4	8.3
2000-over	2	8.3
	48	100.0

The clergymen were asked to categorize the two major age groups in the church. According to their estimations, three-fifths of the churches contained a larger proportion of young marrieds with small children and older couples with children away from home.

In order to classify the congregations into occupational levels, the subjects were asked to give the two major occupational groups in their congregation. More than one-fifth of the ministers listed the main occupations of their members as skilled laborers and office workers. One-fifth classified them as sales representatives, clerks and office

workers. One-sixth classified them as sales people, skilled and unskilled workers, and less than one-sixth as skilled and unskilled. The rest were scattered. These data while having limited reliability do reflect the ministers' opinions. (Table 3)

Table 3

Clergymen's Opinions of the Major Occupational Groups in the Church Membership

Occupational Group	Number	Per cent
Skilled Laborers Office Workers	11	22.9
Sales Representatives Clerks and Office Workers	10	20.8
Sales Clerks Skilled and Unskilled Workers	8	16.8
Domestic Unskilled and Skilled Workers	7	14.6
Sales Representatives Professionals	4	8.3
Managers of Business Professionals	3	6.3
Professionals Skilled Workers and Foremen	2	4.2
Professionals Skilled and Unskilled	2	4.2
Small Business Owners Textile Workers	1	2.1
	<u>48</u>	<u>100.2</u>

When information concerning the size of congregations was cross-tabulated with the occupational level of the congregation, the researcher

found that the two churches numbering less than 100 members were mostly of the skilled, unskilled, domestic and sales group, and the two numbering more than 2,000 members were largely of the sales, white collar, managerial and professional group. One-fifth of the sample had congregations in the 200-350 member category and the members were mainly skilled laborers or office workers. Of the 1,000-2,000 membership category, two churches consisted mainly of sales people and white collar workers, one of management and professionals, and one of domestics, skilled and unskilled workers. (Table 4)

#### Method of Data Collection

After the sixty clergymen for the study were randomly selected from the Directory, the researcher compiled a list of names, telephone numbers and addresses of the clergymen. Each one was contacted by telephone, an explanation of the purpose of the study was given and an appointment was made for the researcher to interview the clergymen. Of the 48 subjects who finally took part, 41 of them preferred interviews at the church, while seven preferred interviews to be held in their home. Of the seven clergymen, five had their wives present with them, and one had his children in the room. In every case the researcher was received warmly and with interest. Only three men showed any sign of reticence.

The interviews were made over a period of three weeks in the spring of 1961. Most of them lasted from forty-five minutes to an hour. All of the subjects expressed interest in the results and an earnest desire to "find out more about all of this."

Table 4

Size of Congregation as Related to the Clergymen's Opinions of Major Occupational Groups in the Church Membership

	Size of Congregation											
	Below 100	100-199	200-350	350-500	500-750	750-1000	1000-2000	2000-over	Num	Per	Num	Per
Congregation	Num	Per	Num	Per	Num	Per	Num	Per	Num	Per	Num	Per
	ber	cent	ber	cent	ber	cent	ber	cent	ber	cent	ber	cent
Professionals				1	2.1				1	2.1		
Managers											1	2.1
Professionals			1	2.1								
Salesmen					2	4.2	1	2.1				
Professionals												
Skilled Workers, Foremen					1	2.1	1	2.1				
Professionals												
Skilled & Unskilled Laborers					1	2.1						
Small Businessmen												
Textile Workers									1	2.1		
Salesmen												
Office Workers			1	2.1	2	4.2	2	4.2	2	4.2	2	4.2
Office Workers												
Skilled Laborers			3	6.3	5	10.4	2	4.2	1	2.1		
Sales Clerks												
Skilled & Unskilled Laborers	1	2.1	1	2.1	3	6.3	2	4.2	1	2.1		
Domestics												
Skilled & Unskilled Laborers	1	2.1	3	6.3			1	2.1	1	2.1		

### Method of Data Analysis

The data compiled from each interview schedule was analyzed in terms of numbers and percentages of the overall sample. Whenever feasible and clarifying, the data were presented in table form. There are some tables showing cross-tabulation of certain items relating them to other variables, and descriptions interpreting these tables.

#### Demographic Data Concerning the Clergymen

The researcher hypothesized that the type of church served by the clergymen, that is the environment in which he ministered, and the background of the clergymen, especially the educational background, played a large part in the amount and type of counseling which he did. For this reason some demographic material was collected to be cross-tabulated with your responses concerning counseling.

As can be seen in Table 3, very few (1/5th) of the subjects fell into the age category of 40 or 49 years, the next largest group being in the 30 to 39 years age-range. The clergymen were under 30 years of age, and the rest over 30. (Table 3)

The question was asked, "Where did you spend most of your formative years?" Of the subjects, almost half grew up in North Carolina, 14 in rural areas and 12 in urban areas. More than three fourths (75%) or over one-third spent their formative years in the South, making a total of 83.3 per cent of the sample being native-

## CHAPTER IV

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of the study was to formulate a description of the environment in which the clergyman counseled, his background, especially in terms of his own preparation and readiness for counseling, the methods and ways of serving families as the marital and premarital counselor, and the relationship of these variables.

#### Demographic Data Concerning the Clergymen

The researcher hypothesized that the type of church served by the clergymen, that is the environment in which he counseled, and the background of the clergymen, especially the educational background, played a major part in the amount and type of counseling which he did. For this reason some demographic material was collected to be cross-tabulated with some responses concerning counseling.

As can be noted in Table 5, over two-fifths of the subjects fell into the age category of 40 to 49 years, the next largest group being in the 30 to 39 years category. Two clergymen were under 30 years of age, and two were over 70. (Table 5)

The question was asked, "Where did you spend most of your formative years?" Of the subjects, almost half grew up in North Carolina, 11 in rural areas and 12 in urban areas. Other than these North Carolinians, 17, or over one-third spent their formative years in the South, making a total of 83.3 per cent of the sample being native

Table 5  
Age of the Subjects

Minister's Age	Number	Per cent
Under 30 years	2	4.2
30-39 years	14	29.2
40-49 years	20	41.7
50-59 years	9	18.8
60-69 years	1	2.1
70-over	<u>2</u>	<u>4.2</u>
	48	100.2

Southerners. Six clergymen were from other sections of the country and two were from abroad. Of the total sample, 19, or almost two-fifths spent their formative years in rural areas and 29, or over three-fifths in urban areas.

Forty-seven of the subjects, or 97.9 per cent, were married. The Roman Catholic priest was the only clergyman not married. Fifteen subjects, or 31.3 per cent had been married 10 to 20 years; 18, or 37.5 per cent, 20 to 30 years; ten or 20.8 per cent, under ten years; and four, or 8.3 per cent over 30 years. Eight clergymen had one child, 18 had two children, ten had three, seven had four, and one had five. Four subjects had no children.

All but one of the clergymen were high school graduates, and all but two had some education above high school level. Over two-thirds of the subjects completed four years of college in accredited institutions and also completed their seminary training. Due to the nature

and imbalance of curriculum in Bible institutions, such as the Piedmont Bible College of Greensboro, those men having four years of study at such colleges or institutes were classified as not graduating from college. In tables in this study, those men having diplomas from accredited colleges but having no seminary training and numbering five or 10.4 per cent of the sample, were shown in the category of "Did not graduate from seminary."

