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His and her definitions of romance
have different dictionary meanings

By Terri Lackey

Baptist Press
10/30/95

HOT SPRINGS, Ark. (BP)--She thinks romance is a bubble bath surrounded by votive candles and a glass of cool, sparkling water. He thinks romance is what happens after his wife towels off.

"Different people have different ideas about what romance is, and that's OK as long as both understand what the other's idea is," Deigie Andrews said in the opening night's session of a Hot Springs, Ark., Fall Festival of Marriage.

"You don't have to be naked to have romance. You can be romantic with your clothes on and with your clothes off," said Otis Andrews, who with his wife, Deigie, led general sessions at the Oct. 27-29 conference. "Regarding Romance" is the theme of the 1995 fall marriage conferences, sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board.

The Andrewses, Macon, Ga.,-based marriage enrichment speakers and authors of the 1994 Fall Festival of Marriage theme book, "Husbands and Wives: The Best of Friends," defined romance as an experience that makes a person feel valued, loved and desired. They listed four ingredients needed to achieve a romantic marriage -- desire, awareness, time and effort.

"You've got to desire romance to be a part of your life," Deigie Andrews said, "and it had better be a mutual desire."

Even if both partners desire romance, they need to be aware of what the other considers romantic. "Look around and be aware about what is romantic to your mate," Deigie said.

"Study your mate to understand what makes her respond," Otis added.

Spending time with one another is a key element to romance, the Andrewses said, adding research has shown couples spend an average of 37 minutes a week in conversation.

"To have romantic time, you have to have time, period," Deigie said. "It takes time to be romantic and to get to know each other. You have to have more time for each other than just at the end of the day when you can hardly keep your eyes open."

"The whole marriage will shrivel up if you don't spend time together and make the effort for romance," Otis said. "Romance will only happen if you are willing to put forth the effort to make it happen."

In a separate conference, Dan and Sandra McGee listed some of the common barriers that diffuse romance in a marriage.

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"Knowing the barriers to romance is the first step in building a lasting marriage," said Dan McGee, a marriage and family therapist from Arlington, Texas. The four barriers to romance, he said, include stress, unresolved anger, fear of failure and unrecognized expectations.

McGee said stress of over extending oneself is a powerful barrier to a romantic relationship.

"The biggest problem couples have has to do with overextension in their lives," he said. "And the areas that cause the most intense stress are career, children, finances and time issues.

"A career is not the most important thing in your life. Careers don't love you back. Spouses and children love you back."

As for children, McGee said, parents can sometimes "do too much for them. You can overextend yourself there too. Don't let your children define what your limits are. You need to reserve your energy to really love them."

McGee said people who hold in unresolved anger, anger which likely originates in childhood, risk loss of health, loss of physical and mental energy and loss of control of their lives.

"Holding on to anger causes resentment, and resentment is the termite of a marriage. It is an invisible destroyer. One day you turn around and your house falls down," he said. "The inability to forgive says more about you than the one who hurt you."

"Whenever you hold on to that anger you are sacrificing a relationship."

Fear of failing when attempting to be romantic and expectations not recognized are other barriers to successfully showing a spouse how much he or she is valued, McGee said.

"You are afraid of being embarrassed if you do something wrong in romance. Some of you just don't want to get hurt. Avoiding the pain because of something from your past and your fear of being hurt keeps you from being romantic. The greatest risk of all is not to risk."

McGee said romantic expectations of a relationship may be imbedded in childhood. "Hopefully your spouse was nurtured and loved as a child, but if your spouse's idea of romance comes from parental neglect they experienced growing up, then you both have some work to do."

Sandra McGee listed several ways to keep a romantic relationship burning, including commitment to each other and the marriage; unexpected surprises or "little, bitty things like a hug or a morning 'I love you' that helps create closeness;" weekly or bimonthly scheduled dates "where you can focus only on each other;" creativity or "letting the child in you come out;" and the three A's -- acceptance or "celebrating differences," appreciation for one another and affirmation of each other.

According to the McGees a romantic marriage can lead to a longer life. "People who enjoy intimate relationships live longer and healthier lives," Dan McGee said.

Fall Festivals of Marriage are sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board. About 25 Fall Festivals are being held this fall in locations ranging from California to North Carolina and Florida to Iowa. About 620 people attended the Hot Springs festival, coordinators said.

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Journeys of romance
require careful packing

Baptist Press
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HOT SPRINGS, Ark. (BP)--If you decide to take a romantic journey in your relationship, you need to know how to pack, according to Otis and Delgie Andrews, marriage conference leaders and writers from Macon, Ga.

