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A Louder Voice

We are excited to welcome Jeff Kemp as a Senior Fellow of the Marriage and Family Foundation for 2010. Coordinated with the strategy of the Marriage CoMission, Jeff will write, speak, and network to inspire others to join the movement to revitalize marriages and families in America.



Jeff's winsome style in articulating the value of marriage and how to strengthen relationships will be an asset to the whole Marriage Movement as we seek to engage our culture and shift public sentiment. As Jeff represents the work of thousands of marriage champions through his passion and creativity, we hope to have a louder voice in mobilizing people to the work of preparing, strengthening and saving marriages.

Marriage Movement Update from Jeff Fray

I wanted to pass on some of the distilled thoughts and ideas that are forming among our partners. With the framework that "ideas have consequences" in mind, there are three "idea pots" that I hope you will noodle on to help us bring more convergence of messaging and strategy in the marriage strengthening movement. It's simple stuff.

1. More Marriage Preparation - Goal: Make it as normal for engaged couples to think about marriage preparation as it is to think about wedding preparation. *Good marriage prep dramatically decreases the risk of divorce.* "Every church a marriage preparing church." "Investing in your wedding? Invest in your marriage too!" Expand this to include dating, i.e. pre-engagement preparation.
2. More Marriage Enrichment - Goal: Make it normal for couples to think that great marriages take work, they don't "just happen." "Every church a marriage strengthening

church." "It works if you work it."

3. More Marriages Saved - Goal: Make it normal for people to have more hope that marriages can be saved. "Every church a marriage saving church."

These three "idea pots" can hold most any activity and program in our Movement. Look for ways to align your own messaging and ministry to reflect these Marriage Movement goals. Harp on them... don't minimize the value of a simple mantra that promotes these ideas. For example, every church looking to grow marriage ministry needs to address these three issues with strategy and programming. Tweak the language, be creative, find phrases that you like, but contribute your voice for these ideas.

Jeff Fray

2010: Four City Focus

In 2010, the Marriage CoMission will focus on activating sector networks, resources, and partners to support the community priorities of four cities: Amarillo, TX ([High Plains Coalition](#)), Columbus, GA ([Right from the Start](#)), Northwest Arkansas ([NWA Healthy Marriages](#)), and Richmond, VA ([First Things First of Greater Richmond](#)). These community marriage initiatives (CMIs) represent a powerful strategy for revitalizing marriages and families and are also a great investment point for sector group resources. Our primary sector groups (Church, Community Mobilization, Corporate, Marriage Services, and Media) are eager to serve into the cities. Eric Garcia of AMFM and Julie Baumgardner of First Things First are leading the charge in the partnership of the sectors and cities.

Stay tuned for more on this dynamic process!

Churches Host Live Event for Couples

Focus on the Family will hold its second annual [Focus on Marriage Simulcast](#) on Saturday, February 27, 2010. The simulcast offers a unique spiritual perspective, inspiring testimonies of saved marriages, and simple ways for couples to get involved in helping others. Churches can still register to host the event and give couples in their communities the opportunity to hear from [relationship experts](#) such as:

- Gary Thomas, author of *Sacred Marriage*
- Gary Chapman, author of *The Five Love Languages*
- Les & Leslie Parrot, authors of *Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts*
- Francis Chan, author of *Crazy Love*
- Stephen Kendrick, co-author of *The Love Dare*
- Kirk & Chelsea Cameron, lead actor in *Fireproof*

Read the great comments on [last year's simulcast](#) and join us!



Report on National Marriage Week Webinar for Pastors

Churches have a huge role to play in the revitalization of marriage and family in America. Wednesday's webinar (Jan. 13), hosted by the [Let's Strengthen Marriage](#) campaign and [nationalmarriageweekusa.org](#), was packed with articulate speakers, excellent research and great ideas to help churches mobilize in support of marriages and families.

Here are some tidbits:

- [Miles McPherson](#), from [The Rock Church in San Diego](#), spoke about the joy of renewing his vows to his wife on their 25th wedding anniversary last fall and how he is burdened to help couples.
- [Sammy Rodriguez](#), of the [National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference](#), described how he is encouraging the more than 37,000 Hispanic congregations in the USA to prioritize ministering to marriages and families.
- [Brad Wilcox](#) and [Elizabeth Marquardt](#) shared the stunning statistics that document the decline of marriage and family and its resulting consequences in succinct, relevant chunks for use by pastors.
- [Chuck Colson](#) ([Prison Fellowship](#)) spoke about the connection between family structure and crime.
- [Chuck Stetson](#) highlighted the [Marriage Index](#) as a powerful tool to measure how marriage is doing and encouraged churches to focus on marriage preparation and enrichment to reverse the discouraging trends.

And that's just the first half! The [webinar recording and powerpoint slides](#) are a valuable resource for helping others catch the vision of the powerful part churches can play in revitalizing marriages and families (webinar is 1 hour in length).

Galatians 6:6 Retreat at WinShape

Senior pastor couples are invited to attend a Galatians 6:6 Retreat on Feb. 8-10 at [WinShape Retreat](#) in Rome, GA. This free retreat is designed to encourage pastor couples personally and in their ministry.

The [Galatians 6:6 brochure](#) has all the details.



If you are not within driving distance of Rome, GA, [please click here to see a national listing of Galatians 6:6 Retreats](#). If you are interested in bringing a Galatians 6:6 Retreat to your community, please send an email to andrea@marriagecomission.com.

Those who are taught the word of God should provide for their teachers, sharing all good things with them. Galatians 6:6 NLT

Chuck Colson on Marriage

Colson's January 14 Breakpoint column featured why he's passionate about marriage:

- "Every time I set foot inside a prison, I see the results of splintered families."
- "I firmly believe that if we strengthen marriages and make traditional marriage a priority, we will keep untold thousands of children from ever going to prison."
- "By strengthening marriages, we will also keep many children from living in poverty."
- "Marriage is a "wealth-generating institution," which provides married couples with the economies of scale, responsibilities, and support necessary to thrive financially."

[Click here](#) to see how he is encouraging churches to be a part of National Marriage Week. Consider using some of these great quotes when reaching out to pastors and congregations on the importance of strengthening marriages.

If you have any questions or needs, please contact Andrea Lee at andrea@marriagecomission.com or 404-775-8808.

Thanks!
Marriage CoMission