In order to report the many colleges and universities the clergymen had attended, the researcher classified them into types: tax-supported colleges or universities, private non-sectarian institutions, church-affiliated or sectarian institutions, interdenominational institutions, and Bible colleges or institutes. Over half of the clergymen had graduated from church-affiliated colleges, one-fifth received certificates from Bible colleges or institutes and one-tenth had graduated from tax-supported institutions. (Note: these numbers are not consistent with the number who attended four years of college because some men obtained certificates after only one or two years in Bible institutes or colleges.)

Over one-fifth of the clergymen did not graduate from college. The largest group of clergymen graduated in the 1940-1949 period, and approximately one-fifth each in the periods 1930-1939 and 1950-1959. Four men graduated before 1930.

Majors in colleges varied greatly. Theology, Religion or Bible were the most popular majors, with many also majoring in English. The next largest group majored in Sociology. The rest were scattered.

An important finding in the study had to do with the amount of

seminary training the subjects had received. Over one-fourth of the respondents had no seminary training. More than half of the clergymen had at least three years. Of the 24 different seminaries attended by the 33 seminary-trained men, six were not approved by any nationwide or regional accrediting association. Two seminaries were approved only by the Association of Bible Colleges. (Table 6)

Table 6  
Formal Education of the Subjects

Formal Education	Number of Clergymen	Per cent
No College Training	2	4.2
Graduated from a Bible Institute, or attended a Bible Institute or College one year or more	8	16.7
Graduated from an Accredited College or University	5	10.4
Graduated from an Accredited College or University and from Seminary	33	68.8
	<u>48</u>	<u>100.1</u>

Table 7 signifies the decade in which the subjects graduated from seminary. This proved to be important when related to the proportion of clergymen participating in counseling. (Table 7)

Nineteen clergymen or 39.6 per cent continued into further graduate work, over half of them studying in sectarian seminaries. Twelve men studied in the field of theology or religion, and one each

Table 7

## Date of Completion of Seminary Training

Time of Graduation	Number	Per cent
Did not Graduate from Seminary	15	31.3
Graduated before 1930	3	6.3
Graduated between 1930-1939	6	12.5
Graduated between 1940-1949	11	22.9
Graduated between 1950-1959	11	22.9
Graduated after 1960	2	4.2
	<u>48</u>	<u>100.1</u>

in sociology, social ethics, philology, law, philosophy, and oriental history and philosophy. One clergyman had completed his medical training before entering the ministry. Of this group, six had attained master's degrees and six their doctoral degrees. (The researcher did not ascertain how many of these degrees were earned or were honorary.)

When the ages of the clergymen were related to their years of formal education, it was found that the largest groups clustered in the 40-49 years of age category and had graduated from seminary in 1940-1949, and the 30-39 years category, who graduated from seminary in 1950-1959. One could conclude from these findings, then, that most of the clergymen who attended seminary went into the schools immediately following their college years. Two men, however, between the ages of

40 and 49 years, did graduate in the 1950-1959 period, thus indicating that there were some who entered seminary after some time in another vocation. (Table 8)

The clergymen were asked to enumerate subjects they studied in college or seminary which were most valuable to them in their role of counselor. Most often mentioned were pastoral theology, marriage and family courses, general psychology and sociology.

The researcher sought to find out if the subjects had in the past held other positions before entering the pastorate. Twenty, or 41.7 per cent of the subjects had other vocations before entering the ministry. Three men had been textile workers, three farmers, two teachers, two service station attendants, an auto parts manager, or mechanic, and three in the armed forces, one as a chaplain. The clergyman who had served as chaplain for four years in the army stated that he had done a great deal of counseling during that time. Other occupations listed were drugstore clerk, office clerk, bank clerk, and upholsterer. The minister who had received medical training interned for one summer.

The question was asked if the subjects were in any type of work for pay while serving their congregations as clergymen. Only five of the sample held such positions: a director of the Wesley Foundation at North Carolina Agricultural and Technological College; a chaplain of the National Guard; a school teacher; a textile worker; and an administrator of the Roman Catholic elementary school. Three of these five positions pertained to pastoral activities.

Because most seminaries have only recently included practical counseling courses in their curriculum, the investigator asked where



the clergy turned to acquire the necessary knowledge and techniques for his actual counseling. The methods mentioned were in descending order: books, pamphlets and periodicals, church-sponsored workshops, lectures and discussions sponsored by groups other than the church, and short courses in counseling, mainly received at the Institute of Pastoral Care, Baptist Hospital, Winston-Salem. Fourteen or almost 30 per cent of the sample had attended some of these courses. Others mentioned were: the Yale School of Alcoholic Studies, North Carolina Council of Churches, and the Greensboro Ministers' Fellowship. Some listed simply "experience."

#### Data Concerning the Clergymen as Premarital Counselors

In order to have some basis on which to discuss the amount of counseling done by the subjects, the researcher asked for the number of weddings performed in the year prior to the study and how many of the couples had taken part in premarital counseling sessions with the clergymen.

Seven men stated that their denomination required premarital counseling. Several clergymen said that they would not marry couples unless they were willing to meet with the pastors for premarital counseling. One clergyman made a practice of not counseling with "older" couples, mainly those who came for remarriage.

Less than one-third of the respondents performed six to ten weddings in the year 1960, all of their couples having taken part in premarital counseling sessions. One-fourth of the clergymen performed one to five weddings in 1960, all of the couples being counseled. Five men, or one-tenth of the sample, took part in 11 to 20 weddings,

all of the couples being counseled, and three men held premarital counseling sessions for their 20 or more couples. Three clergymen, on the other hand, performed one to five weddings, with no premarital counseling, and six, or more than one-tenth of the sample, married one to five couples with only half of them joining in the counseling. (Table 9)

When premarital counseling done by clergymen was related to their years of formal education, some interesting results appeared. The two younger clergymen counseled with all of their engaged couples. Almost all of the men in the categories who graduated from seminary between 1930 and 1960 counseled with all of their engaged couples, while only 60 per cent of those not graduated from seminary counseled all of their couples. (Table 10)

Clergymen who had participated in extra training were found to participate in more counseling. Of 19 men who had post-seminary education, 14 counseled with all of their engaged couples. One minister, however, who had post-seminary study performed only one wedding, that of a relative, and no counseling relationship was established with the couple.

Another helpful experience associated with more premarital counseling was church-sponsored workshops. All of the clergymen listed books and periodicals as their most helpful information concerning counseling. (Table 11)

In order to investigate the kind of counseling done and the subjects' own understanding of counseling techniques, the clergymen were asked to choose a statement that most closely defined their own counseling. Two of these statements expressed a more traditional method:

Table 9

Proportion of Clergymen Participating in Premarital Counseling as Related  
to Number of Weddings Performed in 1960\*

Number of Weddings Performed	None		A Few		About Half		All of Them	
	Num ber	Per cent	Num ber	Per cent	Num ber	Per cent	Num ber	Per cent
None	1	2.1						
1 - 5	3	6.3	1	2.1	6	12.5	12	20.0
6 - 10			1	2.1	1	2.1	14	29.2
11 - 20			1	2.1			5	10.4
20 - more							3	6.3

\*The categories None, A Few, About Half, and All of Them refer to those couples who had premarital counseling sessions with and were married by the clergymen.