The Andrews, who led sessions at the Oct. 27-29 Fall Festival of Marriage at Hot Springs, Ark., first advised couples to "get rid of excess baggage."

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"Forgive your spouse of anything in the past that he or she has done to hurt you," Otis Andrews said. "You forgive the things you can't forget. God doesn't promise the hurt will go away, but there should be no bitterness if you really forgive her."

"The most romantic thing you can do for each other is to say you're sorry and ask forgiveness," Deigie Andrews added.

Second, the Andrewses told couples interested in embarking on a romantic journey to "pack the essentials." Those include: valuing your mate, giving affirmation and loving in a way he or she understands.

The third item that helps couples plan a successful romantic journey is to "know your destination."

"You have control over where marriage is going," Otis Andrews said. "If you want romance, you have to choose romance."

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When romantic love fades,
mature love can be kindled

By Terri Lackey

Baptist Press
10/30/95

HOT SPRINGS, Ark. (BP)--Still in the newlywed stage of marriage when just looking at your spouse makes you feel all warm and tingly inside?

Well, get over it. You just have a few months of bliss left, according to a marriage and family counselor from Arlington, Texas.

"Romantic love lasts only about two years," said Dan Clement, a counselor and Criswell College professor, who with his wife, Dianna, led a seminar at a Fall Festival of Marriage in Hot Springs, Ark., Oct. 27-29.

Couples shouldn't worry about fading bliss, according to Clement, of Dallas, who claims romantic love can be exchanged for a healthier and longer-lasting type of love.

"If you keep looking for romantic love, you'll find yourself moving from person to person," he said. "It's neat to be a newlywed, but it's better to be mature in your love."

The Clements offered suggestions on stoking the love fire, much of which can be accomplished by simply offering a spouse comfort, compassion and encouragement.

"A five-year study indicated that the best predictor of whether a couple will stay married is how well they nurture each other," Dan Clement said. The most important element in nurturing is helping the spouse feel loved, he said.

"When your husband or wife tries to tell you personal concerns or needs, you should just listen. Unfortunately as humans we try to go a few steps farther," he said. "If you could just listen and allow the needs to flow through you, then he or she would really feel loved."

Nurturing, listening to and encouraging one's spouse sounds easy enough, but all types of unwitting obstacles tend to get in the way, he said.

One way to shut down spouses' communication to you is to judge them, he said. Judging comes in several forms, including criticism, name-calling and labeling, diagnosing their situation or even praising in "such a way that they feel manipulated."

"Usually, if a person feels judged, they will block the flow of their needs to you and shut down communication," he said.

Another obstacle to healthy nurture is "sending a solution," he said.

"This is pretty typical for guys," Clement said. "If our wives talk to us about a problem, we just say, 'Well, here's what you should do.'"

Dianna Clements added: "A lot of us want to fix things. We start thinking of all the answers. But sometimes they just want us to champion their cause, to stand behind them when they're feeling vulnerable. Sometimes we just want someone at home who will listen and not necessarily give advice."

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Some spouses send a solution by moralizing the situation, Dan Clement said. "They might preach at us and make us feel they are holier than we are. They might tell us how they would have handled the situation better than we did."

Other obstacles to effective nurturing, Clement said, are diversion or "avoiding the conversation because you don't want to deal with it;" logical argument or presenting a logical solution when the spouse only wants to share an emotion; and reassuring in an inappropriate situation. "Sometimes there is just nothing to say, like when someone dies. That's when reassurances are empty and the ministry of presence works best."

In offering ideas on how to comfort a spouse in need, the Clements suggested asking them what they need.

"Just ask, 'What can I do for you?' But don't feel discouraged if they don't tell you at first. Just keep asking," Dan Clement said.

If they have a specific ailment or psychological concern, Clement suggested getting an education on the subject. "Try to educate yourself about the things your spouse feels scared about or is bothered by," he said.

Giving a mate the space to deal with a problem in his or her own way is one way to comfort a spouse in need, Dianna Clement said. "Try to have some patience about the different ways people deal with things."

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**Lawyers reject ruling
against school vouchers**

By Tom Strode

**Baptist Press
10/30/95**

WASHINGTON (BP)--A panel of church-state lawyers recently told a U.S. Senate committee a state supreme court decision prohibiting the use of educational vouchers at religious schools was unconstitutional.

At a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing, the five witnesses, who did not find unanimity on some other religious liberty issues, agreed the Wisconsin Supreme Court erred in August by blocking the Milwaukee school-choice program's newly adopted inclusion of religious schools. The testimony came in the first of two days of recent hearings before the Senate committee on whether there is a need for a constitutional amendment protecting religious expression.

