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UTILIZING CHURCHES TO REACH FAMILIES  
WITH EXTENSION FAMILY-CHILD EDUCATION IN  
LIVINGSTON COUNTY, MICHIGAN

By

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## ABSTRACT

### UTILIZING CHURCHES TO REACH FAMILIES WITH EXTENSION FAMILY-CHILD EDUCATION IN LIVINGSTON COUNTY, MICHIGAN

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Families in Livingston County, Michigan, face many changes and busy lifestyles. Reaching families with family-child education is difficult for the Cooperative Extension Service program because people do not readily attend meetings. A new method of reaching families must be found.

The purpose of this study was to test a new delivery method for family-child education, and to determine the level of participation by recipients. A series of eight educational leaflets was prepared and distributed through bulletins and literature racks in 11 churches, and by direct mail. Use of the leaflets was evaluated by a self-administered questionnaire. Data were analyzed using frequencies and Chi-Square analysis.

Results indicated that the delivery method was a way to reach new families with family-child education. Distribution through church bulletins was more effective than through placement in a literature rack. Respondents who had the most prior involvement with the Cooperative Extension Service used the leaflets most but those with little prior involvement found them very useful as well.

## DEDICATION

To my husband, whose encouragement,  
love, and patience (not to mention his cleaning,  
cooking, and laundering) made this possible.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Statement of the Problem

Livingston County is located in the southeastern part of Michigan, about 25 miles from the edge of the metropolitan Detroit area (See Figure 1). The county seat, Howell, is nearly in the center of the county, about 35 miles from Lansing, 45 miles from Flint, 28 miles from Ann Arbor, and 33 miles from Pontiac. The county is strategically located, making it an ideal "bedroom" community for each of the surrounding cities. There is no large city within the county. According to the 1980 Census, Howell (population 6,976), and Brighton (population 4,268), are the largest municipalities in the county.

The county is almost equally divided into rural farm and rural non-farm residents. West of Howell, most of the land is rural farm, and east of Howell, most of it is rural non-farm. The southeastern part of the county is heavily populated with lake dwellers and with families who have moved out of metropolitan Detroit.

During the seventies and again beginning in 1985, building of new housing units boomed. Housing values increased as well with the median house value in 1980 at \$62,167, the highest in Michigan (1980 Census). Values continued to rise to an average of \$83,769 in 1987, according to the Livingston County Multi-list Service, February 1988.

Income level is above the average for the state with a median household income of \$33,766 in 1987, compared to the state median of \$27,214,

**Figure 1. Location of Livingston County, Michigan.**

making it the third highest median income in the state (Keith, 1988). During the early 1980's, a recession hit the county hard because much of the employment is related directly or indirectly to the automobile industry. By 1986, most of the effects of the recession had disappeared and the non-farm residents again had an affluent outlook and lifestyle. Farm families, however, have not been as fortunate, and the economy is still very much a problem for them. In many farm families, at least one member is employed off the farm.

Livingston County is made up of 31,344 households, 74 percent of which are married units and 6 percent single parent households with children (1980 Census). Fifty-three percent of the labor force commute out of the county, at least fifty miles, for employment, and over 50 percent of the employed are women (1980 Census). These factors result in reduced family time together, and strained budgets from transportation costs, new expensive housing, and other increased costs. Consequently, attendance at evening or weekend Extension programs is very limited, because families are reluctant to commit time or money to attending programs in centrally located areas.

Family violence, child abuse, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, and other family problems exist throughout the nation, and Livingston County families are not exempt from these problems. But, even if these major problems did not exist, there would still be a need for family-child education to help families build stronger relationships, to build self-esteem in family members, and to help families cope with everyday problems. Extension home economics programs are equipped to deliver family-child education but it must be made available to more families in the county.

One method of reaching families with Extension home economics information, has been through Extension Homemaker study groups (MAEH, Michigan Association of Extension Homemakers). Members of those study groups receive educational information from Extension that is shared within their group as well as with friends and neighbors. In recent years, membership in study groups has declined across the state, and the same is true in Livingston County. Currently, there are eleven Extension study groups in the county, with 118 members. The average age of the members is about 60 years; therefore, programming by and for study groups in the family-child area is limited.

There is no one radio station, television station, or newspaper that reaches the entire county. A monthly newsletter reaches 4500 families with information from all areas of the Cooperative Extension Service. Funding for Extension home economics programming is limited, thereby further restricting outreach possibilities.