Table 10

Proportion of Clergymen Participating in Premarital Counseling as Related to Time of Completion of Formal Education\*

Amount of Formal Education	No Couples		A Few Couples		About Half of the Couples		All of The Couples	
	Num ber	Per cent	Num ber	Per cent	Num ber	Per cent	Num ber	Per cent
Did not Graduate from College	1	2.1			4	8.3	5	10.4
Did not Graduate from Seminary					1	2.1	4	8.3
Graduated from Seminary before 1930			1	2.1			2	4.2
Graduated from Seminary 1930-1939			1	2.1	1	2.1	4	8.3
Graduated from Seminary 1940-1949	1	2.1	1	2.1			9	18.8
Graduated from Seminary 1950-1959	1	2.1	1	2.1			9	18.8
Graduated from Seminary 1960							2	4.2

\*The categories None, A Few, About Half, and all of Them refer to those couples who had premarital counseling sessions with and were married by the clergyman.

Clergymen Participating in Extra Training as Related to  
Extent of Premarital Counseling\*

Elected Training	Premarital Counseling			
	<u>None</u>	<u>A Few</u>	<u>About Half</u>	<u>All of Them</u>
Post Seminary Education	1	3	1	14
Church Sponsored Workshops		3	1	11
Courses				3
One Session Lectures, Discussions				4
Workshops, Nonsectarian			3	3
Courses and Workshops				3
Courses, Workshops, Lectures				2
Talking with Other Clergy				3

\*The categories None, A Few, About Half, and All of Them, refer to those couples who had premarital counseling sessions with and had been married by the clergyman.

(1) giving advice concerning marriage, and (2) planning the wedding ceremony, and giving helpful reading material; two statements expressed a more psychologically-oriented method: (1) enabling the counselee to talk through marriage goals and (2) reflecting and interpreting attitudes and knowledge about marriage. Twenty-two or 45.8 per cent chose the more traditional definitions while 19 or 39.7 per cent chose the more psychologically-oriented definition. Seven or 14.6 per cent insisted upon choosing at least one of each type, thus representing a type of counseling which combines the traditional and newer methods of counseling. One minister, who spoke of the "non-directive" method, said, "I try to help them see themselves as they are, and then to see what they need. They can usually tell when they lack maturity."

The clergymen's definition of counseling was cross-tabulated with the amount of premarital counseling in which they participated. It was found that almost two-thirds of the traditionally-oriented men counseled with all of their couples. Four-fifths of the psychologically-oriented men, and all of those who used a combined method, counseled with all of the couples. Two of the men who had done no premarital counseling with their engaged couples were those who followed the traditional pattern. One clergyman, whose definition was psychologically-oriented, had no weddings.

When the size of the congregation was related to premarital counseling done by the clergymen, it was found that most of the subjects were willing to counsel couples coming to them for marriage, regardless of the size of congregations. The "all of them" category was heavily

populated as opposed to the other categories. Eight of ten clergymen ministering to congregations of 200-350 members were involved in premarital counseling with all of their engaged couples. Six of nine ministers whose congregations numbered in the 500-750 group counseled all of their premarital couples. All of the clergymen who served churches with 750-1,000 members reported participating in counseling with all of their engaged couples, and three of four men of the 1,000-2,000 category counseled with all of the couples. The two clergymen of churches over 2,000 counseled all of their couples to be married in the church. (Table 12)

Although there was no distinctive pattern of relationship between the occupational status of the congregation and amount of premarital counseling done, it should be noted that the largest percentage (18.8) of the congregations in which all engaged couples were counseled consisted mostly of sales and white collar people, as indicated by the pastors interviewed. Furthermore, analysis of the data showed that in every occupational level there were some congregations in which all engaged couples were counseled, since, as shown in Table 13, the category "all of them" included all but 15 of the pastors, and the distribution included frequencies in all occupational levels. (Table 13)

Some of the clergymen reported that they interviewed the engaged couples separately and together. More than half of the clergymen interviewed the engaged couple together only. Sixteen of 29 subjects saw the couples once and 12 saw the couples twice. One minister conferred with the couple together six times in "Pre-Cana Conferences", this being the Roman Catholic priest who reported that this was required by

Table 12

Membership of Church as Related to Proportion of Clergymen  
Participating in Premarital Counseling\*

Number of Churches	Membership of Churches	Premarital Counseling							
		None		A Few		About Half		All of Them	
		Num ber	Per cent	Num ber	Per cent	Num ber	Per cent	Num ber	Per cent
2	Below 100			1	2.1			1	2.1
10	100-199	2	4.2			4	8.3	4 <sup>a</sup>	8.3
10	200-350					2	4.2	8	16.7
7	350-500					3	6.3	4	8.3
9	501-750	1	2.1	2	4.2			6	12.5
4	750-1000							4	8.3
4	1000-2000			1	2.1			3	6.3
2	2000-over							2	4.2

\*The categories None, A Few, About Half, and All of Them, refer to those couples who had premarital counseling sessions with and had been married by the clergyman.

Table 13

Proportion of Clergymen Participating in Premarital Counseling as Related  
to Clergymen's Opinions of Occupations within Congregations\*

Socio-economic Level of Congregation	Premarital Counseling							
	None		A Few		About Half		All of Them	
	Num ber	Per cent	Num ber	Per cent	Num ber	Per cent	Num ber	Per cent
Professionals Managers			1	2.1			2	4.2
Professionals Salesmen					1	2.1	3	6.3
Professionals Skilled Laborers			1	2.1			1	2.1
Professionals Skilled & Unskilled Laborers			1	2.1	1	2.1		
Small Businessmen Textile Workers							1	2.1
Salesmen White Collar Workers	1	2.1					9	18.8
Office Workers Skilled Laborers			1	2.1	3	6.3	7	14.6
Sales Clerks Skilled & Unskilled Laborers					1	2.1	7	14.6
Domestics Skilled & Unskilled Laborers	2	4.2	1	2.1	1	2.1	3	6.3

\*The categories None, A Few, About Half, and All of Them, refer to those couples who had participated in premarital counseling and were married by the clergyman.

his church. Only one minister saw his couples separately, and only one time each. More than one-third of the clergymen had the couples come separately and together, usually once or twice separately and once or twice together.

The subjects were asked the areas of information covered in premarital counseling sessions. No effort was made on the part of the researcher to find out how deeply into the areas the counseling probed. (Table 14)

The 48 subjects were asked questions about the informational areas discussed in premarital counseling. Every clergyman discussed religion in the home with the counselees. They suggested that there be an understanding and agreement before marriage, especially when there were different denominations or faiths involved. One Protestant clergyman told his counselees, "Christ is the head of the home." "Religion is the foundation of home life," stated a rabbi. All of the subjects encouraged their counselees to attend church, say grace at the table, and have family worship. Many of the ministers insisted that this was not "a time for evangelizing." Several, particularly the two rabbis, emphasized this more so than others.

