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Protestantism and the Family

Family and Work: Can Anyone "Have It All"?

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So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. (Genesis 3:6-7, NRSV)

When, at the end of a sabbatical from teaching, I began this chapter with its assigned title, "Love and Work: Can Anyone 'Have It All'?" I experienced another wrinkle in my so-called desire to "have it all." At the congregation I attend with my husband and three sons, I had agreed to direct the Sunday School and teach a younger children's class as well as orchestrate the Christmas program. I had also agreed to lead a Junior Great Books group and to serve as art volunteer in my oldest son's second grade class. And, while any one of these activities alone would have sufficed, I was organizing parties and projects as room mother for my middle son's preschool. Unwittingly, I had become caught up in what one journalist calls the latest trend in education: parents-in-the-classroom and hence, "School-sponsored guilt trips." Besides full-time waged employment,

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cooking, cleaning, folding laundry, packing lunches, doing home repairs, "Supermom must now start teaching on the side!"¹

Why did I do this? Did I want to "have it all"? I volunteered for extra responsibilities partly because of my sabbatical. Perhaps I was paying my dues to my children, the school, and the church, in the intricate community network upheld mostly by "nonworking" women: dues for actually having forged a book out of the minutiae of such problems, *Also A Mother: Work and Family as Theological Dilemma*. It was almost as if I had to compensate for defying a claim I had quoted at the beginning of the book's preface, "A woman . . . either has children or writes books."² But I also wanted to participate in my children's lives. So I tricked myself into believing that I had enough time and energy, a common strategy for mothers who want to "have it all." Not surprisingly, I did not finish this chapter by the projected deadline.

While this variation on the theme of "having it all" is self-imposed and trivial in the overall scheme of life, I have come to recognize such daily, unrelenting personal conflicts as symptomatic of much broader patterns of work and family in our society. Distortions in these patterns must be better understood and challenged, and this chapter is one attempt to do so. Not only has the extra time taken to finish this chapter given me time with my family, it has deepened my reflections and sharpened my thesis: The more I think about the hackneyed cliché of "having it all" the more convinced I become about its ambiguous, deceptive, and even dangerous meanings, as well as the redemptive desire for human wholeness at its core.

The phrase "having it all" has acquired an assortment of moral connotations. On the one hand, aspirations to "have it all" assert that women have a right to have more than traditionally allotted them. When uttered with an increasingly negative and punishing tone, the implication of the phrase is that women want to "possess it all," they want to have more than they should want or have. On the other hand, rather than acquiring, possessing, or having anything, women themselves often experience "having it all" as a "giving away" of themselves instead. Women continue to give and lose themselves to multiple competing demands. Under such circumstances, it would be more appropriate to talk about "doing it all."

Finally, "having it all" represents something other than inordinate desire. Embedded in the phrase is a positive, foundational claim that debunks work and family, self-love and love of others, self-fulfillment and self-sacrifice as false alternatives. Far from a distortion, the endeavor to "have it all" dares to suggest that women, like men, are created to love *and* to work. Central to the thesis of this essay, the original ideals of shared responsibility for family and justice in the workplace merit retrieval as the kernels of truth behind the distortions and ambiguities of the phrase. My use of the phrase in this essay varies among these three meanings, and is best determined by the context.

On the cover of *Also a Mother*, there is a reproduction of a painting entitled "Out of Reach, Daughters of Eve." In the book, I focus on the first phrase, "Out of Reach," but I do not explicitly discuss the second intriguing phrase, "Daughters of Eve." Although it may not seem so at first glance, women's identification with Eve and Eve's inordinate desire is intricately related to the issue of "having it all." Thus, after discussing some of the historical and cultural innuendos of the phrase itself, I will revisit the symbol of Eve, arguing for fresh psychological readings of maternal desire and fresh theological interpretations of Eve, desire, freedom, finitude, and redemption as important resources in tackling the dilemmas illustrated above.

One final comment before launching the discussion: Despite the mutuality of our marital partnership, my husband Mark will seldom, if ever, get asked to be "room mother" or "picturelady." Some schools try for "room parents" and "art volunteers," but the problem is not just linguistic. It concerns an entire way of constructing reality. Imagine a man writing an article about whether he can really have it all. People commonly assume that combining work and family poses few overt conflicts for men. In this sense, the dilemma itself represents an internalized, genderized oppression for many women. Until recently, "having it all" has been defined as a woman's dilemma. But, as my comments will imply, this is a limited interpretation. Solutions to the dilemma of combining family and work necessarily involve men. A growing number of men today sense the loss in their lives that results when they leave relationships and family work to women. Thus, while my focus is primarily women,

the issues for men are interrelated, every bit as complex, and deserve separate treatment.

What Do Women Want?

The question of "having it all" arose as a peculiarly European-American, middle-class women's dilemma in the mid-twentieth century. The first women who thought about "having it all" were fighting powerful demons, a post-World War II North American mindset that idealized the breadwinner husband, his homemaker wife, and the increasingly isolated suburban, nuclear household with its fascinating gadgets and fast foods. Behind this stood the nineteenth-century Victorian ideal of motherly domesticity, now firmly re-entrenched after the period of World War II, during which many wives and mothers had worked in the defense industries. These images were bolstered by religious ideals of moral piety, sexual purity, and wifely submission, and were built on unspoken assumptions about class and ethnicity.

Although people acted as if everyone had always formed families in this way, these gender roles reflected twentieth-century Western ideals, and remained unattainable for most working class and minority families. When the women's movement of the 1960s challenged the 1950s image of happiness and demanded something women had never had before, parity with men in the marketplace and in the household, they were accused of unreasonably wanting to "have it all." Moreover, in seeking equal pay and shared family responsibilities, they neither anticipated the resulting emotional and social roadblocks nor understood how their challenge to sexism was blind to racist and classist superstructures that helped preserve structures of inequality.

Prior to the Industrial Revolution, European-American women did not "have it all," but some women seemed to have more than many women have today. Women have always held major responsibilities for family life, but in pre-industrial times these responsibilities came with certain public claims. Women possessed indispensable skills, particularly as midwives and respected healers of the family and community. They produced clothes; they planted, pickled, and preserved food; they manufactured medicines, soap, and candles. Their participation in society, while under the rule of men, assumed an authority of its own, essential to the survival

and well-being of the community. Women had vital work to do and contributions to make, however much this was directed by the edicts of men.

For many European-American women in the nineteenth century the Industrial Revolution displaced this authority and created what Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English call the "Woman Question" or the "woman problem."³ The market economy shattered the previous unity of work and home and established a new world of work for men. Except for family farms and small family businesses, and for many people of color and the lower class, a line taut with moral tension arose between the public realm of waged work and the private realm of home. As women's productive activities were engulfed by the factory system, they lost a sphere of significant influence. Relegated to the increasingly restrictive domain of the home, many women lost their last few threads of connection to public life, and many men grew distant from family life. Without their former roles in the community's survival, women found themselves dependent on men for status, economic security, community, food, clothing, and recreation, and bound anew to the trivialities of daily home life. Hence the "woman question" (What would become of women in the modern world?) became a gripping public issue in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Even then, it was a question implicitly asked about women from a certain class and ethnic group. Most minority and working class women (and children) were too busy working long hours in factories and domestic service at highly exploitative wages, and hence, faced different problems of personal and community survival.

As the twentieth century closes, the question of "having it all" is simply one more variation on the European-American woman question with which the century began. Second-wave feminists, representing the period from approximately 1966, revolted against confinement and marched for equal opportunity. The ensuing rearrangement in domestic and economic life affected women's roles and identity as much as the Industrial Revolution did men's, when it moved their work out of the home. Women have entered the work force at a rate of over a million women per year for the last decade, more than doubling the number of employed women since 1950. The number of married women in employed positions is more than five times what it was in 1940. In 1950 the Bureau of Labor did not even keep statistics on how many women with children under

the age of one worked outside the home; today half of such women do. Overall, two-thirds of all mothers are now in the labor force.

