Commentary

Spiritual Renovation of Family Life
A Vision for Living Together

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Spirituality is a matter of attitude. Most people have a bad attitude, believing spiritual formation to be a matter of committing oneself to some dogmatic religious formula and working hard to remain committed to it (e.g., 'thou shalt not steal' and 'harm no sentient being'). I want to offer a larger view. My view is that a good attitude is to think of spirituality as the by-product of assuming the role of a creator, that is, the role of god. In this divine role, we assume a vantage point from which it is possible to look at all of creation, especially to look upon humanity as a whole, as one species, notwithstanding how we have divided it up in our various historical times and places. Our human nature can be turned to the work of *theosis*, or the process of becoming god insofar as this attitude of viewing humanity as one is fostered. Like god, we can grow wise. We can submit during living to an attitude of detached concern with life itself, in the face of death itself. Spirituality in the world's religions turns on the capacity to replace an attitude of pride with one of humility, which results from such wisdom. The pride of asserting our individual natures ('personalities') can be tempered by the humility that springs from changing our attitude toward who we think we are. We are not individuals in search of shared harmony as much as we are one species of animal, a part of creation, in which sustaining ourselves at our best is our chief moral task. *Theosis* is not only a process for gaining spiritual awareness. It also is a means of moral empowerment in which new generations must be reared.

Many social thinkers, perhaps responding to popular images of up-market, 'yuppified' life in western industrial societies during the past decade, have written off the family as a throw-back to the past. These researchers consider the family to be less of a help and more of a hindrance in the process of forming next century's entrepreneurs. Implied in this is an ideology of individualism. This ideology holds that a person may choose to relate to other people, but is under no obligation to do so. Relationships grow only out of individual self-interests. Relationships are not considered valuable ends in themselves, but merely means to

the end of personal self-fulfilment. However, I argue that the family is not a throwback to the past, but itself constitutes a unique world in which moral empowerment is formed in terms of specifiable, developing human strengths or virtues. Most middle-class family relationships in our society are not chosen out of personal self-interest (children cannot choose their relatives). Nevertheless, family members are under an obligation to do their best to make their relationships work for the good of all. In the family relationships are first valued in and of themselves; only later might they fulfil an individual member's self-interests. I shall advocate an ideology of familism, within which I believe the rampant individualism that rules contemporary times, and the greed it fosters, must be contained. Anyone committed to familism is a friend of the future.

We shall soon see that these strengths or virtues which I mentioned before constitute a schedule of obligations to which family members must adhere. In different language, these strengths or virtues are the grist of what some academics in religion and psychological studies recognise as the 'religious quality' of all experience. The religious quality of all experience is the substance of human spirituality when viewed from the dynamic vantage point of *theosis*. The family is an important force in the development of what it means to be human, in fostering a sense of belonging to a common lot, and in exercising moral power to affirm the biology and spiritual integrity of the human species. Though it is not the only organised context, the family is an important emotional environment in which a good attitude about spirituality can be (but, usually, is not) cultivated.

While most people in our society are familiar with the nuclear family, there is less familiarity with the extended family, especially with awareness of 'family' conceived as being so extended as to embrace the entire human species (e.g., the 'family of man' or 'humankind'). Such a conception (a 'planetary' family), along with the broad, liberal attitude it implies, constitutes an ideology of familism. For now, recognise that the broadly extended family works best to bring about the wonder of instilling meaning, belonging and moral power in lives. The family is like the medieval alchemist's crucible. In families people experiment with generating out of the 'dross' of individuals the 'gold' of human strengths, or a sense of shared values (a 'morality') that contributes generally to biological propagation and survival, and also to raising children who are capable of seeing beyond individual creativity to the wider vision of 'species awareness' and its concomitant spirituality. This families do (in distinction from most other organised social contexts) in terms of the **turn-over of generations**, in which the conservation of past experiments in strength are readied as moral legacies for guiding those who will take over the future. The family, unlike most other social institutions, has the turn-over of the generations as its chief task. Although other social institutions have investments in the future, families have a direct biological and moral stake in what comes to be. Starkly put, those persons without young have only pasts, unless their ideology of individualism becomes subsumed under and serves the more important ideology of familism.

