

*Compliments of  
The Organizers*

# Highlights

OF THE  
NATIONAL CONFERENCE  
ON FAMILY LIFE

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*Washington, D. C.*

May 5, 6, 7, 8, 1948

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**History**

In 1944 the American Home Economics Association began to work on the idea of a conference composed of national organizations with programs directly affecting the American home and family. The National Planning Association was asked to call meetings of lay, professional, and government groups, and from these a Steering Committee was formed. The work of the committee was financed by The Woman's Foundation, which group continued to be the main support of this Conference. In June 1946, more than 100 organizations joined in the request to President Truman to call such a national meeting. The President gave his "wholehearted concurrence in the objectives" and said, "I shall be glad to extend to such a Conference as you are planning the courtesy of the White House as a place of meeting and as evidence of my official and personal interest."

**Financial Support**

The Conference has had broad financial support entirely from private groups. Five foundations, eleven corporations, thirty-five sponsoring groups, and twenty-three individuals have contributed.

**Purpose**

The general purpose of the Conference was to discover specific means by which the American family may be strengthened for the benefit of its individual members and society.

It examined the modern postwar family, attempted to analyze the problems confronting it as a unit, and sought to present solutions to these problems.

It developed programs of action aimed at achieving greater security for the family and its members, including mental and emotional as well as physical and economic security.

More specifically, the Conference was concerned with such matters as:

1. The importance of successful family living in the practice of democracy.
2. The environment and daily activities (housing, nutrition, child care, etc.) and the stability of families.
3. Defining desirable objectives toward which the family may move in attempting to improve its individual and group living.
4. Surveying and planning kinds of community resources that strengthen families, and suggesting ways of coordinating and making use of them.
5. The use of the resources of education for the development of satisfactory family life for persons of all ages.
6. The training of professional workers in the fields of marriage and family life education, research, counseling and related services.

#### Pre-Conference Reports

The preparation of reports for the Conference was done by two background-area committees and ten action-area committees. One background committee prepared an extensive report of factual and statistical matters on the contemporary American family. The second background committee prepared a comprehensive report on the dynamics of family interaction.

The action-area committees prepared individual reports on community participation, counseling and guidance, economic welfare, education, health and medical care, home management, housing, legal problems, recreation, and social welfare.

Shortly prior to the Conference, these twelve reports were summarized in a mimeographed document known as the "Working Papers," and sent in advance to all delegates attending the Conference.

#### Attendance

Over 1,000 persons attended the sessions of the Conference. Business and industry, agriculture, labor, youth, etc., were represented. A total of 29 different professions had representation. There were delegates from all but four states in the Union and from Hawaii. In addition, 28 foreign countries sent participant-guests to the Conference.

#### General Program

May 5, 5:00 p.m. RECEPTION, *The White House*,

THE PRESIDENT AND MRS. HARRY S. TRUMAN

Representatives from Sponsoring Committee and Business Advisory Committee, Board of Trustees, Technical Advisory Committee, and Program Committee Chairmen

8:00 p.m. PLENARY SESSION, *Departmental Auditorium*,  
ERIC A. JOHNSTON, Presiding

*Conference Orientation*, Ernest G. Osborne

*Family Economics: Trends in Social and Economic Patterns*,  
Ewan Clague

*The Dynamics of Family Interaction*, Lawrence K. Frank

May 6, 9:00-11:15 a.m. SECTION MEETINGS—THE BEGINNING FAMILY\*

12:15 p.m. SPECIAL SESSION, *Departmental Auditorium*  
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

2:00-5:00 p.m. SECTION MEETINGS—THE EXPANDING FAMILY\*

8:00 p.m. PLENARY SESSION, *Lisner Auditorium*  
BORIS SHISHKIN, Presiding

*Dealing With Forces of Disintegration in Family Life*, Charles S. Johnson

Julius Schreiber, M.D., Panel Leader

Jane M. Hoey  
Coleman Woodbury

Judge Paul W. Alexander  
Daniel Blain, M.D.