Do these mothers "have it all?" Unfortunately, in many regards the phrase "having it all" is a romanticized, distorted, and even oppressive concept. Women have not come close to "having it all" if that means equity with men in the work place and family. Women on average still make only about seventy cents for every dollar earned by men. Most have entered lower-paying occupations (clerical, sales, service, factory). Few have given up major domestic responsibilities, and many have added to their household chores. The statistically fastest growing family category in the United States is not the dual-career family for which the phrase "having it all" was primarily coined. This family type is far surpassed statistically by female-headed households of unwed or divorced mothers. Yet primarily white, married women with careers (as distinct from jobs) continue to receive an undue share of attention and acclaim for integrating family life and work. Glorified titles like "supermom" and "super woman" are bestowed on them, while noncareer working women and single mothers are often blamed for the circumstances they must endure.⁴ Typically single mothers are not seen as "having it all" because they do not "have" a man. But in terms of managing households and holding down jobs, they are almost always trying to "do it all," often on low or poverty-level incomes.

When "having it all" really means "doing it all," it is a dubious honor at best. In many ways, the idea of "having it all" was doomed before it began. It arose within an economic and social system that viewed childrearing, homemaking, and community life as "non-work," and which naively viewed market labor as almost completely independent of the labors of family and community. The dilemmas of work and family simply reveal the distortions in these views. Childrearing, housework, and community service are hard, and socially essential work. Most women have always worked, many from the crack of dawn until long after sunset. They have provided enormous productive, reproductive, and maintenance labor, often with little or no compensation. In a word, they have controlled neither the extent nor the fruits of their labor. At the same time, the market economy has persisted in assuming that labor-power resides in lone individuals, neither hindered nor helped by personal relationships, marriage, or family commitments.⁵ Yet, for most men, the ability to put in a forty-to eighty-hour work week or to move across the

country for a job promotion is heavily dependent on the clandestine labors of a "wife" who sustains home and community.

In trying to sustain work and family, middle-class women have finally glimpsed problems that working-class women and single mothers have always known and endured: what Arlie Hochschild popularized as the "second shift." In one study, working women "averaged three hours a day on housework while men averaged 17 minutes; women spent fifty minutes a day of time exclusively with their children; men spent twelve minutes." Based on studies on time use done in the 1960s and 1970s, Hochschild estimates that over a year women worked an "extra month of twenty-four-hour days."⁶ In time-use studies done beyond the United States, the distortions are even more apparent. A 1980 United Nations report indicated that women world-wide perform two-thirds of the world's labor, receive ten percent of the pay, and own one percent of the property.

Many women do not face the dilemmas of "having it all," as extolled by the media and popular culture. Working class women have had no choice but to manage reproductive and productive labors side by side, simply in order to survive. Besides gender discrimination, Asian-American, African-American, American Indian, and Hispanic mothers face racial and economic discrimination, which afflicts the ability of women and men alike to find satisfying, well-paid work. Men often receive less education, toil at manual labor, and face threats of homicide, substance abuse, crime, and incarceration. As a result, mothers have often had to be independent centers of strength, essential for the survival of the group and seldom confined to the private domain. Conflicts of family and home are interwoven with the problems of racism, and with dilemmas raised when the educational accomplishments and the employment rate for women are higher than that for men, or when the support system of extended family begins to break down, or when children are trapped by pervasive poverty.⁷

The pattern of working beyond the call of duty to secure the survival of children and family persists.⁸ The anguish of those striving to "have it all" does not make much sense and even seems elitist and uncaring to those robbed of the chance to establish safe, strong homes, or to those fighting to prepare their children for survival in a hostile and discriminatory environment.⁹ The question of whether anyone can "have it all," therefore, has not been a pressing

question for most women of color, poor women, lesbian women, and women in other countries. Their questions are more rightfully questions of having *anything at all*, questions of personal validation, of survival as a people and a community, and of securing a way where there is no way.

For different reasons, many upper-class women have also not encountered the plight of "having it all" experienced by the middle-class. Upper-class mothers who have desired creative, professional work and even those who do not seek paid work have often simply bought from those in lower economic brackets the home services needed to sustain family life, housekeepers, live-in nannies, gardeners, caterers, decorators, contractors. While money does not solve all of their internal and practical issues, it has helped many well-positioned women avoid at least some of them. In so doing, such women perpetuate the illusion that reproductive labor requires no labor. And they approximate an ideal of "having it all" that actually depends on the labors of less well-situated women. Women's "liberation" in this vein simply shifts the weight of domestic chores "from one group of exploited women, mothers, to another group, the babysitter, housekeeper, cleaning woman, day-care staff, teacher."¹⁰

Hence, the dreamboat of "having it all" not only crashes up against the market distortions of human labor; it also cannot ignore the troubled waters of class and race across which it has so blithely sailed. Since many women who "want it all" have enjoyed the privileges of white society, they simply have not expected any resistance to their desires for equality. "Having it all" is a myth in a cultural and economic system that, as Rosemary Ruether observes, "insists that women are equal, while at the same time structuring its economic and social life to make women economically dependent or marginal, as well as the primary parents."¹¹ And, I would add, in a racist society in which the gap between the "haves" and the "have nots" continues to grow (with women becoming an increasing percentage of the "have nots"), the ideal of "having it all" simply perpetuates a destructive ethos. As long as the workplace still expects the waged worker to have a wife or servant(s), as long as men remain no more willing to pick up the broom than their fathers were, as long as an underclass of women take care of the

homes and children of those in the upper classes, we must be content with what Hochschild calls a "stalled revolution."¹²

How then might the "stalled revolution" be reinvigorated? Can anyone, woman or man, black or white, really sustain a fulfilling family and work life? Many current books on work and family advocate similar solutions. Reuther's list of needed changes in her essay on "Politics and the Family" is a good example, although she waxes slightly romantic about the possibilities of social reconstruction:

Working mothers not only need good inexpensive day care, they need a restructured social order that locates home, school, nursery and work in some more coherent relationship to each other. They need a society that is rebuilding the organic supports around these realities of daily life, instead of asking the working man and woman to hold together this fragmented life through some monumental effort of self-extensions. Most of all, women need a society that promotes support for women and children by making it possible for fathers to be equal participants in the rearing of children and the building of homes.¹³

Obviously, these kinds of changes will depend on political decisions, economic policies, and social legislation which support children, parents, and a variety of current family forms. Proposals for "family friendly" workplaces, increased tax exemptions for children, heightened paternal responsibility, and so forth, are critical.

Such solutions, however, must not sidestep cultural, moral, and theological considerations that are equally important. In *Also a Mother*, I argue that behind the middle-class struggle over "having it all" lies a fundamental religious question about the nature of the generative life. To challenge a society that has divided the burdens and rewards of family and work along gender and other lines, we must challenge psychological, biblical, and theological traditions that have been used to uphold these divisions. Something more than a revision of household roles and the construction of a family-friendly work environment is required for mutuality in contemporary families. Complex psychological, moral, and theological shifts are necessary.

Maternal Desire and Contemporary Psychology

One of my favorite cartoons features Freud reclining on his notorious couch pondering his famous question "What does woman want?" Behind him, Mrs. Freud pushes a broom, looking somewhat perturbed. Pictured in the balloon of her own thoughts is Freud himself, sweeping! But Freud's own response missed the point. He proposed instead his own peculiar rendition of the biblical edict, "your desire shall be for your husband" (Genesis 3:16b). In his analysis, woman's fulfillment lies in receiving from males what they lack by nature, a penis. Women who pursue their own creative desires, rather than experiencing them vicariously through fathers, husbands, or sons, simply have a "masculinity complex," an unnatural, unhealthy refusal to accept their castrated state. Fortunate women attain "normal femininity," a passive acceptance of biological fate and even masochistic, narcissistic resignation to a secondary role as dependents and spectators of male activity.¹⁴

Obviously, this fails to deal with the realities of technology, industrialization, and democratization which have challenged the prized position of the penis and the sexual division of labor which was central to pre-industrial and agrarian societies. In claiming scientific evidence for his theories about penis envy, however, Freud transformed a classic religious, symbolic depiction of female need and inferiority into an ontological fact. His theory captured the modern imagination for decades, and it has taken the work of women psychologists to begin to undermine its determinative power and to understand female desire.