In two recent books, *Disturbing the Nest: Family Change and Decline in Modern Societies* (1988) by David Popenoe and *Haven in a Heartless*

World: The Family Besieged (1977) by Christopher Lasch, the demise of families as social institutions in western industrial societies is described. Popenoe concludes that it is regrettable to see the demise of the traditional family and the emergence of 'post-nuclear familism,' or organising life around things other than notions of marriage and kinship ties (the traditional bases of family life, and the expression of the turn-over of generations). Not only are these recent changes to the traditional family regrettable as well as being a capitulation to the new force of individualism, they also are threats to the survival of the entire human species. An ideology of individualism represents a failure of moral courage, or, in terms of Christian spirituality, an abrogation of 'humility' and the choice of 'pride', when located outside the orbit of familism. Popenoe (1988:340-41) urges that governments take steps to ensure the renovation of families as agents of human strength.

Traditional families, says Popenoe, are energised by a form of ethnicity, or an intuitive sense that there are things more basic than specific times and places and more fundamental than competing material conditions and self-interests which serve from time-to-time to unite a people in the face of adversity. This intuitive sense of ethnicity can be recovered by means of what one thinker, we shall later note, calls 'maternal thinking'. It is a source of human strength that is exercised as moral power in living, that is, the recognition by most people that there is a 'right thing to be done; that doing it confirms the human strength of those able to do it and of those who would do it. It is an affirmation of a fundamental **ethological ethnicity**, that we are bound together in the first instance as a species of animal with an inherent style all its own for surviving and thriving (*ethos*). This is not simply an ethnic bond derived from identifying with a specific ethnic group or with any particular race or nationalism. In families the individual learns that he or she is not alone. Others must be lived with. For example, daily viewings of 'Sesame Street' with my pre-school daughter have impressed not only on her but also on me the importance of 'cooperation', which is seen in operation amidst the extended family setting depicted on this television show, notwithstanding the specific ethnicities of the characters (e.g., hispanic Americans, urban blacks, feathered and hairy and furry animals, all sorts of monsters, etc.).

Families are formed on two major ethological bases. First, one needs to learn that the biology of gender matters: women give life, men serve life given. Thus, again, where would we be if on 'Sesame Street' the differences between Maria and Luis, as a woman and a man respectively, especially surrounding the birth of their child, was not highlighted? (On 'Playschool', another favorite in the Hutch household, both sexes are always presented together, as if to imply the complementary nature of gender differences.) Apart from the woman's role in birthing and breast-feeding, of course, other roles are not so biologically limited or exclusive but shared by both men and women. Families are distinctive in that they necessarily do not exist in a gender vacuum as other specific small groups usually do.

In addition to being built on a foundation of gender differences, a second ethological basis of families is that they function in a direct relationship to the turn-over of generations: ancestors are remembered by the living, and the young are urged to remember the no longer

living when they themselves assume life in the future. In the Christian sphere, this is expressed in themes like the 'fatherhood' of God and the 'sonship' of Christ, 'apostolic succession' from the disciple Peter, and the deceased, who are thought to be 'asleep in the Lord', make up the heavenly 'communion of saints'. Few, if any, groups function these days with the turn-over of generations in mind; and according to the necessity to affirm the biological importance of gender differences. (Some 'greenies' may come close.) But families always serve this turn-over of generations and do so specifically in terms of gender differences. In serving the life cycle the family is thereby served in perpetuity. However, small groups that are not families need not be so linked with the future, nor with the biology that drives the future into present obligation as an ethological imperative. To notice the common humanity of the generations working together to sustain the unbroken biological and cultural connection between generations, that in the present past and future must be united, is to identify the basic primordial ethnicity of family life and the general moral obligation this implies.

Such ethnicity can be referred to as **speciation**, or the process of thinking, feeling and acting as if one were doing so on behalf of all human beings, and be acknowledged by them to be so acting. This is what happens during the role-playing of *theosis*. The attitude that results and which supports such a view is called the 'spiritual life' in most world religions; namely, that we recognise anew that we are one undivided species, and related to some 'Other', often imaged as a 'Creator' or 'Destroyer' (or both), in terms of which life must be lived. The developmental template of this, of course, is the mother/child relationship, itself a potent resource for education in spirituality in terms of bonding, separation and attachment to the '(M) Other' (e.g., symbolic imagery of Mary and Jesus, Madonna and Holy Child).