Sexual adjustment and family planning were topics discussed less often. Seven clergymen recorded that they never discussed sexual relationships with the couple. Of this some of the clergymen said, "I deal with sex realizing that training in childhood colors attitudes," "Doctors need to do this," "I recommend books," "Sex is a God-given thing in marriage; it is sacred, the height of affection between husband and wife."

Table 14

Proportion of Clergymen Who Discussed Certain Informational Areas  
With Counselees During Premarital Counseling Sessions

Areas	Frequently Discussed		Seldom Discussed		Never Discussed	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Religion in the Home	48	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Communication between Members	43	89.6	4	8.3	1	2.1
Symbolism and Meaning of Ceremony	43	89.6	5	10.4	0	0.0
Religious Differences	37	77.1	9	18.8	2	4.2
Finances	36	75.0	8	16.7	4	8.3
In-laws and Parents	34	70.8	11	22.9	3	6.3
Sexual Adjustment	32	66.7	9	18.8	7	14.6
Home Backgrounds	25	52.1	18	30.5	5	10.4
Family Planning and Birth Control	21	43.8	10	20.8	17	35.4

Concerning home backgrounds, in-laws and parents, one clergyman commented, "They need to know that they are marrying a family." Another said, "I tell them there are three trouble spots: in-laws, money and sex." Most of the clergymen brought out the point of the necessity to "put down their own roots, right away." "Break loose, don't be running home for advice." "Each should leave in order to cleave."

The 36 clergymen who discussed finances with the engaged couple felt strongly about its importance. Various comments were: "I major on it!" "...Especially if the girls are used to a high standard of living." "I suggest planning a budget right away."

Two ministers shared the outlines for their premarital counseling interviews with the researcher:

In the first joint session we talk about things in general. I tell them that the groom's choice of vocation takes priority over the bride's, that they should start a budget and do it democratically. I recommend that each should talk to a doctor and get their physical examinations. When I see the bride alone, we discuss her background and the adjustments she will have to make. I ask her, "How do you rate your parents' marriage?" The groom's interview is similar to the bride's except we define his role as the breadwinner, and the head of the household in spiritual as well as other things. The man should take the initiative but still have democracy in the home.

In the last interview, we try to resolve what might be differences of opinions and attitudes which may cause friction. We end with what the marriage ceremony means.

Another example of the premarital counseling procedure was given by the second clergyman. He held one session with the couple, which lasted about one and a half hours.

We first discuss their general backgrounds, and then I go into three areas: the economic aspects - whether both work and whether they have a joint bank account, for instance; the domestic aspects - that they have respect for each other, that they realize sex is

God-given, their ideas of family planning and childrearing, and their relationship with parents and in-laws; and the spiritual aspect - is this marriage the will of God. I suggest they practice family worship, prayer together, go to church. And then we talk about the meaning and planning of the marriage ceremony. I tell them if they have problems after the wedding, they should go to a qualified third person, not to their families for advice.

Some attitudes concerning premarital counseling became evident in the comments made by the subjects when they were asked, "What kinds of questions does the couple ask you in the sessions?" As one clergyman said, "My experience is that they are willing to listen, but not to ask questions." Another had a different attitude: "I can tell when marriages are 'impulse marriages.' They want to rush through. But those who are serious about it will want to discuss their coming marriage with me." Several ministers expressed a rather pessimistic attitude about premarital counseling: "They are going to get married anyway," and "It's not worth much." "They are so in love they cannot see how it is possible to have problems after they are married."

The subjects were asked where their counseling took place. More than half of the clergymen held the interview in their study, one-fifth in their homes, and almost one-fifth at either their own home or study. One preferred the home of the counselee.

Some of the handbooks and manuals for ministers concerning marital and premarital counseling suggested the use of inventories, questionnaires and tests. In questioning the sample of Greensboro clergymen, only four of the 48 used any such guides. Those used were the Sex Knowledge Inventory, a questionnaire in the Methodist manual, and "a family background test, put out by Duke." Several of the counselors, however, "made up their own."

All of the clergymen offered some type of reading material to the counselees.

Wynn and Fairchild (1958), in their survey of Presbyterian clergy, reported only a modest use of referral services in the pastoral ministry. In the present study of 48 pastors, the question of referrals was also asked. Thirty-three, or 68.8 per cent of the subjects had used community services, mainly the physician. (Some clergymen expressed their use of more than one source of referrals, which explains the difference in number of clergymen and number of referrals, as shown in Table 15.)

Table 15

Clergymen Using Community Resources for  
Referral In Premarital Counseling

Referrals to:	Number	Per cent
Physicians	30	62.5
Family Service Agency	3	6.3
Another Clergyman	3	6.3
Psychiatrist	2	4.2
Mental Health Center	1	2.1

Note: Only 33 or the 48 clergymen had used any community resources for referral in premarital counseling.

Data Concerning the Clergymen as Marital Counselors

One of the clergymen interviewed considered the role of the minister-marriage counselor a major one:

The church is the one institution with whom both parties can discuss without fear of their confidence being betrayed; they are not accused of sinfulness (I never pronounce judgment); they have a patient listener. If he feels that divorce is needed, then he tells them so. The rabbi is in the role of "the reassurer." He stands above partisanship...

In order to obtain information concerning the counseling done by the clergymen in Greensboro, the researcher asked the clergymen about the year prior to the study, 1960. One-eighth of the respondents replied that they counseled with well over thirty persons during the year. Less than one-third of the sample found that at least ten to 19 married persons a year came to them. The largest group, almost half of the ministers, counseled with one to nine persons a year. (Table 16)

Table 16

Proportion of Clergymen Counseling  
Married Persons  
During the Year 1960

Married Persons Counseled	Number of Clergymen	Per cent
None	4	8.3
1-9	22	45.8
10-19	14	29.2
20-29	2	4.2
30-over	6	12.5
	<u>48</u>	<u>100.0</u>

The size of the congregation was cross-tabulated with the marital counseling done by Greensboro clergymen during the year 1960. One of the two ministers of the churches whose membership was under 100 counseled with from one to nine persons and the other with ten to 19 persons a year concerning marital problems. Four of the ten clergymen with congregations of 100 to 199 participated with ten to 19 people, and three of the ten with one to nine people. One of the clergymen of the same size congregation counseled with 20 to 29 persons. Three of ten ministers in churches with memberships of 200-350 persons counseled with thirty or more counselees. Two of four clergymen in churches of 750-1,000 members counseled with thirty or more persons. Two clergymen of four in churches whose memberships were 1,000 to 2,000 members counseled with ten to 19 persons. Of the two larger churches, with memberships of 2,000 or more, one clergyman reported counseling ten to 19 persons, and the other with 30 or more. (Table 17)

Marriage counseling done by the clergymen was cross-tabulated with the occupational level of the congregation. Six clergymen or over one-tenth of the sample serving a congregation composed mainly of sales people, skilled and unskilled laborers counseled with one to nine persons with marital problems that year. Five clergymen in churches with congregations consisting largely of skilled laborers and office workers counseled with ten to 19 persons. One clergyman serving a similar congregation saw 30 or more members with marital problems. In the category of domestic and unskilled laborers within the congregation, three clergymen counseled one to nine persons, two with ten to 19, and one each with 20 to 29, and 30 or over. Of the four

Table 17

Membership of Church as Related to Proportion of Clergymen  
Participating in Marital Counseling