New methods and technologies are needed for delivering information in Extension (Caldwell, 1982; Hestor and Dickerson, 1984; Hussey, 1985; Jones-Webb and Nickols, 1984; Rogan and Simmons, 1984). Specific attention has not been given to participation levels of family-child programming in relation to delivery methods.

The purpose of this research was to determine the effectiveness of working through churches to reach families with Extension family-child education in Livingston County, Michigan. An educational program was conducted through churches within the county and evaluated to determine participation levels of those who had never before used Extension as a resource. A group of traditional Extension clientele received the program through the mail as a control and were mailed the same evaluation

form to complete.

### Significance and Generalizability

Use of the delivery method through churches was an attempt to reach new families and increase participation of families in family-child education. Evaluation was designed to measure the effectiveness of the selected method. Livingston County is not the only Michigan county having problems with delivery methods for Extension programming. To a greater or lesser degree, many counties struggle with the same problem. Information obtained from this research project will be available to home economists in other counties, enabling them to test various delivery methods pertinent to their local situations.

### Ecological Perspective

A central tenet of the human ecosystem model is that human beings do not live in a vacuum but rather interact with their environment. This study, in investigating the effectiveness of a specific delivery method for home economics programming, was approached from an ecological perspective.

An ecological perspective is one of viewing organisms and environments in interaction. The focus is on the interaction; that is, how organisms affect environments they act upon, and how these environments affect organisms (Paolucci, Hall, & Axinn, 1977, p. 1).

Learning is a human activity and occurs through interaction with the various environments in which families exist. New strategies for Extension programming need to fit into the ecosystems of the families.

Many families in Livingston County have chosen homes with locations "close to nature" allowing greater interaction with the natural environment. Fresh air, trees, grass, lakes, and open spaces are all part of



that natural environment. However, their residency has also created a problem of access to services from the social environment, in this case, the Cooperative Extension Service. Distance and time to attend programs are limiting factors, and families who have exchanged an urban environment for a rural one are often unaware of Extension programming available to them. This lack of awareness further limits participation.

Circulation, transformation, and storage of energy, matter, and information all are central processes of an ecosystem (Paolucci, Hall, & Axinn, 1977). This study focused on a method used to transfer information from the social environment, in this case, family-child information from the Extension Service, to the family. The church, another part of the social environment, is a significant part of the ecological environment. Interaction between individuals and the social environment occurred as educational materials were distributed through the churches to families. The goal of all educational programs is the inputting of information into the family where it is stored, circulated, and transformed into the output of more productive human beings into the community. As more effective human capital is developed, there is feedback to the behavioral and social environments.

#### Research Objectives

The overall purpose of this research was to determine the effectiveness of working through churches to increase participation in family-child education in Extension programs among adults in Livingston County, Michigan. The method was developed to meet the families' needs and to fit into their environments.

To adequately evaluate this delivery method, the study assessed the use of the educational leaflets and their perceived value. It also

identified the amount of previous interaction between the family and the Cooperative Extension Service, the social environment.

### Research Questions

Because the research was exploratory, several research questions, rather than hypotheses, were formulated.

1. Will distributing family-child educational materials through churches be a way to reach people who have not used the Cooperative Extension Service?
2. Is there a relationship between levels of involvement with the Cooperative Extension Service and level of participation and use of materials?
3. Is there a difference between level of participation by method of distribution within the churches?
4. Is there a difference between level of participation within churches and level of participation through direct mail?
5. Is there any difference in level of participation according to age, employment, sex, or number of children?

### Conceptual and Operational Definitions

Major variables are defined in the following section. Conceptual definitions will be followed by operational definition.

Family-child education conceptually refers to the area of home economics concerned with human development, family relationships, parenting, and communication skills. Operationally, the educational material used was a series of leaflets on strengthening families.

Level of participation in Extension family-child education programs - This term conceptually refers to the extent of involvement in family-child programs. Operationally, there were three levels of participation including the number of leaflets read, the number of activities tried, and the perceived usefulness of the materials. (Questions 4-6 in the questionnaire.)

Level of distribution - Conceptually, the term refers to the number of leaflets distributed. Operationally, there were two levels of distribution, including the number of leaflets distributed by mail and the number distributed to churches minus the number left after the service(s).