This understanding has not come about easily. Analyst Karen Horney in fact suffered the neglect of academic and public attention precisely because she questioned orthodox psychoanalytic theory and Freud's view of female desire. While she acknowledges the existence of penis envy, she sees it as envy of social, not ontological or natural, superiority. Moreover, male attribution of penis envy to women is "not only consequence of their fear of women; it is also a projection of their underlying envy" of the female capacity to bear children.¹⁵

Long before it became popular to do so, Horney tried to understand the pathology of wanting to "have it all" in women like herself, white, middle-class, and predominantly heterosexual women.

She explored the contradictions of the "feminine type" of the 1920s, caught between the desire to please fathers and husbands and the desire to pursue her own ambitions:

Women were permitted to pursue education but expected to become mothers. They were encouraged to be sexually emancipated but supposed to limit sexual desire to monogamous marriage combined with asexual motherhood. They were told that they could have careers but were expected to defer to men at work and at home. They were enticed by ambition but taught to find salvation in love.¹⁶

Horney's therapeutic goal, the "female hero," directly opposes these stereotypical contradictions of "masculine civilization" with its presumed male superiority and female inferiority. The female hero assumes self-responsibility in claiming that she herself is worthy of care and that the world is her domain. Free of compliance to external demands and the resulting, culturally-imposed neuroses, she experiences the power of her ordinary real self. Unfortunately, as needed as it was at the time, Horney's work did little to alter the bias against women at the heart of modern psychotherapeutic practice and culture.

More recent feminist psychologists have pushed their way into the therapeutic mainstream. They provide new resources for understanding female and maternal desire that help shed light on the European-American quandary of "having it all." In *Understanding Women*, feminist therapists Louise Eichenbaum and Susie Orbach construct a powerful psychoanalytical depiction of the demise of desire in female development. Many women (particularly European-American women, a distinction that neither Horney nor these authors make) inherit from their mothers a forceful interdiction against recognizing and enacting their desires, sexual and otherwise.

Drawing on the British Object Relations School, especially the work of Fairbairn, Winnicott, and Guntrip, Eichenbaum and Orbach's basic thesis is that the mother, having learned from her mother that her own desires are secondary to meeting the desires of others, systematically and often unwittingly teaches her daughter that "there is something wrong with her [and] her desires, something that needs to be kept at bay."¹⁷ In so doing, the mother herself provides her

daughter's first lesson in emotional deprivation and leaves her with a residual, repressed hunger for nurturance.

Their argument is based on years of therapy at the Women's Therapy Centre in New York, in which their women clients hesitantly reveal a part of themselves that is "needy and uncared for, undeserving, inadequate, and inarticulate."¹⁸ On the one hand, women talk about their needs with contempt, humiliation, and shame. On the other hand, when inner needs are evoked, women are often flooded with anger, disappointment, depression, and feelings of rejection and isolation. For many women, it is less a question of struggling with distorted, deviant desires than identifying for themselves what they want at all.

Eichenbaum and Orbach identify three steps in a process that insures the lost awareness of desire: (1) the mother identifies with her daughter because of their shared gender; (2) the mother projects onto the daughter her negative, fearful feelings about her own desires and aspirations; (3) the mother unconsciously acts toward her infant daughter as she acts internally toward the little-girl part of herself; with repugnance, fear, and disdain. On another level, the mother consciously knows that she must prepare the girl to live in a society that expects girls and women to defer to others, to follow their lead, anticipate their needs, and articulate her own needs only in relation to theirs.

On a deeper level, this process leaves a woman with deep feelings of neediness. The infant daughter's fresh expression of her desires unconsciously reawakens lost parts of the mother that feel needy and want nurture, response, and encouragement. This reawakening leaves the mother subconsciously aware of her own deprivation, resentful, disapproving, and "annoyed with the child for displaying her needs and for not controlling them as she herself does."¹⁹ A daughter's expression of needs and wants causes a restlessness and discomfort in the mother that the same expression on the part of a son does not.

The mother conveys and the daughter learns a double message: don't be too emotionally dependent; don't be too independent. Don't expect others to meet your needs; don't expect to find avenues to meet your needs yourself. Consciously, the mother pushes the daughter to look to a man for emotional involvement. Unconsciously, she conveys the message that she must not expect a man to meet

her needs or really understand them. On the one hand, a woman feels afraid of her emotional needs and dependencies. At the same time, she feels fearful and guilty about her aspirations for an independence and power that would allow her to meet her own needs. Female desire therefore is effectively confused, debunked, repressed, and nearly obliterated. The mandate to curb one's desires, to split off needs, and not to expect response to them, becomes endemic to the psyche of many females. And the "daughter, as she learns to hide her needy little-girl part, becomes extremely sensitive to neediness in others."²⁰ Such daughters, one might assume, make good, sensitive mothers.

Or do they? Not really, contends psychoanalyst Jessica Benjamin, another feminist object-relations theorist and clinician. In fact, because mothers continue to hide their desires from others and from themselves, the complex system of domination and submission between women and men is perpetuated. Her book, *The Bonds of Love*, investigates the inner and social workings of domination. Is domination inevitable? Or is a relationship in which "both participants are subjects—both empowered and mutually respectful" possible?²¹

Benjamin's case for the latter is based most centrally on reclaiming female, maternal desire and what she calls a lost "subjectivity." She follows some of the same lines of thought as Eichenbaum and Orbach, but goes further in developing a constructive, normative, social agenda. She not only analyzes the demise of female desire; she makes mutuality her normative center and follows this ideal into society at large to challenge its gender inequities in spite of its stated commitment to equality. In this agenda, she is less concerned with the child's and the daughter's development and more focused on the mother's—an unusual stance for any therapeutic theory thus far.

Benjamin traces the structure of domination and the demise of mutuality back to the tension between dependence and independence in infant life. The ideal balance between the human need for self-assertion (or the desire to be recognized) and the need to recognize the other all too easily collapses into the familiar polarities of destructive rulership and self-annihilating sacrifice. When reinforced by gender differences in parenting styles—the exciting, assertive "father of liberation" versus the holding, nurturing "mother of dependency"—the child quickly associates masculinity

and femininity with these two different postures. And the tension between dependence and independence that actually lies *within* the person gets recast as a conflict *between* women and men.

While this is a highly technical analysis, the important point is this: according to Benjamin, domination will end and mutuality begin when the "other makes a difference."²² In a word, mothers must claim their subjectivity. Balancing the recognition of the child's needs with the assertion of the mother's needs, thus far "scarcely put forward as an ideal," is exactly what is required. In other words, in order for the child to receive the recognition that the child seeks, the mother must have an "independent center . . . outside her child."²³

Only a mother who feels entitled to be a person in her own right can be seen as such by her child, and only such a mother can . . . permit full differentiation. This fact has been remarkably elusive. It seems intolerable to the narcissism of adults and children alike that the limits a mother sets should not merely be an occasional dose of medicine corresponding to the child's needs, but might actually proceed from the mother's assertion of her own separate selfhood.²⁴

Just as it is necessary to put the ideal of maternal pursuit of desire and selfhood forward, it is equally essential according to Benjamin to restore the missing father as a nurturer, as someone with whom sons and daughters can identify, and as a person who models respect for the mother's subjectivity. Fathers and mothers must both become models of both separation *and* attachment for their children. These changes, Benjamin claims, would realign the process of development, mitigate the hazardous polarization of gender roles, and in particular, avoid the creation of destructive systems of domination.

It is hard to believe that Benjamin could take up the problem of domination without even mentioning racial and ethnic domination (her chapter on "Master and Slave" is simply a case-study analysis of Pauline Reage's *Story of O*) or without a sense that the familial relationships she describes are primarily based on European-American experiences. She is also oblivious to some of the practical impossibilities of her recommendations in the actual lives of mothers and

children, to the limits of her attempted social analysis, and to the complex ethical and religious assumptions and implications of her work. Mutuality is not only an emotional construct that refers to emotional attunement; it is also an ethical and religious concept that requires both self-giving love and social justice. Without an analysis of human evil, vulnerability, and fallibility in the realization of these ideals, and without an analysis of other forms of domination, Benjamin's optimistic visions for eliminating domination are naive and at times, almost eschatological.