The Study of Ethnicity

Most social thinkers would agree that there is a revival of ethnicity in the world today. There are two lines along which ethnicity is studied: (1) On the one hand, some researchers believe that social structures and material conditions in which we live ('standard of living') should be analysed with a view to noting the personal affection, practical necessity, common interest, or incurred obligation that can be said to draw people together into groups that evidence solidarity. Let us refer to these factors in the short-hand terms, 'shared interests and historical circumstances', but without forgetting that these terms always need careful detailed analysis from situation to situation. For example, the Polish trade union, 'Solidarity', came into being, according to outside observers, only because of the desire of shipyard workers in Gadansk to be paid more money by the state and to work under improved material conditions. Shared interests and historical circumstances could be considered to be the only forces that brought the unionists together. The bulk of research on ethnicity is along these lines; it is most evident in Anglo-American work. Much of it is done by contemporary social policy planners who are utilitarians and neo-marxists. (2) On the other hand, critics accept that the shared interests of separate individuals and historical circumstances are thought by this first group of researchers to give

rise to ethnic bonding. These critics of the first view acknowledge such factors as making up one level on which people are from time-to-time drawn together. However, the critics also argue that there is more to ethnicity than the level of shared interests and historical circumstances alone, especially when human ethology, with its biological limitations and possibilities, is weighed in the balance.

Also significant, perhaps most significant in ethnic bonding say these critics, is what they call the 'primordial bond', or what anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973:259) calls an 'unaccountable absolute import attributed to the tie itself', that is, to the process by which people are drawn together. The primordial bond is a level of solidarity that is more basic to forming human ties than the level of shared interests and changing historical circumstances. The general strength of such a primordial bond, according to Geertz (1973:259-60), derives from 'a sense of natural - some would say **spiritual** - affinity rather than from social interaction' based, say, on some calculus of individual interests and historical circumstances in search of harmony. In the case of the Polish trade union, 'Solidarity', we know from insiders that most of the movement's momentum derived from the Catholicism of members, and from rallying around the image of the 'Black Madonna'. This was clearly an expression by which unionists felt their efforts would benefit not just workers in Poland, but also serve widely to advocate enlightened rights and liberties for all of humankind, in particular in Eastern European Soviet satellite countries. According to social thinker Anthony Smith (1981:25), 'Herein lies perhaps the true dimension of the ethnic revival; it is at one and the same time an attempt to preserve the past, and to transform it into something new, to create a new type upon ancient foundations, to create a new man and society through the revival of old identities and the preservation of the **'links in the chain of generations''**. Here ethnicity is driven by sexuality, or biology which creates the human future.

Sexuality (*eros*) is the immediate *raison d'être* of family life. Sexuality as desire seeks not only present erotic expression. It also extends to the future, in which *eros empowers a new generation. It does this because of death in life, or mortality, and the wisdom it can prompt. Yet again, a new generation is called upon to harness its sexuality within the primordial moral bond of marriage and kinship ties, by which the human species, in the best sense, recognises itself in its responsibility to its future. Such a slant on ethnicity is most evident in European research, which is responsive to depth psychological insights into human motivation.*

Modes of Empowerment: Specific Ethnic Strengths

The social thinker, Erik Erikson (1964), suggests that basic human strengths, what he refers to as 'virtues', must be won from specifiable psychosocial crises which occur throughout the life of the individual, and which together constitute the 'link in the chain of generations' identified above by Anthony Smith. Such service is rendered only insofar as families make it possible to foster and then affirm these strengths for the next generation of family members. These strengths not only express our primordial ethnicity, they also aim at con-

tinuous self-clarification in different historical epochs which, by means of trial and error over time, further empowers generations yet to come. Together these newly won strengths are the moral legacy of our species. What are these basic human strengths, and how do they express the primordial ethnic bond that appears most clearly in extended families in which generational turn-over is driven and the wisdom of *theosis* activated?

Erikson's list of 'virtues' as contained in his paper called, 'Human Strength and the Cycle of Generations' (1964:109-157), is one good expression of what is won by the hard psychosocial work of individual development through a series of eight life crises. These crises begin in infancy, move through early and late childhood, weather adolescence and young adulthood, and then finally appear in middle age and old age. Each of the eight crises is attended to by one virtue, or human strength, that is achieved if all goes well: (1) Trust vs. Mistrust (HOPE); (2) Autonomy vs. Shame and Self-Doubt (WILL); (3) Initiative vs. Guilt (PURPOSE); (4) Industry vs. Inferiority (COMPETENCE); (5) Identity vs. Identity Diffusion (FIDELITY); (6) Intimacy vs. Isolation (LOVE); (7) Generativity vs. Stagnation (CARE); and (8) Integrity vs. Despair (WISDOM). The strengths of hope, will, purpose and competence are the precipates of early and late childhood developmental successes.