Howard Lane

May 7, 9:00-12:00 noon SECTION MEETINGS—THE CONTRACTING FAMILY\*

2:00-5:00 p.m. REPORT MEETINGS — THE CONSIDERATION OF ACTION AREA REPORTS

Community Participation  
Counseling and Guidance  
Economic Welfare  
Education  
Health and Medical Care

Home Management  
Housing  
Legal Problems  
Recreation  
Social Welfare

8:00 p.m. PLENARY SESSION, *Lisner Auditorium*

MRS. OSWALD B. LORD, *Presiding*

*Utilizing the Strengths of Family Life*, Eduard G. Lindeman

Alice V. Keliher, *Panel Leader*

Mrs. L. W. Hughes

Evelyn M. Duvall

Reginald A. Johnson

Warren D. Bowman

Boris Shishkin

May 8, 9:00-12:00 noon PLENARY SESSION, *Lisner Auditorium*

ERIC A. JOHNSTON, *Presiding*; MARGARET MEAD, *Moderator*

*Our Role in Strengthening Family Life:*

Education, Mary Fisher Langmuir

Labor, George M. Harrison and Kermit Eby

Agriculture, Mrs. J. Homer Remsberg

Medicine, Leslie Hohman, M.D.

Social Work, Stanley Davies

Business, Earl Shreve

Community Participation, James Armstrong

\*Twenty-nine section meetings focussed on the same developmental stage of the family were held simultaneously. Each Conference member was arbitrarily assigned to a section according to his interest and/or technical qualification, thereby assuring to each group a cross section of all viewpoints represented at the Conference.

#### SECTION MEETING CHAIRMEN

1. Mr. James Armstrong
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4. Dr. Charles Bish
5. Dr. Henry Bowman
6. Dr. Theron H. Butterworth
7. Dr. Ralph Eckert
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24. Miss Norma Sims
25. Dr. Robert L. Sutherland
26. Dr. Harold Trigg
27. Mrs. Ben Wailes
28. Mrs. Pauline Wilson
29. Miss Myra Woodruff

#### Suggestions and Recommendations

By ERNEST G. OSBORNE

*Program Coordinator*

The task of bringing together the highlights of the National Conference on Family Life is not as simple as it might seem. First, no official recommendations were made, no resolutions passed. Second, recommendations though implicit in reports, either of action areas or of section meetings, were not spelled out. Third, suggestions or recommendations which are concrete and objective enough to be easily formulated may not be nearly as basic as certain more subjective ones. One can suggest that reforms in legal procedures be made, that more adequate housing be provided, that courses on marriage and family life be given. These and other such suggestions are important; but more important is the basic philosophy, the attitude toward human beings that pervades or should pervade all such activities. When one attempts to communicate such a philosophy or to develop ideas for programs that will forward these more subtle, subjective but important factors, a sense of inadequacy is felt.

But, withal, it seems worthwhile to bring together from the section meetings, the action area reports and the speeches made, the assumptions as to what should be done, what next steps may well be taken, what sort of practical experimentation is needed. If there seem to be important proposals that are omitted, such omissions are largely due to the fact that the proposals were not clearly stated in any written material available.

A word should be said, perhaps, about some of the follow-up activities that have already taken place. Within a week after the close of the conference, the State Advisers of the Future Homemakers of America and the New Homemakers of America had received from the U. S. Office of Education a seven page list of "Suggestions for the FHA and the NHA Program of Work Based on the Highlights of the National Conference on Family Life." Individual representatives of various sponsoring organizations reported having made recommendations for the consideration of their organizations. Several follow-up conferences have been held, one of specialists in Family Life Education of Agricultural Extension in Washington,

one Midwest Regional meeting of professional workers in the Chicago area, and a number of others.