Nonetheless, while Eichenbaum and Orbach help us understand the psychic and social destruction of female desire, Benjamin justifies the importance of maternal desire to "have it all" in the best sense of the phrase. Her analysis captures the dangers of parental inequality and provides a much-needed developmental theory for genuine mutuality, showing both how it has been thwarted in distorted gender relations between mother and father and how it might evolve in a changed psychological and social context. She makes a strong psychological case that parents must be equal; each parent must sustain the tension between "sexual cross-identification" and provide an example of integration rather than complementarity.²⁵

In this context, the cultural shame directed toward those women who dare to "want it all" (prodded along by media headlines such as "'90s Choices: Balanced Life Preferred to 'Supersuccess'") is particularly cruel.²⁶ It plays facilely and harshly upon the heart strings of young women who are already prone to sacrifice internal inclinations about themselves, their abilities, their loves, and their desires to social and marital conventions. Daughters quickly learn to blame themselves for the failure to balance work and family, and pull back from wanting so much when, in actuality, they want so little and the problems are far from theirs alone.

Re-imagining Eve: A Theological Task

For women, desire of one's own has had a long history of being covertly yet strictly forbidden. Over the centuries of Christian interpretation, Eve has stood for wrong and misdirected desire. Ecclesiastical and theological traditions have upheld and solidified this tradition by interpreting agapic love as unconditional self-sacrifice. Many women have taken these interpretations of love and of Eve's

culpability to heart. In a penitent, compensatory, and committed manner, they give of themselves willingly, relentlessly, and sometimes fiendishly.

Elaine Pagels observes that the archaic creation narrative wields such "an extraordinary influence upon western culture" that she herself is "surprised to discover how complex and extensive its effect has been."²⁷ For generations, creation stories have shaped human hopes for procreation, work, marriage, and human striving. While I do not attempt the sort of exegesis better performed by biblical scholars, I do want to suggest some alternative ways of thinking about Eve as important to tackling the conundrums of "having it all."

How culpable is Eve? Does she want to "have it all?" The narrative in Genesis 3 is driven by two powerful, interrelated energies with Eve at their center: healthy, vital human desire and misguided, distorted desire. On the one hand, Augustine's classic reading of the narrative of the "fall" has been used throughout Christian history to blame women for evil and suffering and to condemn sexual desire as unnatural, contrary to divine will, and the result of human sin. On the other hand, the distinction between misdirected and properly directed desire upon which he based an entire theology is both important and helpful. Although Augustine gave women a subsidiary, less favored role within his theology, his acknowledgment of the power and the place of desire in religious life was psychologically and theologically insightful.

In the second creation account in Genesis 2-3, human desire itself is part of the goodness of creation, even if what humans desire and how they pursue their desires leads to ill and evil results. In this context, the act of the woman in taking and eating and offering the fruit of the tree to her husband is understandable. It is hard to see how the woman's response could have been otherwise. It is not the nature of her desire that is wrong, it is the degree and extent of it.

That Eve becomes carried away in her desire to "have it all" becomes clear in the three-part movement of the clause that describes the rationale behind her decision. She saw (1) "that the tree *was* good for food" and (2) "that it *was* a delight to the eye" (Genesis 3:6, emphasis added). Both are appropriate observations. They capture the appeal that fosters healthy desire. It is in the last clause that a deeper note of ambiguity creeps in and the moral scale tips.

She wants the fruit for yet another purpose. The woman saw (3) "that the tree was to be desired to make one wise," or, as the serpent has implied, to make one "like God." She knows she is wise; she wants to be wiser still, like God, omnipotent and complete. And "she took of its fruit and ate."

Lurking in her thoughts is a dissatisfaction with divine creation. She is not what she might be or could be, she suspects she could be otherwise, made better or wiser somehow. In the goodness of the human capacity "to desire" lies the penchant not just to desire, but to doubt, worry, covet, crave, envy, and forever increase what is desired. Desire for the rich goodness of created life gives way to a disregard for divinely-ordered limits on creation and a drive for invincibility.

Rather than the temptress, the source of evil and suffering, or the point of weakness, here the woman is "quintessentially human." "To be the curious one, the seeker of knowledge, the tester of limits," observes biblical scholar Susan Niditch, is to be "quintessentially human—to evidence traits of many of the culture-bringing heroes and heroines of Genesis." On this score, the woman assumes the role of central protagonist in the narrative, deliberating along the fault lines of sensual, intellectual desire. She is, in Niditch's words, "no easy prey for a seducing demon," but a "conscious actor choosing knowledge" and bringing in culture.²⁸ Yet desire carries the passionate human beyond the reasonable limits of human need and order as divinely created.

Why this exegesis? In this moment of Eve's deliberation, we see an intersection of relevant theological themes ignored in most treatments of "having it all," freedom, limitation, and the necessity for divine correction and redemption. Humans are created with a divine mandate to "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28). They are created to eat and to enjoy the delights of creation, to till the garden, to cleave to one another without restraint or fleshly shame. Yet in the midst of the garden of possibilities there are limits. These are not always obvious; they are sometimes arbitrary and even inherently tempting. In the narrative of Genesis 2, for example, Yahweh gives little explanation as to why the fruit of one tree rather than another must not be eaten.

The failure to recognize human limits is part of human sinfulness. And the failure to divide the responsibilities of creation and

procreation justly among women and men is a consequence of this. When such limits are transgressed, the naturally-given impulses for work and love become perverted, painful, beleaguered, and destructive. Inevitably, but not irredeemably, women who aspire in a positive sense to "have it all" go one step too far: their acquisitiveness turns being into having, sharing into owning, growing into getting. For many women and men, today's danger is not the struggle to choose "generativity (procreativity, productivity, creativity) over self-absorption and stagnation," identified by life cycle theorist Erik Erikson.²⁹ The prime crisis and task of contemporary adulthood in the United States is more often "generativity vs. fragmentation,"—that is, excessive self-extension, and exhaustion. In contrast to the problems of self-indulgence that he postulates, the problem is self-loss and the inability to establish just and appropriate limits to human desire. A prominent challenge and temptation of the adult stage of the life cycle is the lure of over-scheduling, over-commitment, over-extension. A consistent, sometimes boastful, complaint seems to cut across gender, class, race and age: not having enough time, being so terribly busy.

Just as North American society has denied death, the penchant to "have it all" refuses to acknowledge finitude. In adulthood one must focus one's generativity on a limited number of areas. Freedom to choose, to decide (in Latin *decidere*) means "to cut off." The perennial temptation is to refuse to relinquish what cannot be, to step beyond creation's boundaries, to seek more than can be humanly cared for, to want to become "like God" by "having it all." In this sense, no one can or should "have it all." "Having it all" is at heart a theologically misleading modern premise. The economics of buying and having, in Dorothee Soelle's interpretation, have inappropriately replaced "religion as 'the ultimate concern.'"³⁰ As a result, relationships are undermined, work is subverted, and desire is deadened.

Yes, "Daughters of Eve" who have desired too much have also glimpsed the new heaven and the new earth. They have recognized that work versus family, creation versus procreation, self-love versus love of others, self-fulfillment versus self-sacrifice are sets of "false alternatives." In Adrienne Rich's experience, the choice has

seemed to be between "love"—womanly, maternal love, altruistic love—a love defined and ruled by the weight of an

entire culture; and egotism—a force directed by men into creation, achievement, ambition, often at the expense of others, but justifiably so.³¹

In these terms, "Daughters of Eve" refuse to choose. In seeking ways in which "the energy of creation and the energy of relation can be united" (as they have seldom been in the history of masculine civilization) they reach for what may be the unreachable but redemptive possibilities of human livelihood.³²

Work and love are the essence and goal of human creation. All humans were created for good work and good love. Good work means "fruitful, enjoyable, rewarding work" not based on the commodification of the marketplace, but on attaining full personhood, relating to others, nature, and the world.³³ Good love preserves the subjectivity of the other and the human potential for mutuality. It expresses the human project of liberation, its wholeness in solidarity with others, with erotic, bodily love a symbol of the call to communion and children a God-given blessing. Humans are gifted with freedom, with worth and value as human beings created to work and to love. Human failure to work and to love thus leads to the question of the nature of human salvation. To hope for the elimination of "false alternative" is to hope for the "not yet," the coming of the kingdom in this world. In a way, then, even misplaced desire to "have it all" is attuned to the goodness of God.