The remaining four human strengths are those of adulthood. They are the most important for the spiritual maturity of persons who would be care-providers to children. They begin during adolescence with **fidelity**, or 'the ability to sustain loyalties freely pledged in spite of the inevitable contradictions of value systems'. Fidelity is the cornerstone of identity and receives confirmation from supporting ideologies and affirming companions. **Love** is 'mutuality of devotion forever subduing the antagonisms inherent in divided function'. It makes intimacy work and is the basis for ethical concern. **Care** is 'the widening concern for what has been generated by love, necessity, or accident; it overcomes the ambivalence adhering to irreversible obligation'. Whatever one leaves behind, creates or produces (or helps to produce) is the emblem of care, itself the impulse to teach the younger generation whatever one holds to be the most valuable skills and lessons of life. **Wisdom**, the last strength wrested from the psychosocial crises of development, is 'detached concern with life itself, in the face of death itself'. It maintains the integrity of all human experience and responds to the need of the on-coming generation for a coherent emotional and cultural heritage. Insofar as all these human strengths get orchestrated and attended to through deliberate focussing exercises and awareness training techniques, they come to constitute the spiritual nature of human life. This is in direct proportion especially to a person's success in sustaining the ethnic strength of 'wisdom', the virtue that, when all is said and done, underwrites *theosis*, or the process of spiritual development, most.

Not all people are thoroughly successful in achieving one hundred percent of each human strength. Degrees of achievement occur; sometimes the inability to achieve a particular strength eventuates in thwarted spiritual development. In such instances, the flip-side of virtues is seen. Appearing is what Donald Capps (1983:38), a thinker about human spirituality, calls eight counter-veiling 'vices' that are implied in Erikson's schedule of 'virtues'. The vices Capps

lists appear in a life when for whatever reasons either the achievement of a specific human strength falls far short of full development or is not achieved at all. Thus, the list runs in the following way, with the suppressed potential virtue in parentheses: gluttony (hope), anger (will), greed (purpose), envy (competence), pride (fidelity), lust (love), indifference (care) and melancholy (wisdom). Says Capps (1983:48), 'we ought not to think of the vices as stage-limited. We should view them instead as negative capabilities that are part of the epigenetic ground plan and thus always available to cause disorder, dysfunction, disintegration, and anomie'. Of course, the vices militate against the cultivation of spiritual awareness, the pinnacle of which is the virtue of old age, 'wisdom', detached concern for life itself, in the face of death itself.

Spirituality: Historical Reality or Experiential Actuality?

A recognition of the human strengths identified by Erikson describes dimensions of the bond of primordial ethnicity. Cultivating an awareness of the need to engender the virtues in living does not occur in a vacuum. Rather it automatically engages the individual in a collective activity which Erikson himself calls 'speciation'. Eschewed is any sense that a spiritual life can be cultivated alone, apart from the hard work of human development or in any 'canned way', as educators and teachers of religious dogma would sometimes like to serve it up. Speciation is a term used by ethnologists who study the behaviour of animal groups. It is the process by which we appeal to each other not in terms of reality (in which we are in so many ways different from each other), but, rather, on the basis of actuality. Actuality--what we actually experience in 'face-to-face' encounters with each other--assumes that we are one species in the process of casting a wider vision for the future, notwithstanding the divided function marked by real historical differences, not the least being persistent gender differences. For Erikson, each of us lives in at least two dimensions at once. On the one hand, we live in the world of **reality** which is shared with others in historical time and space, in which we are perceived and judged by others. This is the world of human differences. People are somewhat artificially divided into different races, nationalities, economic statuses, role behaviours, political parties, geographical locations, and the like. Not the least of human differences is evident in the fact that women and men are biologically different. An ideology of individualism would usually deny this difference and, thus, fails to address its importance or perceive how women and men complement each other when they serve generational turn-over. Forces of familism, however, accept the reality of gender differences and make them work for the actual future, not just for some abstract idea of it.