Membership of Church	Number of Counselees									
	None		1 - 9		10 - 19		20 - 29		30 - over	
	Num ber	Per cent	Num ber	Per cent	Num ber	Per cent	Num ber	Per cent	Num ber	Per cent
Below 100			1	2.1	1	2.1				
100 - 199	2	4.2	3	6.3	4	8.3	1	2.1		
200 - 350	1	2.1	3	6.3	3	6.3			3	6.3
350 - 500			6	12.5	1	2.1				
500 - 750			7	14.6	2	4.2				
750 - 1000	1	2.1	1	2.1					2	4.2
1000 - 2000			1	2.1	2	4.2	1	2.1		
2000 - over					1	2.1			1	2.1

ministers serving congregations which had mostly sales and professional people, two or 4.2 per cent of the sample counseled one to nine people, one counseled ten to 19, and one counseled thirty or more persons coming to him with marital problems. (Table 18)

Marital counseling done by the clergymen in 1960 was cross-tabulated with the completion of formal education of the clergymen. Two subjects out of the five who did not graduate from seminary reported that they counseled over 30 married persons during the year 1960. Three-fourths of the clergymen, regardless of the amount of education, counseled from one to 19 persons in 1960. About one-sixth counseled with 20 or more persons. Six of 11 clergymen graduating between 1940 and 1949 counseled with one to nine persons. Six of ten clergymen who did not graduate from college reported counseling with ten to 19 persons in 1960. Eight of 11 men who graduated from seminary during the 1950-1959 period conducted marital counseling with one to nine persons. (Table 19)

Proportion of clergymen participating in marital counseling was cross-tabulated with the proportion in premarital counseling. One clergyman had not taken part in any marital or premarital counseling during the year 1960, and one who had done no premarital counseling had counseled with one to nine married persons. Of those clergymen who had counseled a few of their engaged couples, one participated in no marital cases, three with one to nine persons, and one with ten to 19 persons. Of those clergymen who had counseled about half of the couples whose weddings he had performed, one counseled no marital problems, two counseled one to nine persons, and three with ten to 19 persons.

Table 18

Proportion of Clergymen Participating in Marriage Counseling in 1960 as Related  
to Clergymen's Opinions of Occupations within the Congregation

Principal Occupation in Congregation	Number of Couselees in Marriage Counseling									
	None		1 - 9		10 - 19		20 - 29		30 - over	
	Num ber	Per cent	Num ber	Per cent	Num ber	Per cent	Num ber	Per cent	Num ber	Per cent
Professionals Managers					2	4.2			1	2.1
Professionals Salesmen			2	4.2	1	2.1			1	2.1
Professionals Skilled Laborers			2	4.2						
Professionals Skilled & Unskilled Laborers	1	2.1	1	2.1						
Small Businessmen Textile Workers			1	2.1						
Salesmen White Collar Workers			4	8.3	2	4.2	1	2.1	3	6.3
Office Workers Skilled Laborers	1	2.1	4	8.3	5	10.4			1	2.1
Sales Clerks Skilled & Unskilled Laborers			6	12.5	2	4.2				
Domestics Skilled & Unskilled Laborers	1	2.1	3	6.3	2	4.2			1	2.1

Table 19  
 Numer of Persons with Marital Problems Counseled by Clergymen in 1960 in Relation  
 to Time of Completion of Formal Education

Amount of Formal Education	Number of Counselees in Marital Counseling									
	None		1 - 9		10 - 19		20 - 29		30 - over	
	Num ber	Per cent	Num ber	Per cent	Num ber	Per cent	Num ber	Per cent	Num ber	Per cent
Did not Graduate from College			4	8.3	6	12.5				
Did not Graduate from Seminary			1	2.1	1	2.1	1	2.1	2	4.2
Graduated from Sem- inary before 1939	1	2.1	1	2.1	1	2.1				
Graduated from Sem- inary 1930-1939	2	4.2	2	4.2	1	2.1			1	2.1
Graduated from Sem- inary 1940-1949	1	2.1	6	12.5	2	4.2	1	2.1	1	2.1
Graduated from Sem- inary 1950-1959			8	16.7	1	2.1			2	4.2
Graduated from Sem- inary 1960			1	2.1	1	2.1				

Indicative findings are those in which the clergymen had counseled all of the couples they married in 1960. One had no persons coming to him for guidance in marital problems, while one-third of the sample had counseled with one to nine persons. One-fifth had counseled ten to 19 persons, two with 20 to 29 persons and one-eighth of the ministers with 30 or more persons. (Table 20)

In counseling with married couples, 39 clergymen or 81.3 per cent of the sample usually saw them separately and together. Five or 10.4 per cent saw them only separately and four or 8.3 per cent saw them only together. The number of sessions varied from couple to couple.

The clergymen were asked what were the main areas of marital problems brought to them and how many times these main problems arose. Table 21 shows the numbers and percentages of the number of times the marital problems were brought to the clergymen. (Table 21)

In discussing the areas of communication among family members, several clergymen in their comments brought out the point that other problems, such as sexual adjustment or finances led to the complete breakdown of communication. Home backgrounds and problems with in-laws and parents were seldom major problems brought to the ministers. Sexual adjustment rated high in the problem frequency. One minister commented that fifty per cent of his cases in the past year were infidelity and sexual maladjustment. Suspicion of extra-marital relations was voiced as a cause of great anxiety.

Several clergymen commented that the "lack of religion in the home" rather than "religious differences" was a major problem. "The greatest need of families," said one of the clergymen, "is personal

Table 20

Premarital Counseling as Related to Marital Counseling  
by Clergymen in the Year 1960\*

Couples Participating in Premarital Counseling	Number of Counselees in Marital Counseling									
	None		1 - 9		10 - 19		20 - 29		30 - over	
	Num ber	Per cent	Num ber	Per cent	Num ber	Per cent	Num ber	Per cent	Num ber	Per cent
None	1	2.1	1	2.1						
A Few	1	2.1	3	6.3	1	2.1				
About Half	1	2.1	2	4.2	3	6.3				
All of Them	1	2.1	16	33.3	10	20.8	2	4.2	6	12.5

\* The categories None, A Few, About Half, and All of Them, refer to those couples who had premarital counseling sessions with and were married by the clergyman.

Table 21  
 Proportion of Clergymen to Whom Certain Marital  
 Problems Were Brought

Areas	<u>Frequent Problems</u>		<u>Seldom Problems</u>		<u>Never Problems</u>	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Excessive Use of Alcohol	36	75.0	9	18.8	3	6.3
Communication Between Members	34	70.8	14	29.2	0	0.0
Sexual Adjustment	27	56.3	18	37.5	3	6.3
Finances	25	52.1	20	41.7	3	6.3
In-laws and Parents	20	41.7	23	47.9	5	10.4
Home Backgrounds	16	33.3	29	60.4	3	6.3
Religion in the Home	13	27.1	27	56.3	8	16.7
Religious Differences	7	14.6	29	60.4	12	25.0
Children	6	12.5	29	60.4	13	27.1
Family Planning, Birth Control	0	0.0	17	35.4	31	64.6

religion. Lots of families do not realize the power of evil to destroy love until it happens." Mixed marriages were most often mentioned in this connection. The excessive use of alcoholic beverages was the most frequent problem expressed.