The panelists who rejected the Wisconsin court's decision were Steven McFarland of the Christian Legal Society, Doug Laycock of the University of Texas, Oliver Thomas of the National Council of Churches, Michael McConnell of the University of Chicago and Forest Montgomery of the National Association of Evangelicals.

While Thomas said the inclusion of religious schools in the program probably was constitutionally permissible and predicted the U.S. Supreme Court would strike down the Wisconsin court's ruling, he still seemed to oppose vouchers, calling them a disastrous idea for schools. Earlier, he said such benefits might be financially harmful for the states.

A former general counsel for the Baptist Joint Committee, Thomas differed with the other panelists on some other benefits issues. One such difference surfaced during discussion, at Chairman Orrin Hatch's request, of the *Fordham University v. Brown* case.

The Department of Commerce rejected the application of a public radio station operated by Fordham for federal funding because it broadcasts a Catholic mass from the Fordham chapel for one hour each Sunday morning. A federal court upheld Commerce's restriction against religious programming, finding it does not "inhibit religion."

All five panelists said the court ruling was wrong.

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In his written testimony, McConnell said the case illustrates a problem: "Government officials are under the impression, too often confirmed by the courts, that discrimination against religious speech is not only constitutionally permissible, but constitutionally required."

Thomas, however, said government aid should not be granted to a station which broadcasts Jerry Falwell's "Old Time Gospel Hour" or programming from Bob Jones University.

McFarland told the committee Thomas' distinction was "the kind of line drawing" the government should avoid.

Thomas reacted forcefully, charging the other panelists were "coming out of the closet" in support of government subsidies of programming like Falwell's.

The other panelists did not respond, but afterward at least two of them reproved Thomas for his attack, an observer reported.

Opinions among Americans on "benefits" issues are much more polarized than is reflected in this ... panel," Laycock told Sen. Hatch, R.-Utah, and other committee members in the Oct. 20 hearing.

While the panelists discussed "benefits" language in a proposed amendment read by Montgomery, it is possible that proposal will not be introduced. In fact, a religious equality amendment has yet to be introduced. One or two proposals may be introduced by members of the House of Representatives in the next few weeks, however.

While Rep. Henry, Hyde, R.-Ill., chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, reportedly supports a religious equality amendment, Hatch expressed misgivings about supporting an amendment to solve problems he acknowledged exist.

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Make a budget and follow it,
speaker advises seminarians

By Lee Weeks

Baptist Press
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WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Talmage Williams has been there and done that. His mission now is to make sure other ministers don't find themselves in similar situations.

Twenty-five years ago, he owed more than he owned and faced the grim prospects of putting three children through college on a meager pastor's salary.

"It was taking everything I made to pay the bills and provide for the family," he said.

Williams wants pastors to pay attention to his advice now so they can avoid costly mistakes in the future.

As a consultant with the North Carolina Baptist State Convention and the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, Williams preaches a simple message.

"The purpose of money management is not to shackle you with something that controls you," he said. "It is rather a plan to help free you to do what you believe is really important."

Speaking Oct. 27 at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., Williams said ministers should establish a value system "in light of (their) Christian commitment."

"All of us live out of our value system," he said. "If you buy things that are unnecessary, it means that you have to give up something else somewhere."

Williams said for a minister to be effective, he must control his spending so his spending doesn't control him.

The key to controlling one's finances, Williams said, is establishing a budget.

Williams warned against the dangers of credit cards: "Quit charging for anything that is not a really life-and-death kind of issue. You find yourself limiting your freedom. You're borrowing from the future for instant gratification and it causes problems later."

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Williams said it is wise to budget monthly spending for all a family's expenditures such as food, gas, housing, clothing and recreation. The key is to not spend more than has been allocated.

"Have a plan and then keep simple records to keep up with what you're doing," he said.

A husband and wife, Williams said, should work diligently to model good stewardship before their children.

"A good money management plan is a tremendous inheritance to pass on to your children," he said. "If they see you planning (and) you involve them in the process of doing it, they will learn the its value and then continue it as they grow up."

Williams said he is living proof of how sticking to a budget can conquer the burden of financial debt.

He said within five years after setting up a budget he was able to double his giving to missions while steadily increasing the percentage of his income he saved for retirement.

"It can free you up to do some things personally that you never thought you could do," Williams said.

Starting early to save money for retirement and college education for children is a must, Williams said.

"What you put in early will accumulate so much more than what you put in late," he said. "Most of us can reorganize and do a lot of things we never thought possible -- when we decide to, plan to and take definite steps to do it."

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