On the other hand, says Erikson, we also live in the world of **actuality**, or a sense of the world to which we commit ourselves in ceaseless interaction. While reality divides people into different groups, with different statuses, power and influence in history, actuality is the experiential arena in which difference is over-ridden, temporarily nullified. This is spontaneous, a natural, uncontrived occurrence. It is the heart of spiritual formation. Here speciation is said to over-ride 'pseudo-speciation', or the limited and

self-defeating tendency to become enmeshed in the dialectic of playing either the roles of victor or vanquished. The differences in our historical realities (i.e., groups competing for our allegiances in terms of abstract thought, which forecloses options) can be transformed by attending to experiential actualities (i.e., we are fundamentally a single species charged with survival, in terms of concrete thought, which stems from the necessity to live life, and to live it together, not just to think about doing so). Insight into the primordial ethnic basis of worthwhile acts draws together our species and makes spiritual development possible (a *telos*, 'speciation').

Humankind is one species, but without spiritual awareness species annihilation is possible. This is realised each time we sit down and have frank and forthright conversation with each other, hopefully in good faith. The unity of who we discover we are together (as distinct from what we believe in our heads may set us apart from each other), ethologically speaking, needs to be powerfully affirmed time and time again. This, in spite of our tendency for either the victory of forcing our ideas and wills on others or the defeat of capitulating and submitting to a superior historical or ideological force. Instead of conflict amongst pseudo-species it is instead possible for people to walk on the road that leads to greater spiritual realisation, at least to a common future identity, one that overcomes differences and potential hostilities.

We distinguished at the outset the broad ideological conflict of contemporary society between 'individualism' and 'familism'. We can now say that these competing orientations or social ideologies operate vis-à-vis each other as the competing and conflicting moral postures of different 'pseudo-species'. However, the conversion of familism into a competing and conflicting foil against which individualism usually rails has only been made possible by the recent emergence of a distinct ideology of individualism (e.g. the 'Me' generation and the yuppie phenomenon). The 'foil' of familism is constructed as such by adherents of an exclusive individualism. Familism, thus, is thereby unfairly denigrated and foisted upon the public as only the 'choice for losers', or even 'the enemy' that is out to snuff out individual self-fulfilment. The supporters of an ideology of individualism trade only in historical realities, not in the actuality of lived experience. The record shows that the actuality of an ideology of familism, along with an individualism that is deliberately subsumed under and serves familism, is longer-standing in history than the reality of individualism by itself. Family life based on marriage and kinship ties, themselves so essential to generational turnover in the past, has guided humankind successfully through centuries of effort to sustain experiential actuality as the moral grist of living. An ideology of familism, not an exclusive ideology of individualism, bears the wide embrace of primordial ethnicity (i.e., awareness of speciation, through the process of *theosis*). This primordial ethnicity which is inherent in humankind, as I have suggested, is the ground of spiritual development, or growth in the capacity to act according to the human strength of 'wisdom'.

Familism and Spiritual Formation: Maternal Thinking

Feminist thinker, Sara Ruddick (1989), suggests that primordial ethnicity is evident in what she calls 'maternal thinking', which is available both to women and men who are faced with making practical sense out of the distinctive labor of raising and providing care for children. Maternal thinking is what in Eriksonian terms is 'experiential actuality'. Any job has certain specific demands. To engage in any practice is, by definition, to accept the conditions that constitute the practice. For example, to be recognised as a jockey or a scientist means to be more or less committed to crossing the finish line or replicating findings by experiment. So too is the job of 'mothering', in which both women and men engage. Ruddick says that three actual, concrete conditions define the job of maternal care: (1) **protection** of children, which includes preserving their lives at fundamental levels ('Hold my hand when we cross the street!'); (2) **nurturance**, which fosters growth ('After you finish eating, I'll read you a bedtime story'.); and (3) **training**, or the education of children in social acceptability ('Don't pick your nose!'). While all three conditions of maternal care are necessary for children who hope to walk into the future in strength, the second condition, nurturance, is the most important when it comes to what is called spiritual development. Says Ruddick (1989:82) of spiritual formation that is born of nurturance, 'To foster growth is to nurture a child's **developing spirit** - whatever in a child is lively, purposive, and responsive'. Here the actuality of the human strengths of hope, will and purpose get linked together, and they are mediated amidst the relationship between children and those who engage in maternal practice. In Christian parlance, children cared for become not mere individuals to be taught religious lessons, but 'creatures', bound in the actuality of relationships with care-providers. Care-providers themselves are no longer mere individuals who just teach religious lessons, but now 'creators', fostering *theosis*, or the awareness of the importance of the goal and attitude of speciation. Ruddick (1989:83) holds that . . . 'To foster growth, then, is to sponsor or nurture a child's unfolding, expanding material spirit'. This does not result from moral bullying or harsh-mindedness, however these may sometimes be benignly packaged by educators in some creches, kindergartens, schools and churches. Rather, developing spiritual awareness is a naturally occurring process, similar to but not the same thing as creativity (individualism, not familism, is the source of creativity but not spirituality). Conscious cultivation of the sense of primordial ethnicity is the key for adults. However, for children spiritual awareness is only made possible by nurturance, itself born in the human strength of love during parents' young adulthoods, and then focussed during parents' more confident middle-lives by the virtue of care. Children thereby enter into creation, itself a 'cosmos', or an already ordered world, created by parents acting in the role of god, the 'creator', and who themselves, as mere mortals, are engaged in the experiential actuality of *theosis*. In other words, they self-consciously cultivate the Eriksonian virtue of 'wisdom' as they embark on their last years of living, and prepare to give up their places to the young without regrets.