In this sense, then, the desire to "have it all" is not wrong or evil in and of itself. The phrase has nipped at women's heels for decades, doggedly accusing "high-demand" women of wanting too much. "Daughters of Eve" have accordingly felt reprimanded, guilty and shamed like Eve, for their apparently inordinate desires. Economic and social structures have further made it seem that the possibility of some women "having it all" depends on the exploitations of other women to keep house, raise children, and service the elderly. Yet, while "having it all" is a cliché bogged down in racist, classist, sexist, and materialistic waters, the ideals of human worth, freedom, and fulfillment from which it sprung remain revolutionary.

A corrected interpretation of "having it all" must restore appropriate responsibility to men, local community institutions, the workplace, government, and public policy makers. Moreover, a corrected interpretation must grasp the nature of human desire in the best sense of God's intention, and will depend on God's

intervening grace to guide and correct human distortions in work and families. "Daughters of Eve" have discerned a hope at the heart of God's grace that blesses love and work as endeavors to be celebrated, shared, and safeguarded as part of human creation and redemption for both men and women. Women should not be blamed for their unrealistic expectations or their failure to work it all out, nor seen as fools or guilty of wanting too much when their problems are quite relative to a particular moment in history that has forced a false separation between paid work and family care, and an unnatural divorce between work and love which belong together. "Daughters of Eve" and their supporting men discern and practice a truth about human fulfillment which has religious and moral roots: they have made democratic, egalitarian relationships of justice and mutuality in the family and in the workplace a priority.

¹ Barbara Brotman, "And While You're at it, Get Started on the Pyramid," *Chicago Tribune*, 5 April 1994.

² Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, *Also a Mother: Work and Family as Theological Dilemma* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), 13.

³ Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, *For Her Own Good: 150 Years of the Experts' Advice to Women* (New York: Doubleday, 1978), 3.

⁴ Rosanna Hertz, *More Equal Than Others: Women and Men in Dual-Career Marriages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 4-5.

⁵ Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, trans. by Mark Ritter (London: Sage Publications, 1992), 103-50.

⁶ Arlie Hochschild, with Anne Machung, *The Second Shift: Working Parents and the Revolution at Home* (New York: Viking, 1989), 3-4.

⁷ Audrey B. Chapman, "Male-Female Relations: How the Past Affects the Present," *Black Families*, 2nd ed., ed. Harriet P. McAdoo (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1988), 190-200; Marian Wright Edelman, "An Advocacy Agenda for Black Families and Children," in *Ibid.*, 286-95;

Donald Matthews, "The Black Child as Social Problem," *Journal of Religious Thought* (Summer 1988): 70-78.

⁸ Evelyn Nakano Glenn, "From Servitude to Service Work: Historical Continuities in the Racial Division of Paid Reproductive Labor," *Signs* vol. 18, no. 1 (Autumn 1992): 1-43.

⁹ Marie Ferguson Peters, "Parenting in Black Families with Young Children: A Historical Perspective," in *Black Families*, 236-38 (228-41).

¹⁰ Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, "Let the Children Come," *Second Opinion* vol. 17, no. 1 (July 1991): 12 (10-25).

¹¹ Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Church and Family IV: Recapturing a Lost Issue," *New Blackfriars* (April 1984): 178 (170-79).

¹² Hochschild, *Second Shift*, 12.

¹³ Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Politics and the Family: Recapturing a Lost Issue," *Christianity and Crisis* (29 September 1980): 266 (261-66).

¹⁴ Sigmund Freud, "Female Sexuality," in *Sexuality and the Psychology of Love*, ed., with an intro. by Philip Rieff (New York: Collier Books, 1963), 200-201.

¹⁵ Marcia Westkott, *The Feminist Legacy of Karen Horney* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 54.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 50-51.

¹⁷ Louise Eichenbaum and Susie Orbach, *Understanding Women: A Feminist Psychoanalytic Approach* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 43-44.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 43-44.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 140.

²¹ Jessica Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination* (New York: Pantheon, 1988), 8.

²² *Ibid.*, 68.

²³ *Ibid.*, 24.

²⁴ Ibid., 82.

²⁵ Ibid., 114.

²⁶ Gail Scmoller, "'90s Choices: Balanced Life Preferred to 'Supersuccess,'" *Chicago Tribune*, 8 September 1991, Section 6, p. 1.

²⁷ Elaine Pagels, *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent* (New York: Random House, 1988), xix.

²⁸ Susan Niditch, "Genesis," in *The Women's Bible Commentary*, eds. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), 13-14. See also Phyllis Trible, "Eve and Adam: Genesis 2-3 Reread," in *Womanspirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion*, eds. Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 79 (74-83); Adrien Janis Bledstein, "The Genesis of Humans: The Garden of Eden Revisited," *Judaism* vol. 26, no. 2 (Spring 1977): 187-200.

²⁹ Erik H. Erikson, *The Life Cycle Completed: A Review* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1982), 67; *Childhood and Society*, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton, 1950, 1963), 267.

³⁰ Dorothee Soelle with Shirley A. Cloyes, *To Work and To Love: A Theology of Creation* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 118.

³¹ Adrienne Rich, *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose 1966-1978* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1979), 46-47.

³² Ibid., 43.

³³ Soelle, *To Work and To Love*, 76.

Protestantism and the Family

Reclaiming Space in Contested Terrain: The Role of the Congregation*

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Church and Family: A Good Habit?

The family is in a state of flux and congregations have an important role to play. Congregations and clergy have important connections with the most intimate moments in people's lives over the span of the human life cycle. Hence, they stand in a significant position of influence.

Going to church was what my mother called a "good habit." Although I recall little explicit church teachings on the family, beliefs about the family were enacted. I recall vividly my ten-year-old cognitive dissonance when the church voted to allow women as deacons and then elders. To young eyes adapted to all men marching down the aisles in dark suits, these women looked starkly out of place. Now this memory simply serves to remind me of the extent to which antipathy toward women and resistance to inclusivity and change is deeply embedded in our human psyche and social systems, including religious traditions.

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On the other hand, that we, my mother, father, brothers, myself, worshiped together honored the value of human vulnerability and connection within the family fold. Going to church was one of the primary activities we did as a whole family, with few other parallels. My parents' care for my brothers and me, however limited by their human foibles, was an essential context in which they practiced what they believed and I learned about the love of God. The rites of passage of church education, youth Sunday, church camp, communion, and most significantly, adult baptism were offered to me as equally as to my brothers, with no distinction based on my sex, verifying my place as a child of God within life and within the kingdom. Our congregation created a new and different kind of familial community oriented toward looking beyond individual, familial well-being and working together in the wider community for the common good. Different from school and neighborhood, in church I made friends and commitments I might not have otherwise.

This final lecture draws on a grid proposed in the final chapter of *Also A Mother* to suggest the kind of reflection and conversation that must begin to take shape both in the pastoral office and among people in congregations. Congregations have at least three distinct, but interrelated roles in addressing work and family as creative theological dilemmas: (1) a descriptive or pastoral role (this is how life is these days); (2) a normative or prophetic role (this is how life should be); and (3) a programmatic or proclaiming role (here are a few ways to get there). On the one hand, these activities cannot really be so sharply separated from one another. On the other hand, each act deserves its own delineated place.

While congregations must attend to important religious and ethical visions of the good life, they must avoid moving to this second action too quickly, before basic understanding is reached. This is a danger for many conservative and evangelical churches. At the same time, congregations must not forget about forging normative judgments on lifestyles. This is an equally tempting peril for many mainline congregations who wish to stress their openness and inclusivity, but then fail to adopt a clear position on critical family issues. Finally, dialogue must not remain at an esoteric or theoretical level, which is more the nature of the second normative step, while ignoring the third step of down-to-earth recommendations.

Congregations as Holding Environments

Congregations provide a fitting forum for listening and reflecting on the time pressures, work load, and dilemmas of families today. This first step, that of simply knowing the concerns that lie before members, exposes a few core problems: (1) the "conspiracy of silence," in Janet Fishburn's words, that enshrouds what happens in the family lives¹ and, I must add, the work lives of members, and (2) the apprehensions that surround really listening to the struggles, desires, and ideas of women.