Level of involvement with the Cooperative Extension Service - The term conceptually refers to the experience respondents previously had, or currently have, with the Cooperative Extension Service. Operationally, respondents were asked to state their knowledge of the Extension Service, and self-rate the perceived extent of their previous or current involvement with Extension. (Questions 1-3 in questionnaire.)

#### Limitations, Basic Assumptions

Research on delivery methods was not a sensitive topic, but respondents might have been hesitant to answer questions pertaining to interest or need of family-child education topics. To protect privacy, respondent names or other identifying information were not requested on the questionnaire.

Another limitation was the use of a self-selected sample. Those for whom the education experience was positive may have been more likely to complete the questionnaire. Thus, the sample may be biased.

There were several other limitations in the study which should be noted. Surveying only adult family members rather than the whole family was a limitation in the study. Responses of children might have been quite different from those of the adults. In addition, the sample included only one church in an urban area, thereby limiting generalization.

Several basic assumptions were made by the researcher. First, it

was assumed the respondents would be able to read and complete the questionnaire. Secondly, it was assumed that at least 15 percent of the sample would return the completed questionnaire. To help insure return, the researcher placed collection boxes in each of the churches, thereby making it unnecessary to mail the completed questionnaire. Questionnaires sent by mail were stamped, self-mailers, facilitating return. Additional questionnaires were supplied to churches with reminders to complete the forms.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### The Need for Change in Delivery Methods

In recent years, changes in family lifestyles, e.g. the increase of women in the work force, the increase of single parent families, and the increase of adults caring for elderly parents have reduced participation in Extension family life programs (Hester and Dickerson, 1984). Extension professionals are looking at the problem, and specifically, at the need for new methods and techniques for delivering information (Caldwell, 1982; Hester and Dickerson, 1984; Hussey, 1985; Jones-Webb and Nickols, 1984; Rogan and Simmons, 1984).

#### Needs of Rural America

Rural America is characterized by an agriculture tradition, sparse population, isolation, and the presence of small loosely knit communities. Rural communities are typically long distances from goods and services, are culturally homogeneous and have little or no public transportation system. (Treadway, 1984; Kulvesky & Coop, 1981; McCannon, 1983 cited in Barker, 1985, p. 5).

Learners are highly dependent on the automobile for transportation to learning centers. Poor roads, long distances, and increasing transportation costs affect rural people more than urban people (Barker, 1985). This is true even in counties that are adjacent to metropolitan areas.

Young farm women have even greater time demands than many other

women because of triple roles as homemakers, on-farm workers, and off-farm employees. They find it particularly difficult to attend meetings that take them away from already limited time with the family (Jones-Webb and Nickols, 1984).

Rural America is the home of the farmer, but also of the commuter, the vacationer, the retired, and those who just want to get away from it all. Often, however, these families find there are fewer cultural attractions and limited public services in rural areas and, therefore, less opportunity to attract state and federal funds for educational programs (Barker, 1985).

#### Adults as Learners

People are becoming better educated and education is addictive. The more education one has, the more one tends to want (Cross, 1981). According to some 1972 figures, over three-fourths of American adults want some form of new learning. One-third were involved in some form of adult learning in 1971. Adults who participated in learning activities were already relatively well educated (Carp, Peterson, & Roelf, 1974).

Houle (cited in Cross, Valley, & Associates, 1981) indicated three types of adult motivation for learning. First, some adults are goal-oriented and want to gain a specific objective. They are not limited to any one method, but seek that which will help them achieve their goal. The second group of adults is activity-oriented and interested in learning for the activity itself rather than for the skill or subject matter being taught. A third group seeks learning for its own sake. These learning-oriented people are usually avid readers.

Adults are most frequently motivated by the desire to solve a

problem or to learn a skill (Cross, 1981). Knowledge that leads to better jobs, helps in practical living, or teaches skills and pleasures associated with leisure-time activities holds more interest for adults than regular college classes. Carp, et al., indicated that adults ranked vocational subjects of first importance, followed by subjects related to hobbies and recreation, home and family, and personal development. Men were more interested in job related learning, while women were more interested in self-fulfillment.

Cross (1981) stated that there is a change in the role education plays in people's lives. Instead of a linear life plan, i.e. education-work-retirement, people are adopting a blended life plan of work plus education. This leaves less leisure time, except for longer vacations, since much of the leisure time is spent in educational pursuits (Cross, 1981).