Some of the best news comes from the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. This organization, with its 5,000,000 members, is initiating a program which will give much greater emphasis to family life than has been true of its program in the recent past. The National Committee on Parent Education and the National Council on Family Relations have already been asked to help in the development of training for lay leaders. It is expected that the resources of other professional organizations will also be called upon for help in the development of the program which is to be launched this coming fall. Articles based on Conference material continue to appear in newspapers and magazines. The Conference publicity has been hailed as outstandingly effective from an educational point of view.

But again, the forward look is most important. In what ways will individuals and organizations, local communities and states, the national government itself, be able to contribute effectively to better family living? It is hoped that the suggestions briefly outlined below will stimulate the action that will determine whether the time, effort, and money that went into the National Conference on Family Life was worthwhile. Obviously, not all of the suggestions will be appropriate for each organization. Policies and programs differ. Others not mentioned may well be developed. *The important thing is that there be some more definitely family-centered concerns and family-centered programs developed in an increasing number of agencies of our society.*

#### **1. Needs of Individual Family Members Calling for some Form of Community Action**

Obviously, the following suggestions are but representative of the many family relationships which need the helping hand of some community program if they are to meet most adequately the needs of individuals involved. It is all right to tell a father that he should do more things with his family or a mother that she should develop interests of her own, but in too many instances the lack of facilities, of opportunities, is a major stumbling block. In the development of any services that may possibly be of aid to the family, the family inter-relationships implied here should be kept constantly in mind.

#### **1. MOTHERS**

- a. Opportunities should be given for part-time work both remunerative and voluntary. In addition to the economic factor, the emotional significance of maintaining and developing real interests outside immediate family concerns is great. Pressures should be put on industry, service agencies, and the professions to provide such opportunities as one contribution to the health of family life.\*
- b. More qualified part-time domestic help should be available. Schools, Y. W. C. A.'s and other similar organizations should continue to build a new emphasis on the social value of competent home assistants. The problem of "baby-sitting" is one important aspect.
- c. Further development of community services to home-makers, and to the whole family should be explored. At present, diaper service, community laundries under commercial auspices, frozen food stores, and other similar services are but the beginning of possible community services to the home-maker.

#### **2. FATHERS**

Development of more activities which draw the father back into active family membership should be emphasized. Father-son banquets and other similar "single shot" activities have their place but need to be supplemented by more thorough-going projects. Parent-teacher associations, school staffs, church leaders, and those in similarly strategic positions can do much to rehabilitate the father as an actively functioning family member. Current economic and social developments tend to draw him out of the home. Strong counteracting programs are needed.

\* Some of the participating organizations—notably the Catholic groups—disagree with this recommendation. They recognize that mothers ought to participate to a reasonable degree in community affairs, but they are strongly opposed to any recommendation which would encourage mothers, and particularly the mothers of growing children, to leave the home, even on a part-time basis to engage in remunerative occupations. Far too many mothers, because of economic necessity, are already engaged in outside occupations. Basic economic reforms are urgently needed to make it possible for more and more of these women to give their undivided attention to their primary calling—the making of a fully rounded home. Current sociological studies indicate that one of the major causes of juvenile delinquency is the absence of mothers from the home. Similar studies indicate that this is also one of the causes of divorce and broken homes.

### **3. CHILDREN**

There should be provision through school, church, recreational center or other agencies, of situations in which the child of a particular age group may have experiences with other youngsters both of his own age group and with those older and younger. This service is necessary because of the current scarcity of large families, which automatically provided such experiences.

### **4. YOUNG PEOPLE**

- a. Provision of more opportunities for the participation of young people in community activities should be made. At this age when abilities are rapidly developing, far too often there are no realistic opportunities for their use. More community committees would do well to include, in their active membership, representatives of this age group. One basic reason for the "youth problem" is that there are so few socially significant roles for him to play in family, church, school, or community.
- b. Provision of facilities and services which will facilitate effective and wholesome courtship should receive attention. Crowded homes and cities and lack of other desirable centers drive young people into undesirable "joints" for much of their "dating." Churches and community centers may well explore possibilities of providing arrangements acceptable to young people in the process of developing the intimate kinds of friendship which may lead to marriage.