Many mainline clergy and members have relegated family and work problems to the private realm. They seldom question deeply embedded conventions about family privacy and unwritten rules about what can and cannot be discussed. During "Joys and Concerns" in the small church worship service I attend, certain events like anniversaries, deaths, acceptable illness and hospitalizations are mentioned, but many authentic concerns such as divorce, infertility, abortion, domestic stress and violence, teen-parent conflicts, vocational conflicts and choices are taboo. As Fishburn points out, however, clergy can influence the topics of conversation in the congregation more than they know. Given the problems that most adults face, preaching on previously taboo crises of generativity is an utter necessity.

When I first suggested the idea of congregations as "holding environments," I was drawing on a concept used in my own training as a pastoral psychotherapist. The idea of "holding environment" was coined by D.W. Winnicott to refer to the potential of parents to provide a context in which a child's anger, frustration, and distress can find expression without losing the relationships upon which the child depends. On the best days, a good enough parent provides both space and freedom as well as limits and structure. A non-holding environment is either too intrusive or too distant and silent, and otherwise unreliable, frustrating, and discouraging.

Since proposing the term for this discussion, however, I have become more aware of its double and problematic meaning. The "holding environments" of families and congregations have also offered fertile ground for abuse. The benefits of a safe context for growth are turned into a situation in which the more powerful hold

the less powerful in ways that fundamentally disturb their healthy development. Second, Winnicott's view of the facilitating environment depends heavily upon the devoted attentions of what he dubs the "good-enough mother" who, in his descriptions, is oddly and unrealistically perfect in her ability to adapt to the child's need. This psychological theory has catered to the modern idealization and romantization of maternal capability and to the isolation and distance of fathers from their children.² These problems of abuse and dependency on women have also proven characteristic of some congregational "holding environments." Some have held women responsible for the holding. Some congregations have held too tightly and abusively.

Nonetheless, there is a real need to provide a "holding environment" in the best sense of the term, a safe, dependable, predictable, trustworthy, sustaining space that allows open communications about the current gender, familial, relational, marital, intergenerational, and vocational strife of everyday life for nearly everyone. Conversations initiated through study groups, workshops, retreats, growth groups, house-church gatherings, and sermons must include the voices of both women and men of different ages and must listen to peoples' concerns about the many changes in postmodern life-styles. They must look at present problems and at conventional answers, as well as the assumed religious doctrines.

In general, we tend to underestimate the immense anxieties that surround these issues, especially when changes in images of generativity, work, and family mean giving women new voice and authority, and diminishing the assumed priority and prerogatives of men and men's work. What happens when, as a woman in an editorial on abortion in *Christian Century* requested of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, we ask men "to retreat from public debate for a while"?³ What happens when we claim that only mothers can know certain things, or that fathers ought to enter the domestic world for a while? If nothing else, for many men women's equal participation in life remains an intrusion and a hassle. But more, the "sheer audacity," family theorist Morris Taggart honestly confesses, "of introducing a WOMAN as . . . commentator and fellow yearner" calls "everything . . . into question." "How can I deal with the anxiety," he reveals, "that comes from feeling like a guest in (what I had assumed was) my own house?"⁴

Some of the apprehension is also intergenerational. Most congregations are communities of many generations, and members are most resistant to changes of any kind that expose generational differences. Changes in gender relations today do just that. As in many congregations, two different groups characterize my congregation: those born after, and those born prior to World War II. By and large, the latter group assumes, even if its members do not practice, a homogeneous, unified moral code. Among other things, this moral code prohibits masturbation, premarital intercourse, extramarital intercourse, and homosexuality, and it discourages interracial marriages, divorce, and even discussion of suicide, adultery, children out of wedlock, and other misfortunes. The younger generation is less likely to be imbued with most of these same moral ideals, professing a relative acceptance for many, if not all, of the behaviors that those born before World War II forbid or dispute. For most of the younger people, "no moral issue had the kind of black-and-white clarity . . . that it had for those who came of age before 1960."⁵

People across the generations may never fully understand or accept the other's worldview. Just recognizing and talking aloud about the generational differences in beliefs about work and family, however, can go a long way in increasing understanding. This is particularly true in an aging congregation, with a young minister whose vocational, sexual, and familial choices differ. Usually, people prefer to operate as if nothing has changed. But a great deal has changed, and people must notice and talk about the overt and hidden value gaps. Older members must grant greater allowance and acceptance to younger members whose work and family lives follow new moral codes, in which sexual relations have changed, in which the woman is no longer the "Keeper of the Springs,"⁶ and in which unexpected, unheard-of complications arise. Greater awareness on the part of the younger generation of the ways in which the older members may take offense or experience disappointment is also needed.

When it comes to questions about work, love, and intimacy, psychology has operated as a quasi-religious, culture-forming body of knowledge. When people turn somewhere for help in solving dilemmas, they look less to church or synagogue and to sacred scriptures and theologians, and more often to the self-help

bookshelves, popular talk shows, and therapeutic interventions that the modern discipline of psychology has spawned. People are talking about dire family conflicts within the sanctuary of personal therapy, whether pastoral therapy or some other kind. This is one place where the most intimate family issues are not taboo and where people very often find convincing and helpful answers.

In many cases, this is a good thing. But, I would argue, one of the first responsibilities of the pastor, pastoral counselor, and pastoral counselee is to try to return some of this intimate conversation to the congregation where it also belongs. Talking in therapy was never intended as a replacement for public discussion, but in many cases, that has indeed been the case. By providing a "holding environment" separate from the congregation, something absolutely necessary because these issues were *not* being dealt with to any extent in congregations and perhaps could not be dealt with there, pastoral counseling has effectively robbed many congregations of some of the most highly-charged, emotionally life-giving material that the congregation actually needs to care for itself and the people in its spheres.

By saying "return this intimate conversation to the congregation," I mean encouraging *public* discussion of some of the problems which have been heretofore taboo for many congregations. In a word, pastoral counselors should encourage those whom they counsel to return to their congregations either to speak up about or to ask for discussion of some of the intimate dilemmas about which they seek therapy. Pastoral counselors have an obligation to disturb the "conspiracy of silence" that enshrouds what happens in the family lives and to break the unwritten rules about what can and cannot be discussed during "Joys and Concerns" in many typical worship services.⁷

Given the deep-seated nature of these apprehensions, pure rational discussion is inadequate to the task of intellectual and practical change. This kind of conversation is bound to be conflict-filled and challenging for most congregations used to hiding family tensions. Pastoral skills of good listening and mediating will be in high demand. Pastoral counselors ought to share what they have learned so well in individual and family therapy settings with the wider congregational life, that is, how to create and sustain a trustworthy "holding environment." Such communication will require

a level of engagement, conflict, and empathy that many mainline or oldline congregations and families are bound to find most trying. But, in many ways, what better place to have such a conversation than where people of many generations sit side by side in an institution which is situated between private and public spheres of life, where there are opportunities for informal gatherings of many shapes and sizes, and where people have moral traditions and scriptures to call upon as proven resources and as new visions?

Congregations as Communities of Prophets and Visionaries

Of course, talking about "how life is these days" will constantly push people to ask difficult normative questions about "how life should be." As the first step of listening, brainstorming, and holding has implied, a second, equally challenging and critical step for mainline congregations is to deliberate over moral values and visions. First of all, men and women need new ways to think about their commitments to work. Congregations have a crucial prophetic role to play in confronting the values of a materialistic "Protestant" work ethic that puts profits before people. Clergy and members know that there is more to life than money or they would not be worshiping. But just like Moses's people, religious people today need occasional or constant reminders, especially in America's gadget-oriented, product-hungry society. On this score, the needs of children must no longer be our lowest priority, jobs related to children our lowest status, worst paid positions, and caring for children something of little value. As bell hooks contends, we must guarantee the "right of children to effective child care by parents and other childrears," and the "restructuring of society so that women do not exclusively provide that care."⁸

Congregations must also begin to attend to, recognize, and proclaim the implicit connections between the interests of communities and families, and the interests of economics and politics. They need to critique social and economic norms of care that artificially separate public material productivity from private procreativity, nurturance, and tending, rewarding the former and disregarding and devaluing the latter. On a minor scale, they can value the latter and encourage people to try to adapt the work place to themselves and to the values of new life, nurturance, care, and

faith rather than adapting to male- and market-defined values, job schedules, and demands. I will mention some policy implications of this in a minute.