#### Recreation and Leisure Education

Leisure is defined by Verduin and McEwen (1984) as discretionary or unobligated time. It implies freedom to choose activities according to one's own interests. Learning for recreation and leisure is the most rapidly growing adult field of study, followed by the study of personal growth and family living (Cross, 1981).

Adults may look to four major groups for leisure education. Public agencies and institutions, voluntary work agencies, private groups, and commercial recreation enterprises are all actively involved in adult education (Penland, 1977).

American adults value their leisure time, perhaps more than any other culture. But, they have specific requirements for their leisure time that include enjoyment, happiness, satisfaction, creativity, mental

growth and learning, physical development, social development, and escape from boredom or routine (Penland, 1977). To be worthwhile, leisure pursuits must meet at least one and probably many of these requirements. Adult educators, therefore, must consider these factors when planning educational programs.

### How Adults Like to Learn

Chamberlain (1980) noted the increase in complexity of modern life, leaving less time for any one aspect of daily life. Continuing educators have learned to present sessions at more convenient times, but the courses need to be even more convenient. Some educators are scheduling courses in neighborhood centers or on commuter trains, but most still require participants to come to them.

Most adult education programs are still planned for group settings. Because of people's busy lifestyles, educators must look at other methods.

Gordon (cited in Niemi, 1971) stated:

It is possible that adult education today has outgrown the schoolhouse, the university and the world of organized education. In fact, nothing can stop adult education from continuing to gather momentum in our culture. Our problem is that it will not be carried on in the places we want to see it: libraries, schoolhouses, university complexes, etc. (p. 8).

A 1972 survey indicated 10 percent of the learners and 17 percent of the would-be-learners preferred learning at home. Forty-five percent and 13 percent respectively preferred schools, and both groups (36%) indicated all other sources including work site, correspondence courses or community organizations as locations for learning. Only 14 percent wanted college classes.

In 1974, would-be-learners chose lecture and classes as the first



choice of method for learning, on the job learning as second choice, and short term correspondence or workshops as third choice. Twice as many rural would-be-learners chose self-study as did urban people (Carp, et al., 1974).

Penland, cited in Verduin and McEwen, (1984) stated that most adults preferred to learn in their own homes. Other adults indicated that they prefer learning outdoors, in discussion groups, in libraries, and at public events. But, for parenting concepts and skills, the home is the most flexible and natural environment for learning (Roehl, Herr, & Applehaus, 1985).

Forty-four percent of Penland's (1984) respondents reported reading was the best way for them to learn. This method was exceeded only by seeing or observing (45%).

Research on adult learning projects shows self-planning and direction are preferred to formal classes (Barker, 1985). Self-directed learning allows learners to set their own pace, structure, and style. They can keep the style flexible and achieve immediate learning (Verduin & McEwen, 1984). They can individualize the subject matter to solve a problem and determine for themselves what they wish to learn (Cross, 1981).

Almost everyone participates in some form of self-directed learning. Cross (1981) reported that 79-100 percent of all adults conduct at least one learning project a year, with an average of 100 hours per project. Most of these are entirely self-directed.

Even self-directed learning must have some human contact, however. Adults want competent help in planning and guiding their learning (Cross, 1981). People first seem to seek help from families and

friends (Katz, 1985). Allen Tough (cited in Verduin & McEwen, 1984) suggests that about 70 percent of adult learners fall into the self-directed class and that of these learners only 20 percent seek professional help. The rest seek help from family and friends.

Cross (1984) stated that self-directed learners seek help from three groups of sources. Friends, relatives and neighbors are the first group, followed by a paid expert, and then books and pamphlets. Different studies rank these major sources in different orders, but the groups remain the same.

### Barriers to Adult Learning

Lack of time vies with cost for first place among the obstacles to education (Cross, 1981; Cross, Valley & Assoc., 1974). This is especially true for people in their 30's and 40's and for the better educated, higher income population (Cross, 1981). Other barriers include the lack of desire for school, structured classes, feeling one is too old (Cross, et al., 1974), and home/job responsibilities. Home responsibilities are more often barriers for women while job responsibilities are more often a problem for men (Cross, et al., 1974; Woodley, Wagner, Slowey, Hamilton, & Fulton, 1987).

Single parents and dual worker parents are likely to experience role overload. There is increased competition for discretionary time requiring creative approaches to provide education that is convenient in terms of time and location (Roehl, et al., 1985).