### **5. THE AGING**

It has been suggested that some sort of cooperative housing might be one effective solution to the problems which aging parents and their children increasingly face. Whether or not such a solution offers much, the importance of a fuller life for older people is great. Again, no entirely satisfactory situation is likely to develop if all responsibility is left to individual families. Community services must play their part. Continued employment, recreation, a sense of belonging, and many other factors must be considered in the development of a rounded program for these older members of our society.

## **II. Programs or Activities Believed to Need Special Emphasis**

*Note:* A number of the suggestions listed below might be included in Unit I and vice versa. It should be recognized that the inter-

relationship of factors affecting the family is such as to defy precise and nice organization. Again, as with Unit I, the suggestions presented are only indicative of some of the programs needed if the American culture is to support American families in discharging obligations which society expects from them.

### **I. SUBSIDIES TO FAMILIES**

In a number of the section meetings various aspects of some form of family subsidy were mentioned. It was noted that, though family subsidies have not been looked on with favor in the United States in theory, a number of forms have developed. The G. I bill, it was pointed out, was to a considerable degree a form of family subsidy, since nearly one-fourth of those students receiving government aid for further study have families of their own.

Some section meetings reported that in the experience of their members there seemed to be a growing number of parent subsidized marriages. Other types of indirect subsidy from government, industry, and family were discussed.

Whether it would be for the welfare of American families to inaugurate some more universal, government-sponsored and supported system, seemed to be a moot question. Many felt that there should be more information as to the psychological factors involved in subsidy plans carried out in other countries. Others felt that in spite of our traditional opposition to such subsidy, there should be widespread discussion on the local level of what may be involved.

### **2. COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE**

With only a few dissenting voices, those attending the Conference emphasized again and again the crying need for more and adequate family counselors. They believed that the school, the welfare agency, the church, industry, the special youth-serving organizations and, indeed, every group in intimate contact with the family should provide opportunities for family members to get help through counseling in solving the many problems with which modern life confronts the family.\*

\* Those organizations which questioned the advisability of making a general, over-all recommendation in favor of family counseling—e.g., the several Catholic organizations—are not in any way opposed to family counseling as such if it is carried on by competent agencies and for the right objectives. (Footnote continued on page 10)

It was stressed that organizations in the local community genuinely concerned with the welfare of families should work toward the development of family counseling services where they do not exist, and for their support and extension where they have been established. It was felt that though a great deal must be expected from the universities, schools of social work, medical and theological schools, and other organizations now training counselors, there are many ways in which local resources can be more effectively used toward the provision of counseling for all who should make use of it.

### 3. EDUCATION

It was only natural that, since the largest number of individuals from any one professional group was to be found in one or another kind of educational enterprise, there would be considerable stress put on the responsibility of education for improved family living. Interestingly enough, it was reported that in many of the section meetings people representing fields other than education were among the strongest advocates of more extensive programs of education for marriage and family living.

There was strong emphasis on the desirability of providing more opportunities for children of elementary school age, for youth of high school and college age, and for adults to develop the kind of understandings of self and of relationship to others that will contribute to the strength of and satisfaction in family living. Reports from all parts of the country as to the expressed need for this sort of education were made.

It was pointed out that greater use should be made of parents in the initial steps of planning and developing such courses. Nor was it believed that efforts along this line should be limited to the schools. The churches, family service and youth-serving agencies, independent adult education groups and parent-teacher

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In fact, they encourage the development of responsible programs of guidance with due emphasis on religious and moral training as well as on psychological and other factors involved in the family relationship. They maintain, however, that too often, in practice, family counseling, as we know it in the United States, includes the recommendation of practices which, according to the basic tenets of these organizations, are unethical and destructive of sound family living—e.g., contraception. These organizations are therefore unwilling to recommend the widespread extension of family counseling services unless they can be reasonably certain that such counseling, especially when it is conducted under public auspices, will foster rather than run counter to the Christian concept of sound family living.

associations were named as among the groups that could well sponsor and carry on family life education.