People also need new ways to think about their commitments to families. Congregations play an instrumental role in fostering parental inclinations, broadly conceived, and in widening the circles of caring labor. If parenting is an act of faith, and even a sort of ministry of service, congregations must assign value to what parents, and all those who offer care in other forms contribute, and must work to ease their burdens. Congregations can begin by simply talking about the use and abuse of power both inside and beyond their walls. This is a task to which most families and most congregations gave little, if any, time a few decades ago. Yet it is an invaluable step in human consciousness about relationships, freedom, and responsibility. There is much that can be said on this, from the power dynamics between children and adults within families and congregations (especially in terms of sexual abuse) to the power dynamics between husband and wife and mother and father. I limit my remarks to the latter.

If it is primarily or partly within the family and the congregation that children first come to have a sense of themselves, their relations with others, and their relations to God that is foundational to moral and spiritual development, then it makes all the difference in the world whether this experience is one of unequal altruism and one-sided self-sacrifice on the part of women and mothers, or of justice, mutuality, and reciprocity. Political scientist Susan Moller Okin makes this point powerfully in *Justice, Gender, and the Family*:

What is a child of either sex to learn about fairness in the average household with two full-time working parents, where the mother does, at the very least, twice as much family work as the father? What is a child to learn about the value of nurturing and domestic work in a home with a traditional division of labor in which the father either subtly or not so subtly uses the fact that he is the wage earner to 'pull rank' on or to abuse his wife? What is a child to learn about responsibility for others in a family in which, after many years of arranging her life around the needs of her husband and children, a woman is faced with having to provide for herself

and her children but is totally ill-equipped for the task by the life she agreed to lead, has led, and expected to go on leading?⁹

If children are to develop a commitment to love, justice, and just institutions, in particular, they must spend their formative years in an environment and in institutions in which love and justice are practiced, not in institutions that requires sacrifices of women that are not required of men. To Okin, I must add: The family is by no means the only place where injustice is learned and inordinate sacrifice is required, but it is one of the primary places. Families alone cannot institute equality in the tasks of caring labor in families when work structures, social institutions, and dominant ideologies all work against it. But if we want to liberate and transform lives, the redistribution of power in the contested terrain of the family is critical.

With children, the elderly, the sick, and others in need, self-giving is a necessary and inevitable part of life. But its unequal distribution between men and women is not. Mainline churches need to confirm this. They need to advocate greater justice between men and women in the home, as well as greater care in the workplace. This means changing distorted definitions of the "good mother" that equate goodness with self-sacrifice and dated definitions of the conventional family that rely so heavily on the domestic labors of women. It means praising the virtues of "good enough" mothers who give of themselves without losing themselves, and of "good enough" families and fathers who share the burdens between men and women as justly as possible.

In general, it will not be an easy task to debunk negative views of dependency and personal needs, and the high esteem with which most congregations and pastors still hold "disinterested love" and self-sacrifice. Nor will it be easy to challenge the inhumane, impersonal organization and pressures of almost all work environments and economic norms that put products and profits before persons. But, based on biblical and theological principles, congregations must participate in such movements. Of utmost importance, they must reclaim and offer new interpretations of biblical passages that have been wrongly used and abused by fundamentalist traditions to support oppressive gender relations, familial relations, and views of women. Resources that were not available even a few

years ago, like *The Women's Bible Commentary*, are now available and are invaluable in this process.

By recent definition, pastoral counselors provide a space where moral imperatives, that normally operate in congregational settings, can be relaxed and temporarily suspended for the sake of further understanding. Yet, if a counselor believes a democratic relationship better than a hierarchical, dominating, oppressive, or exploitative one and believes that position to be grounded within religious tradition, that counselor has a relative obligation to claim and articulate this position. I say "relative" because I am not arguing that the counselor force, or even subtly convince a counselee to adopt this position. I am arguing that where a counselor stands on the pivotal issue of gender justice has a necessary and unavoidable bearing on the outcome of the therapy, whether articulated or not. At this particular historical moment, it is better to articulate one's position. Although I am not advocating religious moralism about egalitarianism, I am well aware that a little moralism in this direction will still not do much to alter centuries lived under the moralisms of domination and submission.

Congregations as the Living Body

None of these discussions should be removed from the real life of the living body and the different needs of different parts of the body of believers. Discussions in the first two areas should always point toward a third movement of programming and restructuring, which will vary from community to community, depending on the circumstances. The following comments, therefore, are suggestive of some of the possibilities.

If there is one common theme that runs through the lives of many people, it is the "speed-up" and the strife over determining domestic and economic responsibilities amidst the pressures of a fast-paced, status-conscious technological society. The public-private split whereby men work and women love has been challenged, but, ultimately, it has not changed. This domestic division continues to isolate husbands and wives from each other, to exclude fathers from family attachments, and to restrict mothers from personal and public investments. This threefold internal "divorce" is often a

prelude to an official divorce, and it is at the heart of problems of many families today.¹⁰

Clergy and pastoral counselors should not be so afraid to talk in greater detail about what democratic relationships between men and women actually look like in real life. Many people are hungry for stories by which to live. They want to know how to share domestic and economic labors, particularly in a society that typically forbids such equal sharing. A pastoral counselor should not withhold viable ideas about the actual logistics of redistributing household chores, a demanding and time-consuming task for many couples. How can people change the division of labor inherent to conventional gender role definitions? What have people tried? What works and what doesn't? How can people change the division of domestic labors in the congregation itself, which continue to presume that women will run the Sunday School, coffee hour, nursery, funeral meals, and assume positions of leadership both in the congregation and the work world? What will it take to teach men to tend to the chores of relationships, domesticity, and children, and as important, to reclaim the values of caring labor for both men and women in a society driven by the marketplace that devalues the taking care of children, elevates material productivity, places in jeopardy those in significant care taking roles, primarily women, and forbids men serious concern over friends, children, family, and domicile?

Congregations themselves must model changes in the internal distribution of their own caring labors. Although it is most difficult to change actual programmatic structures, the restructuring of tasks previously divided along gender lines is important. Sunday school, for example, which is normally relegated to women, usually the mothers of the church, might be co-taught by female and male teams and who may or may not actually be parents. Youth and men's groups can help with coffee hour, potlucks, or funeral meals on as regular a basis as women's groups, or these tasks can be distributed in entirely different ways. Broadly speaking, congregations cannot continue to move women into new positions of authority without also valuing their former contributions, and urging men to take on some of these tasks. Congregations can also oppose the tendency of women to become "giving trees" by thinking twice before relying on women and mothers to do the necessary chores. They may need to allow

for an initial labor shortage among members and alter traditional programs and structures to accommodate the changed lives of many members.

Most women's work loads would be cut dramatically, however, if men made stronger commitments to children and families in the home. Congregations can oppose the social trends and conventional pressures that alienate boys and men from the activities of nurture, and even help them develop the skills required to care for the dependent needs of others. This means the mundane task of teaching the young, especially young boys and men, how to engage in egalitarian relationships, how to tend to the chores of children, relationships, and domesticity. Younger families might study what a healthy parental leave looks like, help people institute policies in their work places, and support men in their responsibility to make use of them. Women and men might debate the inevitable problems of egalitarian relationships and share their working strategies for distributing household chores, an accomplishment that can be most demanding and time-consuming for many couples. They might share strategies to undercut the heightened time-crunch and to limit and control the pressures of extracurricular activities, work, and career advancement in general.