For effective lifelong learning for adults, consideration must be given to location, accessibility, cost, timing, materials, nature of instruction, and procedures. If these are not considered, they easily become barriers to learning (Penland, 1977).

### Possible Instructional Methods

Taking into consideration the changes in lifestyle, the needs of rural people, and the preferences of adults as learners, the educator must select the instructional methods which best meet these challenges. As delivery systems have been developed and evaluated, many conclusions have been drawn by educators and learners alike.

Funding is one of the most basic considerations in the choice of a delivery method. The best method is only useful if it is available and affordable. The sources and amount of funding determine the programs and methods to be used.

Another factor in the selection of a delivery method is the appropriateness for the content, goals, and needs of the program as well as the needs of the audience (Spencer, 1986). The most advanced or complex delivery system will be of no use if it does not meet the educational objectives of the learner.

According to Spencer (1986), motivation of the student is another factor to be considered. The more motivated the student is, the more willing that student will be to try a complex technological delivery method. However, if the motivation is for social reasons, just for group interaction, technology will not meet the needs. If the motivation is for a required certificate, students will more readily use technology or a different method. In general, the less complex the educational delivery method is, the more likely it will be accepted and used by students (Spencer, 1986).

If the audience is distant from the educational institution, priority should be given to methods which provide greater access; endeavors must be made to accommodate adult schedules as well as their locations.

While most adults prefer the variety of traditional instructional methods, they admit that many non-traditional methods provide better access (Spencer, 1986).

Less than 2 percent of American adults express interest in learning via radio, television, audio or video cassettes. But people tend to like what they know more than know what they like. They prefer methods that are familiar. Very few have tried to learn via technology (Carp et al., 1974).

### Home-based Learning

Home study education has a rich history in America and continues to be popular today, primarily because of its convenience and flexibility (Lambert, 1985; Bobbitt & Paolucci, 1986).

The home setting provides a natural, realistic, and familiar place available for learning throughout the life span. In the home, learning can be pursued within the context and pattern of everyday life at the time it is needed (Bobbitt & Paolucci, 1986, p. 48).

For parenting and family relations concepts and skills, the home is the most flexible and natural environment for learning. Many families seek knowledge from near relatives or neighbors rather than from experts. While there are advantages to this practice, misinformation and myths can also be perpetuated (Bobbitt & Paolucci, 1986).

A major task facing family life educators concerned with home-base learning is that of finding appropriate and effective ways to intervene in family learning while noncommittally respecting a family's privacy and self-reliance. Mass media shows the greatest promise for meeting this challenge if families have developed the competencies for evaluating media information (Bobbitt and Paolucci, 1986, p. 56).

Radio, television, computers, audio and video cassettes, and printed materials are all excellent methods for learning at home. "Direct mailings, such as monthly parent letters, can be especially helpful to the

busy parent who does not have the time, the inclination, or the energy to seek out the information" (Roehl, et al., 1985, p. 21).

Correspondence courses have always had the advantage of self-pacing, and now video and audio tapes offer the same advantage (Spencer, 1986). In Spencer's (1986) survey, 31 percent of the participants indicated print-based correspondence study as the most cost effective delivery method. It is a nontraditional method used by many institutions that operate on a self-supporting basis.

However, correspondence study is not without problems and must be well designed to promote learning. Correspondence study often fails to motivate the student to complete the course and is seldom tailored to individual needs (Spencer, 1986). Both of these objections, however, can be handled by well designed courses. Yet, even if it is well designed, home study tends to work best only for self-starting, mature individuals who know what they want (Lambert, 1985).

#### Suggested Alternative Formats

Various alternatives to classroom or correspondence learning have been suggested for schools and other agencies. A few will be mentioned here.

The Cooperative Extension Service has generally been the major supplier of educational programs to rural America. While active, most rural libraries offer limited services with a restricted focus on adult education (Barker, 1985). These programs could be expanded. Churches also offer some educational programs and could be an excellent possibility for parenting programs.

Employees and employers are considering education at the workplace more seriously. Before, or after work, and lunchtime programs are

possibilities. An educator could also act as a resource person at the workplace for consulting purposes (Roehl, et al., 1985).