The continued need for sex education came in for its share of attention. In spite of the striking development during the last quarter of a century, Conference participants pointed out that youth as well as parents were asking that this particular phase of education for better family living be stressed. In general, it was felt that a "broad" approach was desirable rather than one which focussed on the biological aspects only. By "broad" it was meant that the social and psychological backgrounds of relationships between the sexes should be thoroughly explored.\*

The continuing tendency to provide education for family living primarily for girls and women was deplored. It was felt that even in the areas of home management boys as well as girls should be given training and experience. There were strong recommendations that boys and men be considered in the development of all family life education programs.

The need for instructional aids—more functional texts and pamphlets, visual and auditory materials of all sorts—was emphasized. The need for all groups interested in education for marriage and family life to experiment in the development of useful materials was discussed at some length in certain section meetings. The committee responsible for the preliminary report on the use of radio, movies, magazine and newspaper fiction and articles plans to continue its study.

### 4. HEALTH AND MEDICAL CARE

In reports and discussions on health and medical care, there was emphasis on the need for more adequate education of family members in the basic facts of human biology, of human nutrition, and of accident prevention. It was felt that programs of prepa-

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\* The Catholic organizations participating in the Conference sounded a warning against the wrong type of sex education. They recognize the need for a certain wholesome minimum of sex education, graduated to meet the changing needs of different age groups. They emphasize, however, that, if only because of the delicacy of the subject, sex education, wherever possible, is best carried on within the intimate circle of the family itself. Whenever it is necessary to supplement the instruction given in the home by further instruction in the school, uncommon precautions should be taken to guarantee an atmosphere of modesty and wholesome reticence and to guard against the imparting of unethical attitudes. These organizations also warn against attaching an exaggerated and unrealistic importance to the value of sex education as such. Sex education of itself, unless buttressed with sound moral and religious training, is capable of doing more harm than good.

ration for marriage should be broadly based on the cooperative efforts of home, school, church, and the medical profession. Health care was discussed with special reference to fertility and sterility, pregnancy, infancy, childhood, and old age; and there was explicit recognition of the social and economic factors involved. The consensus was that adequate food, housing, and medical care should be available to all families without regard to race, color, creed, or economic status. By and large, the discussion was controversial only with reference to the topics of medical care insurance and of contraceptive advice in marriage counseling.\*

#### 5. RECREATION

Among the many things discussed, the value of more family-centered recreation in a society where multiplicity of organizations often draws family members out of the family circle was noted. Both staff and member representatives of youth-serving organizations reported heightened interest in the development of the family emphasis in their programs. It was urged that parents' participation in program development be enlisted.

As a part of the activities of youth-serving agencies, more adequate orientation of leaders in the dynamics of family life—the ways in which attitudes and behavior are affected, was urged. It was also felt that in addition to family-centered recreation activities, such organizations could well help in the conscious preparation of youth for better family living. Increase of counseling facilities as well as group discussions centering on aspects of family living was recommended.

It was hoped that cooperation among the various youth-family-centered programs would increasingly be promoted at national, state, and local levels.

#### 6. HOUSING

In reports and discussions it was urged that there be a more active participation of those concerned with family values in

pressure for housing suited to satisfying family living. Housing experts and other interested professional and lay persons pointed out that present housing developments were saddling hundreds of thousands of families with quarters largely inadequate for healthy family development. Excessive costs, constricted quarters, flimsy construction, poor arrangements were all mentioned as current developments which should be strongly resisted. With few exceptions, those who turned their attention to the housing aspect of family life stressed the need for more rental housing and approved of the provisions of the Taft-Ellender-Wagner bill. Attention was also focussed on the great variety of both rural and urban dwellings needed to fit the different stages of family life—the beginning family, the expanding family, and the contracting family.