Familism not only makes children and the birth of children a singular focus. The ideological orientation of the family also links natality with sexuality and, finally, with mortality. This linkage is the actuality of the cycle of generations in which children grow up and replace their parents and then, finally, are themselves similarly replaced by their young. Hardly is it trite to point out that in the extended family of 'Sesame Street' this insight was poignantly illustrated when 'Uncle Wally' died. This was one of the major human events in the twenty (+) years long history of the show, let alone in the lives of youngsters viewing it and experiencing its personal impact. The local 'Sesame Street' characters, included in one, unified 'extended' family (adults, children, monsters, animals), seriously grappled with the fact of death in life and engaged in a process of mourning. Familism, not individualism, is the paramount ideological support for such life-affirming activity, such speciation. Familism, and the politics that support it, engenders primordial ethnicity as a source of spiritual awareness. Psychologist and feminist thinker, Phyllis Chesler (Quoted in Ruddick 1989:207), points to the connections between natality, sexuality and mortality when she says, '**All** women who bear children are committing, literally and symbolically, a blood sacrifice for the perpetuation of the species'. Birth, procreation and death serve the species. These powerful and inexorable ethological forces are contained within and dramatically linked together by family life as it propels humankind into the future. Individualism, by definition, assumes a continuous birth of the self in which sexuality may have a pleasurable place but in regard to which death is anathema. Such a self-serving stance is not fundamentally concerned with our species as a whole surviving and thriving into the future. Such an individualism resists primordial ethnicity and, with it, a spirituality that is embodied and actual in the lives of those who care for children. It inhibits future spiritual growth unless it becomes subsumed under and serves familism.

Therefore, those who in the broadest sense parent and provide quality care for kids become virtual 'elders' of the human tribe. No nostalgic manoeuvre to Eliadian-like 'primordial time' is required. Rather, those who would parent best nourish the highest moral hopes of the young by being charged by evolution and by the cycle of generations with the hard, spiritual work of passing on to their offspring this 'wisdom' only they of advanced years now know if they have been honest with themselves and maintained their sense of integrity. They are possessed by detached concern with life itself because they stand so close to facing death itself. The job, of course, can be botched; but that would demand of me a more critical study of what those not in the know about the vision portrayed here believe spiritual development in children to be all about. Eventually, this wisdom of successive generations will convert humankind into peacemakers, who will be linked to the now pressing necessities of living together and keeping the peace on the planet earth and, indeed, perhaps elsewhere in the future. Spiritual formation is the affirmation of the fundamental life we share together, including all the mystery of creation it appears, often with surprise, to be.

Advocating Familism

The process of reinforcing families and the ideology of familism, under today's social conditions, involves placing more stress on the following broad social and moral obligations of maternal, spiritual thinkers:

1. The obligation of parents who bring children into the world to live together and create a strong family unit.

2. The obligation of the employment sector to consider the effects on the family of all of its activities and to realise that most of its adult workers have not one but two important roles in life. For the private sector, this obligation may need to be continually reemphasised and supported by the state.

3. The obligation of government, when providing facilities and services, to give help in a manner that as much as possible strengthens rather than weakens the family unit.

4. The obligation of men, in view of the changing roles of women, to take a much more active role in family life.

5. The obligation of people who make laws, social policies, and political pronouncements to ensure that, in the process of protecting 'alternative lifestyles', they do not downgrade the ideal of the nuclear family--parents living together and sharing responsibility for their children and for each other (From Popenoe, 1988:340-341).

These guidelines will also foster a retrieval of primordial ethnicity, which is the basis of human strengths fostered in families which are mindful of the spiritual nature of human life.

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