Roehl, et al. (1985) offer several suggestions for parenting education. A parent educator might introduce the idea of parenting parties for couples, similar to Tupperware parties. The educator could work with the hospital maternity unit to establish mailing lists to disseminate information to new parents. Department stores and supermarkets could be used for special seminars on consumer issues related to parenting.

### Suggested Technologies

Unstable funding and the high cost of traditional classroom instruction have signaled the importance of alternative methods using available technology. Television, satellite, audio and video tapes, and computers have all proven cost effective (Spencer, 1986).

Mass media methods, especially television, have been used and are suggested for educational use because they reach those who cannot or would not be in a classroom (Munski, 1980). Television does have a major effect on socialization and attitude formation (Katz, 1985), and it can also be used for educational purposes. Local cable television channels could be an excellent tool to reach some groups of people. Information and referral, education and prevention, and community organization issues could be broadcast via cable television. Most cable companies have local channels available, but, if those channels are not used, they will become unavailable. While there is not a large viewing audience for local channels, the viewers will emerge from programming and personalities they want to see (Katz, 1985).

Radio programs and audio tapes may be helpful to commuters.

Passengers could also make use of printed materials and learning packages that accompany tapes or radio programs (Roehl et al., 1985). One drawback of audio methods, however, is the possibility of loss of attention (Spencer, 1986); therefore, audio materials must be very well produced.

As costs for travel and lodging continue to rise, alternative education delivery systems are becoming a more important consideration for continuing education programming. Microcomputer instruction offers one of the better options for learner-access instruction (Kasworm & Anderson, 1982, p. 90).

For people who prefer individual instruction, the computer holds promise (Meierhenry, 1982). However, even as a method of individualized instruction, there are drawbacks and limitations.

Cost is, of course, a major factor. Microcomputer costs are decreasing but still involve a major investment. The system would have to have a high level of use or else be used for several things to justify costs (Meierhenry, 1982).

Portability, while improving, is still a drawback if equipment must be moved. Another problem, also improving, is rapid obsolescence (Meierhenry, 1982). As these problems are addressed, microcomputers will be used even more.

Kasworm and Anderson (1982) list nine educational applications for computers:

1. Drill and practice
2. Tutorial
3. Problem solving (especially science and math)
4. Simulations
5. Testing
6. Computer-managed instruction
7. Information management
8. Word processing
9. Computer literacy

The above list agrees with Guoulette's (1982) assessment that microcomputer programs are generally limited to intellectual and highly

logical instruction. Few programs can convey affective learning objectives or encourage intuitive learning. For purposes of personal and family living education, use of computers would probably be limited since the very nature of the learning suggests human interaction and a process approach to learning (Meierhenry, 1982).

The greatest use of computers may come when paired with other technologies such as video disks (Meierhenry, 1982) or with printed or audio materials. Bobbitt and Paolucci focused on the use of computers in families.

Perhaps in the future, each family will have available to it learning resources via mass media for their particular use. A home mass media center with a computer terminal at the family's fingertips could serve the family both as a source and processor of information. An infinite amount of information from many sources would then be available for efficient family decision-making. The home education center could link the family to formal education centers as well as particular research and information centers. Through it, all family members could more easily become lifelong learners and more effective decision-makers (Bobbitt and Paolucci, 1986, p. 56).

Yet, even the best of computer programs will be difficult for people with poor keyboard skills (Guoulette, 1982). The human element still influences the effectiveness of technology.

### Summary and Implications

Recent lifestyle changes in America have created the need for the development of educational delivery systems that will make education more easily available to today's families. Rural Americans especially need delivery systems that are accessible and affordable.

Adults want education that will teach them a skill, solve a problem, or help them make better use of leisure and recreation. Most adults prefer self-directed and self-paced learning. Time, distance,



cost, and the fear of formalized instruction can all be barriers to adult learning.

Educators need to develop affordable, alternative methods for adult learning that fit the objectives of the learner. Home learning opportunities via printed materials and technology are possibilities.

Extension must look at methods to meet the needs of learners within the parameters of learning objectives and budget constraints. In addition, creative approaches must be implemented if Extension is to remain viable as an education institution.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY AND INSTRUMENTATION

In this chapter the leaflets which provided the educational content for the delivery method will first be described. The description of the project design, sampling procedure, evaluation design and distribution will follow. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the response and statistical analysis.