#### 7. LEGAL PROVISIONS

The dramatic report of the American Bar Association-appointed committee met with a warm reception on the part of most Conference attendants. The three specific recommendations were:

- a. That the President of the United States be asked to appoint a Commission to reexamine the laws regulating marriage and divorce and legal procedures in divorce cases.\*
- b. That the Conference urge establishment of family and juvenile courts presided over by specialist judges and having adequate quarters, staffs, and budgets.
- c. That the Conference urge immediate extension of legal aid offices and low cost legal services.

Since the Conference as such was pledged not to pass resolutions, the Legal Committee's resolutions will be submitted to sponsoring organizations and to local community groups for any action deemed advisable. One approach is to apprise local and state bar associations of the substance of the report and to urge

\* The participating Catholic organizations point out that divorce legislation in some of the states is so lax as to make a mockery of the institution of matrimony and to be a cause of serious scandal to the rest of the civilized world. The current divorce rate in the United States, they add, is an infallible indication of the lowering of our moral standards and ought to be regarded by all who are interested in the future of the American family as a very critical danger signal. Any move toward the reform of our divorce legislation ought to start from the principle that the marriage bond is indissoluble and that it is the duty of the state to do everything possible to defend the bond and to preserve the stability of family life.

that appropriate steps be taken to bring about consideration of ways in which legal practices and codes can more effectively serve the family and its members than has hitherto been the case.

#### 8. TRAINING FOR LEADERSHIP

In a number of section meetings, and particularly in the Counseling and Guidance, the Education, and the Home Management Action Area Committees, the need for effectively trained leadership—both lay and professional—was stressed. Interest in the field of marriage and family relations has out-grown available trained leadership. While colleges, universities, and schools of social work may still have major responsibility in providing this leadership, local communities and professional organizations are also faced with a challenge. It is hoped that serious consideration will be given by many groups both to the improvement of present leadership and to the enlisting and training of new people in the field.

#### 9. FEDERAL RESPONSIBILITY

One noteworthy characteristic of both Conference reports and meetings was the unwillingness to shift to the national government *major responsibility* for the improvement of American family life. Stress was put throughout on the significance of voluntary effort through such organizations as were represented in the sponsoring agencies. It was felt, too, that local agencies, schools, churches, and other family-serving groups should focus major effort on development of activities designed better to serve family needs.

It was recognized, however, that in several respects Federal Agencies had major roles to play. The value of the contribution of information-gathering bureaus was evident through the fine contribution made to Conference reports. The necessity of active Federal effort to provide certain aspects of social security and health services was clearly recognized. Realistic acceptance of the basic effects of healthy or unhealthy economic conditions on family life was emphasized throughout. It seemed obvious that many of the factors determining economic conditions could only be dealt with at the national level.

It was suggested in one group that a Federal Department of Family Life would be desirable—one which might draw together interests and activities now scattered among a number of different agencies.

Sponsoring organizations are urged to keep in touch with national developments—legislative and otherwise—which directly or indirectly affect the welfare of the family. Conference participants were convinced that intelligently conceived pressures should play an important part in the nature of developments at the national level.

#### 10. PUBLICITY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

It is urged that interpretation of the needs, interests, and problems of families be constantly kept in the forefront of public consciousness. Publicity activities of the National Conference on Family Life have already set a pattern for continued efforts of national organizations and of local groups.

It is hoped that committees on community, state, and local levels will plan and carry through a continuing program of public education designed to create intelligent awareness of and interest in *the significance of family relations* as well as the activities of their own organizations.

Radio, television programs, newspapers, and magazines are all anxious for good materials on family relations and child development. Workers in the field should make special efforts to "feed" sound and interesting information to these mass media.

The use of advertising in the interest of education is a distinct and desirable aim. Each year the National Advertising Council publishes a series of public service "ads" devoted to some non-commercial cause. Individual firms have contributed institutional advertising devoted to child behavior or child welfare. Local firms may well be persuaded that it is good business for them to do likewise. Professional workers can offer to serve as consultants in the development of such advertising and thereby reach a much wider public.