Family planning and birth control were seldom or never discussed in problems brought to the clergymen.

Though more than one-tenth of the clergymen said that the couples' children caused major problems, the others expressed the fact that this was seldom or never the case.

The clergymen were asked, "Should a minister initiate counseling when he knows of marital strife within a family of his congregation?" The majority of clergy in the sample stipulated that they should. While over one-half of them did initiate such counseling, and one-fourth did not, eight or 16.7 per cent of the ministers "made themselves available," or "opened the door" of communication between themselves and the couple. This was done by making a pastoral call to the home or making a point of conversing with them after services and meetings. Eleven or 22.9 per cent of the pastors said the main source of information of family problems was when a friend of the family brought it to their attention. Over 20 per cent of the clergymen reported that news of trouble came by way of the family or a friend of the family. Many subjects reported they could tell if there were problems simply by observation of the couple or family.

Most of the ministers carried on their marital counseling in their study. There were some, however, who counseled either in their study or in the home of the counselee.

Thirty-eight of the 48 clergymen, or 79.2 per cent of the subjects, used some counseling services in the community. Most often contacted, in rank order, were physicians, Family Service Agency, and psychiatrists. Since Greensboro had at that time two professional marriage counselors, eight men had referred some couples to them. When one minister was asked this question he replied, "Sometimes the clergy assumes the role of one who knows all. We should freely and honestly use psychiatrists, physicians and marriage counselors. Better to use referrals than to delve into something we don't know much about." (Some clergymen expressed their use of more than one source of referrals, which explains the differences in number of clergymen and number of referrals, as shown in Table 22.)

Table 22

Clergymen Using Community Resources For  
Referral in Marital Counseling

Referral to:	Number	Per cent
Physician	16	33.3
Family Service Agency	13	27.1
Psychiatrist	11	22.9
Marriage Counselor	8	16.7
Domestic Relations Court	6	12.5
Mental Health Center	3	6.3
Department of Counseling Baptist Hospital	3	6.3
Lawyer	2	4.2

Note: Thirty-eight of the 48, or 79.2 per cent clergymen used community resources for referral in marital counseling.

Reading material was offered to those people who came to the clergymen with problems by 29 or 60.4 per cent of the clergymen. Over one-third did not offer reading materials. Two men made available their own libraries.

#### Self-Described Needs and Aids of the Clergymen

Many pastors reported that they did not consider themselves competent in counseling their parishioners in matters of marital and premarital relationships. They were especially concerned about problems involving neuroses and abnormal behavior. As one respondent stated, "I'd like to be able to tell when the possibilities of the ministry stop and the necessity of a psychiatrist or another professional person is needed." The clergymen were asked if there was any type of additional training or aids they would like in their counseling ministry. Only one replied in the negative. Thirty-one or almost two-thirds of the clergymen reported they would like seminars or workshops dealing with techniques and methods of counseling. Nineteen or 39 per cent indicated a need for such workshops in marriage and family life, touching upon such topics as alcohol and the changes of family patterns. Nine or 18.8 per cent said that a good bibliography in their own hands would be of tremendous help. Two clergymen suggested the possibility of "a symposium of physicians, psychiatrists, marriage counselors and ministers dealing with the minister's approach to marriage counseling, and how these professionals could work together." One member voiced the opinion that the Greensboro Ministers' Fellowship could sponsor such a meeting. Two very candid statements were made, which seemed to represent the feelings of many of the

respondents: "I would like something but there is just no time for it," and "I need help, but I don't know what."

A group of general questions was asked of the clergymen at the end of the interview. They were asked if there were courses offered at the seminary attended in the areas of marriage and family living and in counseling. Of the 33 men who had graduated from seminary, 17 or half of them reported there were courses in marriage and family living and almost half reported that there were courses in counseling. A majority of the clergymen emphasized that they had covered some of these areas in courses called pastoral counseling or pastoral theology. All 33 men considered these courses a necessity in the curriculum of their seminary.

The clergymen were asked what methods other than individual counseling they used to help promote good marital adjustment within their churches. The methods most often mentioned in rank order were:

(a) sermons; (b) a major emphasis in National Family Week (or Christian Family Week) in the month of May; (c) young peoples' Sunday night groups, and church school; (d) the Baptist Training Union for the Baptists; and (e) Family Night groups at the church, which may be educational or recreational. Several other methods were reported, such as Family Workshops, Midweek services, provision of family devotional material, and young couples' clubs.

Another question concerned the speaking to groups outside of the church on marital adjustment. Twenty-two or 45.8 per cent reported that they never spoke to outside groups. Nineteen or 39.6 per cent seldom spoke to other groups and seven or 14.6 per cent frequently spoke to

other gatherings. High school groups were mainly those visited, with civic organizations and college groups less often visited. Social clubs, Future Homemakers of America, young adult groups other than their own church groups, radio, Parents' League, and Parent-Teacher Associations were also mentioned.

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which the clergy were reaching out to the community in their role of preacher and social worker. The study was designed to:

1. determine the type of church the clergy were serving in terms of membership and income; 2. determine the extent to which the clergy were reaching out to the community in their role of preacher and social worker; 3. determine the extent to which the clergy were reaching out to the community in their role of preacher and social worker.

The study was conducted in the following manner: 1. a list of churches was obtained from the local telephone directory; 2. a letter was sent to the pastor of each church requesting information regarding the church's membership and income; 3. a letter was sent to the pastor of each church requesting information regarding the church's social work activities.

The data were analyzed in the following manner: 1. the type of church was determined; 2. the extent to which the clergy were reaching out to the community in their role of preacher and social worker was determined; 3. the extent to which the clergy were reaching out to the community in their role of preacher and social worker was determined.

The following are the results of the study: 1. the majority of the churches were small churches with a membership of less than 100; 2. the majority of the churches were churches of the Protestant faith; 3. the majority of the churches were churches in urban areas.

It was found that the clergy were reaching out to the community in their role of preacher and social worker to a limited extent. The majority of the churches were small churches with a membership of less than 100, and the majority of the churches were churches of the Protestant faith. The majority of the churches were churches in urban areas, and the majority of the churches were churches in which the clergy were not reaching out to the community in their role of preacher and social worker.

The study was limited in several ways. First, the study was limited to churches in the local area. Second, the study was limited to churches in which the clergy were not reaching out to the community in their role of preacher and social worker. Third, the study was limited to churches in which the clergy were not reaching out to the community in their role of preacher and social worker.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research project was concerned with the clergymen in Greensboro, North Carolina in their roles of premarital and marital counselors. The study was designed to:

(a) identify the type of church the clergyman served in terms of the environment in which he counseled, the background of the clergyman, especially in terms of his own preparation and readiness for counseling;

(b) describe the clergyman's methods and ways of serving families as the marital and premarital counselor;

(c) report the needs and aids which the minister himself sees as being beneficial to him in his own counseling practices.

#### Related Literature

Literature in the field of pastoral counseling has come into its own in the past two decades. Only in the last few years, however, have books been written primarily for and about the minister-counselor using the modern tools of the behavioral sciences. Some studies about the clergyman have been done in research using statistical methods.