#### Educational Content

"Free To Be . . . Family"<sup>1</sup> was a series of eight leaflets written by the researcher to help families build stronger relationships within the family unit (see Appendix A). Based on the work of Dolores Curran (1983) and Nick Stinnett (1979), each leaflet described a positive family characteristic with activities to help families strengthen a particular trait within their individual families.

"Showing Respect For Others" was the title of one leaflet addressing the need for family members to respect each other as well as people outside the family, including those who might be different in some way. Some suggestions given were for adults to model respect by not shouting derisively at referees at ball games, using good manners, and waiting their turn in line.

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<sup>1</sup>To avoid confusion and copyright problems with Free To Be A Family by Marlo Thomas, "Free To Be . . . Family" title was changed to "Growing The Family Tree" in early 1988.

Another in the series was entitled, "Sharing Leisure Time" and focused on activities for family members in lieu of watching television. A similar topic, "Enjoying Family Time," encouraged families to work on projects together as part of a regular family time each week.

Family traditions and rituals were the focus of "We Always Do . . . ." Children find part of their identity as a family member by the unique words spoken and actions performed within that family. Family members were encouraged to discover how family traditions started, interview family members of another generation, or start a family scrapbook or photo album.

"What's Right? What's Wrong?" encouraged families to look at their own moral standards as they pertain to decision making. One suggested activity was a method of teaching decision making to children.

Family mealtime has become a lost art in many families because of our busy lifestyles. "Making Mealtime Count" focused on shared, happy mealtimes together, with suggestions to make them fun and an important part of everyone's day.

Self-esteem was the topic for "Build Up--Not Put Down." Family members were encouraged to listen to their conversations with each other and concentrate on building more positive communication. One activity suggested was to watch a favorite television program as a family and discuss how people on the program talked to each other.

The last leaflet in the series focused on building a spiritual base for the family. "Religious Beliefs--A Foundation for Families," encouraged families to think about their own religious beliefs, how they differ from other people, and why they are important to the family unit. Some specific activities involved discussion of religious holidays and the traditions associated with them.

### Project Design and Sampling Procedure

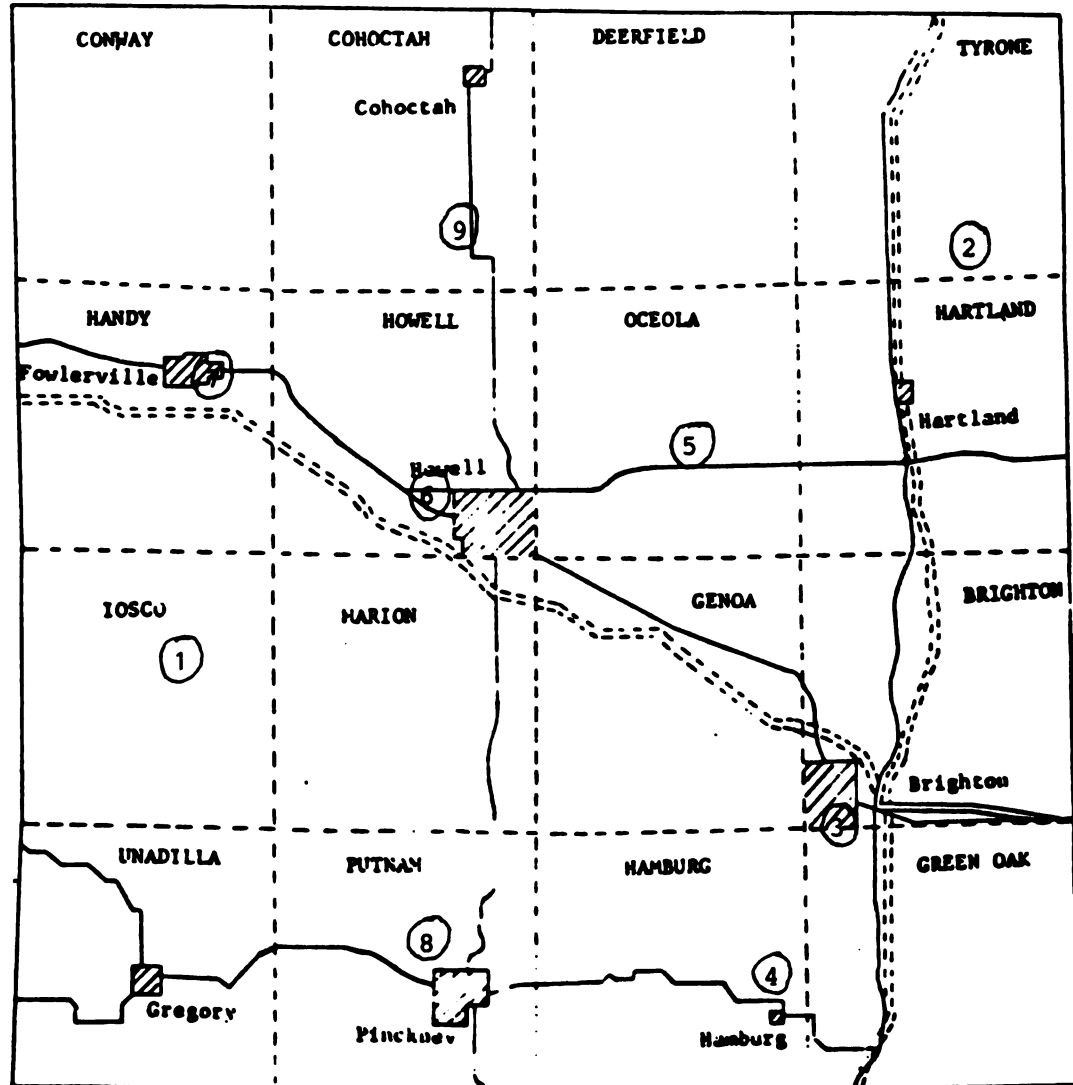
From the 87 churches in Livingston County, 10 churches were selected by the researcher to pilot the project. The selections included a cross-section of denominations, size, and location within the county (see Figure 2 for locations).