#### 11. NEED FOR RESEARCH

Perhaps partly as a result of the voluminous materials prepared for the Conference, it was widely recognized that concerted effort is necessary to make full use of the knowledge that we have already accumulated. But even more universal was the feeling that individuals, organizations, and communities should encourage in every field the basic research which is necessary to increase our knowledge, equipment, and skills for dealing with problems of family living in modern, complex society.

## 12. COMMUNITY WIDE COORDINATION

If any one phase of the National Conference on Family Life received more approval than others, it was the opportunity afforded people from varying disciplines and backgrounds of experience to think and plan together. For many, it was the first time that they had discussed matters related to marriage and family living save with their own professional colleagues, or within their own lay groups.

The inter-twining ways in which the life of the family is associated with community organizations would seem to call for cooperative planning and effort on the part of these organizations. One must recognize realistically that there is often rivalry for the support and participation of people in the community. On occasion even churches feel the pinch of competition from other organizations serving the family socially, educationally, or recreationally. It would appear, however, that groups and individuals sincerely interested in being of maximum service to the family must work through these difficulties and develop cooperative and coordinated programs.

The whole process of community organization needs thorough-going exploration. It has been suggested that local communities should attempt to share with one another the fruits of efforts in community planning and action. One of the most strategic points at which continued and energetic effort is needed is that of home and school cooperation. Sad to say, in community after community, there is a decided gulf of misunderstanding, indifference, and active antagonism between teacher and parent, home and school. No more important contribution to satisfying family life can be made than that which comes out of friendly, understanding, and cooperative effort on the part of these two groups so definitely affecting the lives of children. Neither is wholly adequate to the task of building the desirable emotional climate in which wholesome personal growth takes place. The church and other community agencies, tax-supported—as city health departments, park departments, etc.; and voluntary—as Y. M. C. A.'s, Girl Scouts, Family Service Agencies, etc.; play their significant roles too. In some communities there are Councils of Social Agencies which can give the needed leadership. But only coordinated planning and action on behalf of the family and its members can result in each group making its maximum contribution.

Chairman Eric A. Johnston, at the final session, urged the establishment of Community Family Life Councils. He was not proposing a new operating agency by such a suggestion but a channel through which organizations already serving families, professionals contributing to the health and educational well-being of family members, and lay groups concerned with aspects of family life might pool their experience and resources.

Any individual or organization is a potential catalytic agent as far as community organization is concerned. One caution at least should be mentioned. In working toward any type of co-operation, those whose participation is desired should be enlisted in the early stages of planning and not be invited to membership in an already going organization.

In an increasing number of smaller communities and in larger cities some type of neighborhood coordinating group of those agencies and individuals interested in the promotion of better family living has been set up. Every effort should be made to develop a large number of such groups. It was suggested by one section meeting that "Group discussion similar to that which we have had here (in Washington) be carried on in every community, and that these groups be made up of as many related interests in family life as are available."

Such a procedure may well be the first step. Whether or not such discussions result in some form of Community Family Life Councils, *the values of inter-communication, of learning to appreciate the contributions of other disciplines, other organizations, other individuals is the important thing.*

The highlights, suggestions, and recommendations reported here give a picture of the vitality of the National Conference on Family Life. The large number of follow-up activities already carried on or planned for the future is indicative of the earnestness and concern of conference participants and sponsoring organizations.

## *Conference Organization*

MR. ERIC A. JOHNSTON, *Chairman of the Conference*

MR. BORIS SHISHKIN, *Vice Chairman*

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### **Program Committee Chairmen**

#### **Section I**

*Statistical Background:*  
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	United Service for New Americans, Inc.
	Young Men's Christian Association, National Board
	Young Women's Christian Association, National Board

The total membership of these 125 organizations is more than 40 million persons.

## Present Status of the National Conference on Family Life

Until January 1, 1949, the headquarters office at 10 East 40th Street, New York 16, New York, will be maintained for the purpose of giving information and distributing publications. Inquiries should be addressed to Mrs. C. H. L. Pennock, *Secretary*.