Most of the studies found by this researcher concerned the clergyman and his many roles, his own expectations and the layman's view of the clergyman's roles (Blizzard, 1955, 1956, 1958; McCann, 1962; Nameche, 1958; Wood, 1964). Included in these studies was the role of

pastor, or minister-counselor. The clergyman's role as counselor was found to be influenced by his own social values, the socio-economic level of his congregation, his educational level, and that of his congregation (Brown, 1956; Cumming and Harrington, 1963). He ranked first, along with the physician, as that person outside kinship or friendship circles to whom a troubled person turned (Cumming and Harrington, 1963).

The amount of counseling done by clergymen varied from one hour to forty hours per week (Vivona, 1960; Fairchild and Wynn, 1958). Most clergymen did not consider themselves adequate to discuss many areas of family life with counselees. Most relied heavily upon literature they gave to the counselees (Blizzard, 1956; Fairchild and Wynn, 1958; McCann, 1962).

There was a lack of cooperation between the clergyman and various social agencies, or "deviance-controlling" agencies (Cumming and Harrington, 1963; Fairchild and Wynn, 1958).

In studies concerning the clergyman's role expectations and layman's view of the clergyman's role, it was found that "people-oriented" role patterns were primary among two-thirds of the clergy, as opposed to "idea-oriented roles" (Blizzard, 1958). When asked to evaluate his most meaningful contributions to his parish ministry the clergyman ranked counseling very high in importance, effectiveness, enjoyment, and time spent. The traditional roles in which the clergyman considered himself most adequate were those of preacher, priest, teacher, and less adequate in the contemporary roles of counselor, organizer and administrator (Blizzard, 1956).

It was found that the most effective traits of a minister were his character, personality and skill as pastor-counselor, the most successful were his general ability in "practitioner roles", competence in denominational programs, and personality (Blizzard, 1958). Most effective activities of the clergyman as seen by the laymen were his preaching, counseling and calling, which were in accordance with the clergyman's evaluation of his own role (Wood, 1964).

Several manuals for clergymen were published recently in which clinical counseling techniques were applied to the parish setting. Those particularly concerning the minister-counselor in premarital and marital situations were few, but more is being done to aid the average minister now than ever before.

#### Method of Data Collection

Forty-eight clergymen randomly selected from the 1960 Directory of Churches and Related Agencies in Greensboro, North Carolina were interviewed by the researcher. A schedule containing multiple choice, open end, and short answer questions was pretested and used during the session to obtain information in a uniform manner. These interviews with the subjects were made during a three week period in the Spring of 1961.

#### Data Analysis

Data were compiled from each interview schedule and analyzed in terms of numbers and percentages of the overall sample. Whenever feasible the data were presented in table form, some showing cross-tabulations of certain items relating them to other variables, and

interpretations of these tables.

### Findings

1. Almost half of the churches in the study were made up of congregations of 100 to 350 members. Three-fifths of the congregations contained large proportions of young married couples with small children, and couples with children away from home. Three-fifths contained mainly skilled and unskilled workers, office workers, and sales people. The smaller congregations were in large part skilled and unskilled laborers, domestics and sales clerks, and larger churches were mainly those people of higher socio-economic levels.

2. Though no distinctive pattern of relationship of the size of congregation to the proportion of clergymen participating in premarital counseling was indicated, there was a trend toward more consistent counseling of all engaged couples in the larger churches. Though no distinctive pattern of relationship in the socio-economic level of the congregation and amount of premarital counseling was discernible, there was a trend toward more consistent counseling with all engaged couples in congregations of mainly sales and white collar people.

3. Three-fourths of the subjects counseled with one to twenty married persons with problems, most of them counseling between one to nine persons. This was true regardless of the size or socio-economic level of the congregation or the amount of formal education they had received. There was a trend indicating that seminary-trained men, and particularly those more recently graduated, tended to be more active in marriage counseling.

4. Most of the clergymen were between the ages of 30 to 50 years, married and had at least two children. Most were native Southerners. A majority of the clergymen were seminary-trained, mainly graduating between 1940 and 1960. Almost two-fifths of the seminary-trained men continued into further study. Over one-half the clergymen had taken courses in college or seminary which had helped prepare them for counseling. These were pastoral theology, marriage and family life courses, general psychology and sociology. Though few men considered their training adequate, all of them agreed that these courses were necessary in preparation for the ministry. Clergymen who had participated in extra training were found to participate in more counseling activities. Popular methods of acquiring knowledge and techniques of counseling were, in rank order: the clergyman's own reading, attendance at workshops, lectures, and short courses in counseling.

5. Though the majority (70 per cent) of the clergymen counseled all of their engaged couples, it was found that the more recent seminary graduates most consistently counseled all of their engaged couples.

6. Those men whose counseling techniques were either psychologically-oriented or a combination of psychologically- and traditionally-oriented were more active in counseling than those whose counseling was more traditionally-oriented.

7. Areas of information most frequently discussed by clergymen in premarital counseling interviews were: religion in the home, communication between family members, symbolism and meaning of the

ceremony, religious differences, and finances. Those less often or never discussed were in-laws and parents, sexual adjustment, home backgrounds, family planning and birth control. All of the clergymen offered reading materials to the couples.

8. Problems most frequently brought to the clergymen in marital counseling were: drinking, sexual adjustment, finances, and in-laws and parents. Those less often of major concern were: home backgrounds, religion in the home, religious differences, children, and family planning and birth control. It is indicative that some of those areas less frequently or never discussed in premarital counseling were those areas most frequently brought as marital problems to the minister.

9. More than two-thirds of the clergymen had used community resources for referrals in premarital counseling, and more than three-fourths in marital counseling, primarily the physician.

10. Many pastors reported they did not feel comfortable or competent in counseling in some areas of premarital and marital relationships, and especially in matters where they suspected there was some form of mental disturbance. Almost two-thirds wanted more training in techniques and methods of counseling. About two-fifths of the subjects wanted more training in the area of marriage and family life.

11. Methods other than counseling used by clergymen to promote good family life were: sermons, major emphasis during Christian Family Week, Sunday School curriculum, and young peoples' organizations.

#### Recommendations for Further Study

Based on the findings of the study several recommendations for further research could be suggested.

(a) More thorough research in what is discussed in premarital counseling sessions should be undertaken. This researcher found that many of the topics not discussed in the premarital conferences were later brought as problems by the married couple to the clergyman. If this is the case, then some clergymen are not helping the engaged couples in areas most needed. Such information would be most helpful in training the minister-counselor.

(b) A larger statistical research project testing the findings in this study is recommended. A statewide project through the North Carolina Council of Churches, the Conference of Christians and Jews, or the North Carolina Mental Health Department could possibly prove more significant.

(c) It would be fruitful to undertake a study of state laws pertaining to the regulation of who can perform marriage ceremonies since premarital counseling depends solely on the motivation of the officiant.