Congregations also stand in a good place to help create "good enough" communities that ease the load by providing avenues of mutual aid, assure women other means of self-worth, and expand the network of caregivers essential to a child's health. A wonderful example is the Roman Catholic tradition of naming godparents who assume responsibilities for guiding, nurturing, and caring for children. Whatever happened to the religious tradition of "adopting" children in other religious communities? What has happened to the importance of images of adoption that figure so centrally in the relationship between Israel and God in general? These traditions merit resurrection. If churches are to be communities of people who "suffer with one another," as Herb Anderson contends, then they must work to offer living networks in which intergenerational relationships are cultivated, and parents are "relieved of sole responsibility" for the faith and development of their children. When this happens, argues Fishburn, it will be "easier to see that the American ideal of a self-sufficient family is not only impossible it is undesirable."¹¹

As an integral part of this third activity, congregations must seek to understand and, when appropriate, influence institutional and political decisions, policies, and legislation that support children, parents, and a variety of current family forms. In almost everything I read on the problems of work and families, similar proposals are offered, despite sometimes widely divergent political stances. If nothing else, congregations must become much more aware of the nature of these public policies and more adept at providing educational and supportive networks for securing necessary changes. Clergy and members need to consider seriously several measures before us.¹²

A reallocation of government priorities and resources is suggested. Policies for raising the personal tax exemptions allowed for dependent children, which have progressively eroded since 1948, and for spending less on military buildup and more on parenting and child care have been presented. Divorce laws have also come under closer scrutiny. Foremost in needed policies are the changes advocated by many people that would insure the economic well-being of children and mothers. Some propose making payments from the absent parent, often the father, a collection process, similar to Social Security taxes.

There are other public policy needs that are pressing. We need more "family friendly" work places. This means family leave policies, child care services, and flexible schedules and definitions of promotion. We need educational institutions that design their programs to affirm shared parenting and respond to the constraints of dual income families, single parents, stepfamilies, and commuter marriages. We need male participation in these institutions, and in other institutions, such as day care centers, so that children do not grow up thinking only women are demoted to these apparently less valued, less profitable tasks.

Until unjust domestic arrangements in which the primary burden rests on women are restructured, we must also find ways to protect the vulnerabilities of women and ensure equal benefit. Where the one person, usually the woman and mother, remains economically dependent on her spouse, Okin and others have suggested "equal legal entitlement to all earnings coming into the household,"¹³ with employers making out checks equally divided between the earner and the partner. The partner is thereby reimbursed for domestic services upon which both the earner and the employer depend.

Some of these proposals are more drastic than others. Some, like Okin's equal legal entitlement, have complicated and problematic implications, are open to abuse, and are based on a regrettable lack of trust between spouses. Some will take extensive work, planning, and funding, whereas others will, as Sylvia Hewlett likes to say, give us the "biggest bang for our buck," costing less now than the alternative consequences in the long run.¹⁴ All are designed, however, to alter conventional avenues of generativity in work and families for women, men, and children. Power inequities between women, men, and children will not change, other than through such consistent systemic reordering.

At the same time, as I said in my second lecture, none of these proposals will have much lasting impact without a deeper desire for change on the part of American men and women. None of these public policies will be very successful without a personal and cultural crusade to deconstruct and restructure mature adult generativity. As Catherine Keller puts it, the changes require "more than a few considerate shifts of rhetoric and lifestyle. What is required is nothing less than our lives."¹⁵ In the meanwhile, while no concrete steps, no strategies of intervention, no new support group will answer all the problems, many interim designs, when seen as part of a broader reconstruction of modern ideals of work and family, have a viability that demands their implementation. It is not just a strategic matter of sharing labors fairly. It is also a matter of reconsidering what it means to be a generative person in society at large.

In many cases, these three tasks or spheres of activity call for a much more directive style of intervention in people's lives than has been the typical non-directive counseling style advocated by those in pastoral and practical theology in the last several decades. In the conflicts over North American family models, structures, and dynamics, pastoral counselors cannot just sit back and listen. Although prescribing ideals before adequately understanding the problems is a peril to be avoided at almost all costs, oldline, reformist, and progressive pastoral counselors have a crucial obligation to forge a few bottom-line normative judgments on life-styles, and to get as clear as possible about their position on family issues.

While oldline Protestantism is reluctant to enter the fray of the culture war over the family, the battle will continue to determine North American images of the "good family" and the "good life," and religious belief will make a difference. In the culture war, the

influence of religious traditions on the family is quite a bit like the air we breathe and the gravity beneath our feet; we sometimes fail to notice how much we rely on them and how much force they really exert.

In the battle over who defines *the* Christian view, the sides are not equally well-organized and represented. Liberals are far more concerned with respecting diversity, racial, ethnic, gender, sexual, etc., than with arriving at a uniform family platform and theology. The press consistently gives greater coverage to conservation rhetoric on patriarchal family forms as representative of "Christian family values" rather than to the apparently out-of-fashion oldline Christian rhetoric of equality, justice, and acceptance.

Fair or not, the culture war over the definition of *the* Christian family continues. As sociologist Judith Stacey observes, we are living in the very midst of a "transitional and contested period of family history, a period *after* the modern family order, but before what we cannot foretell." We have come to a stage when the "logical progression of stages breaks down."¹⁶ These are perplexing times for Protestantism and family. If my reading of Christian history, of the paradoxes of "having it all," and of the role of congregational life is warranted, however, oldline, liberal Protestantism continues to have an important role to play.

¹ Janet Fishburn, *Confronting the Idolatry of Family: A New Vision for the Household of God* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991), 141.

² See, for example, D.W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (Tavistock, 1971), 141, where he writes that good-enough mothering "includes fathers, but fathers must allow me to use the term maternal to describe the total attitude to babies and their care. The term paternal must necessarily come a little after than maternal."

³ Susan Maloney, S.N.J.M., "Catholic Bishops and the Art of Public Moral Discourse," *The Christian Century* (May 9, 1990): 486.

⁴ Morris Taggart, "Epistemological Equality as the Fulfillment of Family Therapy," in *Women in Families: A Framework for Family Therapy*, eds., Monica McGoldrich, Carol M. Anderson, and Froma Walsh (New York: Norton, 1989), 110.

⁵ Fishburn, *Confronting the Idolatry of Family*, 30.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 141.

⁸ bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (Boston: South End Press, 1984), 23-24.

⁹ Susan Moller Okin, *Justice, Gender, and the Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1989), 23-24.

¹⁰ Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr. and Andrew Cherlin, *Divided Families: What Happens to Children When Parents Part* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 28-30, 46-49.

¹¹ Fishburn, *Confronting the Idolatry of Family*, 172, 174; cites Herbert Anderson, "Christian Themes for Family Living," *Dialog* 28 (Summer 1989): 172.

¹² See, for example, Elaine Ciulla Kamarck and William A. Galston, with essays by Robert J. Shapiro and Margaret Beyer, "Putting Children First: A Progressive Family Policy for the 1990s," (Washington, D.C.: The Progressive Policy Institute, September 27, 1990) 7-8, 21-33.

¹³ Moller Okin, *Justice, Gender and the Family*, 180-81.

¹⁴ Sylvia Ann Hewlett, *When the Bough Breaks: The Cost of Neglecting Our Children* (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 243.

¹⁵ Catherine Keller, *From a Broken Web: Separation, Sexism, and Self* (Boston: Beacon, 1986), 4.

¹⁶ Judith Stacey, *Brave New Families: Stories of Domestic Upheaval in Late Twentieth Century America* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), 18.

The Religious Culture of Southern Appalachia*

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This paper is by nature *impressionistic*. In a way, my remarks are a culmination of a quarter century of involvement with the people and culture of the Southern Highlands. I have chosen this part of Appalachia because I am personally familiar with this territory. Having taught at Lexington Theological Seminary in Kentucky for over twenty-five years, the geographical proximity has afforded me the opportunity to take students on travel seminars into the region. This has provided a "hands-on" experience for studying the culture and the people of the area. There is now a consortium of some forty-six seminaries offering traveling seminars, as well as providing other academic programs for the preparation for ministry in the mountains. This consortium is the most ecumenical effort in the States, and is called the Appalachian Ministry Educational Resource Center. I served on the original academic committee of this consortium. Over the years, a number of students at the Seminary have been from the mountains, and conversations with them have contributed to this paper. Also, for over a decade I was on the Appalachian Committee of the Christian Church in Kentucky which administered a program of ministry in the mountains in conjunction with the Division of Homeland Ministries of the Disciples of Christ. This paper is influenced by these years of involvement in the Southern

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