(d) Research concerning the counseling of couples involving premarital pregnancies is needed. One of the major problems facing clergymen today in the area of premarital counseling is how to counsel with the couple who acknowledges the bride-to-be is pregnant or when the minister-counselor strongly suspects this is a major factor in their decision to marry. Other specific situations in premarital counseling, such as in the case of physically handicapped people, divorced persons, widows and widowers, and mixed marriages should be studied from the viewpoint of the clergyman. Because the minister is often associated with the family in the life of the church he is in a unique position as opposed to the professional counselor.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

Prepared and Revised by Elizabeth  
in Greensboro, North Carolina

1. THE SCHOOL

1. How long have you been teaching?

2. What is the active membership of your church?

\_\_\_\_\_ 0-100 \_\_\_\_\_ 100-250 \_\_\_\_\_ 250-500 \_\_\_\_\_ 500-1000  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1000-2000 \_\_\_\_\_ 2000-5000 \_\_\_\_\_ 5000-over

3. What are the two major age groups in your church?

\_\_\_\_\_ Young marrieds with small children  
\_\_\_\_\_ Couples with pre-teens and teenagers  
\_\_\_\_\_ Couples with grown children away from home  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other couples

APPENDIX

4. In general, what are the two major occupational groups?

2. THE INDIVIDUAL

1. What is your age?

\_\_\_\_\_ Under 20 \_\_\_\_\_ 20-29 \_\_\_\_\_ 30-39  
\_\_\_\_\_ 40-49 \_\_\_\_\_ 50-over

2. Where did you spend most of your formative years?

\_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Rural or Urban

3. Are you married? \_\_\_\_\_ How long have you been married? \_\_\_\_\_

4. How many children do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Are you a high school graduate? \_\_\_\_\_ When did you graduate? \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTIONNAIRE

Premarital and Marital Counseling by Clergymen  
in Greensboro, North Carolina

I. THE CHURCH

1. Denomination \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is the active membership of your church?  
\_\_\_ Below 100    \_\_\_ 200-350    \_\_\_ 500-750    \_\_\_ 1000-2000  
\_\_\_ 100-199    \_\_\_ 350-500    \_\_\_ 750-1000    \_\_\_ 2000-over
3. What are the two major age groups in your church?  
\_\_\_ Young marrieds with small children  
\_\_\_ Couples with pre-teens and teenagers  
\_\_\_ Couples with grown children away from home  
\_\_\_ Older couples
4. In general, what are the two major occupational groups?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

II. THE MINISTER

1. What is your age?  
\_\_\_ Under 30    \_\_\_ 40-49    \_\_\_ 60-69  
\_\_\_ 30-39    \_\_\_ 50-59    \_\_\_ 70-over
2. Where did you spend most of your formative years?  
\_\_\_\_\_ State                      \_\_\_\_\_ Rural or urban
3. Are you married? \_\_\_ How long have you been married? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many children do you have? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Are you a high school graduate? \_\_\_\_\_ When did you graduate? \_\_\_\_\_

6. How many years of college did you complete? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Which college or university did you attend? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_
8. What year did you graduate? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What was your major in college? \_\_\_\_\_
10. How many years of seminary did you complete? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Which seminary did you attend? \_\_\_\_\_
12. When did you graduate? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Have you done other graduate work? \_\_\_\_\_
14. Where? \_\_\_\_\_
15. In what field? \_\_\_\_\_
16. What courses did you have in college and/or seminary that would offer you assistance in your marital and premarital counseling?
- |                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| ___ Marriage and Family Living | ___ Principles and techniques of counseling |
| ___ Child Growth & Development | ___ Other _____                             |
| ___ Child psychology           | _____                                       |
| ___ Social psychology          | _____                                       |
17. Were you in any other type of profession or vocation before entering the ministry? \_\_\_\_\_
18. Along with your ministry, are you in any type of work for pay now? \_\_\_\_\_ What? \_\_\_\_\_
19. Have you received any helpful information about counseling outside of your formal studies? \_\_\_\_\_
- If so, please specify. \_\_\_\_\_



5. What areas of information do you cover with the couple?

a. Communication between family members

Frequently  Seldom  Never

b. Home backgrounds

Frequently  Seldom  Never

c. Sexual Adjustment

Frequently  Seldom  Never

d. Finances

Frequently  Seldom  Never

e. In-Laws and Parents

Frequently  Seldom  Never

f. Religion in the home

Frequently  Seldom  Never

g. Religious differences

Frequently  Seldom  Never

h. Symbolism and meaning of the wedding ceremony

Frequently  Seldom  Never

i. Family planning and birth control

Frequently  Seldom  Never

j. Other \_\_\_\_\_

6. What kinds of questions do the couple ask you in premarital counseling sessions? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Where do you carry on most of your premarital counseling?

In your study or room at the church?

In your home?

In the home of the counselee?

Other \_\_\_\_\_

8. Do you use any questionnaire, inventories or tests in counseling? \_\_\_\_\_ What? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Do you offer reading materials to the couple? \_\_\_\_\_  
What? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What professions or agencies have you used for referrals?  
 \_\_\_ Physician                      \_\_\_ Family and Children's Service  
 \_\_\_ Psychiatrist                    \_\_\_ Mental Health Center  
 \_\_\_ Other

## B. MARITAL

1. Approximately how many married persons did you counsel during the year of 1960?  
 \_\_\_ None      \_\_\_ 10-19      \_\_\_ 30-over  
 \_\_\_ 1-9      \_\_\_ 20-29
2. In counseling with married couples having difficulties, do you usually see them:  
 \_\_\_ Separately                      \_\_\_ How many times?  
 \_\_\_ Together                        \_\_\_ How many times?
3. What are the main areas of marital problems brought to you?
- a. Communication between family members  
 \_\_\_ Frequently                      \_\_\_ Seldom                      \_\_\_ Never
- b. Home backgrounds  
 \_\_\_ Frequently                      \_\_\_ Seldom                      \_\_\_ Never
- c. Sexual Adjustment  
 \_\_\_ Frequently                      \_\_\_ Seldom                      \_\_\_ Never
- d. Finances  
 \_\_\_ Frequently                      \_\_\_ Seldom                      \_\_\_ Never

e. In-laws and parents

Frequently  Seldom  Never

f. Religion in the home

Frequently  Seldom  Never

g. Religious differences

Frequently  Seldom  Never

h. Drinking

Frequently  Seldom  Never

i. Family planning and birth control

Frequently  Seldom  Never

j. Children

Frequently  Seldom  Never

4. Do you initiate marital counseling when you feel it is necessary? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the main source of information concerning marital problems within the family when you feel it is necessary to initiate the counseling?

A member of the family

A trusted friend of the family

Other

6. Where do you carry on most of your marital counseling?

In your study or a room at the church

In your own home

In the home of the counselee

Other

7. Do you ever refer a couple to another professional person or agent?

Physician  Family Service

Mental Health Center  Psychiatrist

Other \_\_\_\_\_

8. Do you offer reading material to the couple? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, what? \_\_\_\_\_

#### IV. GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Is there any type of additional training you feel would be advantageous to you in your marital and premarital counseling?

If so, what? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Were there courses offered at the seminary you attended in the area of marriage and family living? \_\_\_\_\_

In the area of counseling? \_\_\_\_\_

3. If not, do you consider that such instruction should be included in the curriculum? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What are some of the methods you use other than individual counseling to help promote good marital adjustment within your church? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you speak to any groups outside of the church on marital adjustment?  Never  Seldom  Frequently

What types of groups?

College  High School  Social Clubs

Civic Organizations