In August 1987, the researcher telephoned each church to set up an appointment with the minister or priest to discuss the project. A few responded immediately, requesting the materials sight unseen. In several cases, the secretaries asked for samples to show to the minister and then responded by phone. Only two appointments were made to discuss the project personally. In the end, nine churches in Livingston County and two outside the county participated. Of the two churches out of the county, one minister, upon hearing about the project, requested to participate. The tenth in-county church, did not respond after repeated phone calls. An alternate was not chosen since printing had reached 3,000 copies of each leaflet, somewhat taxing time and monetary resources.

In addition, the series was mailed to 240 individuals on the Extension home economics mailing list. The list is made up of Extension Homemakers, a group of teen mothers, and others who have requested mailings.

Six of the churches, including one of the out of county churches, were asked to insert the leaflets into their church bulletins for distribution. The remaining 5 churches were asked to place them in a literature rack and periodically announce their availability. For easier reference these will hereafter be referred to as the bulletin group and the rack group, respectively.

# Livingston County



- |                             |                               |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Trinity United Methodist | 6. Grace Lutheran             |
| 2. Our Saviour Lutheran     | 7. First Baptist              |
| 3. First Wesleyan           | 8. Peoples Evangelical Free   |
| 4. Holy Spirit Catholic     | 9. Oak Grove United Methodist |
| 5. Saint Johns Catholic     |                               |

Figure 2. Location of Churches in Livingston County, Michigan.

Distribution of the series began the first weekend after Labor Day in September 1987 and continued for 8 weeks. Leaflets were distributed in the same order to all churches and through the mail. Table 1 lists the churches, number of copies delivered, location, and denomination. The number distributed to each church was the same as the number of bulletins printed by each church. Distribution methods, (bulletin or literature rack) are labeled "B" or "L" (for literature to distinguish it from rural), respectively. In the same way, "R" represents rural, "T" represents town, and "U" represents urban. For purposes of this study, rural is defined as a population of less than 2500, town as a population of 2500-50,000, and urban as greater than 50,000.

The first issue of the series was personally delivered to each church, while subsequent issues, except the last, were batched and mailed for a period of 8 weeks. The last issue was delivered along with questionnaires and drop boxes for collecting the completed questionnaires. All of the churches were asked to include the final issue of the series in the church bulletins along with the questionnaires to insure a greater rate of response. Reminder letters and additional questionnaires were mailed to the churches, to prompt participants to complete and return the surveys.

Originally, the level of distribution through churches was to be operationally defined by the number of leaflets distributed minus the number left after the service(s). In fact, only one church returned any unused leaflets and that was a very small amount. When asked, representatives of the other churches stated they had used them all or had plans to use the rest of them. Therefore, the level of distribution was defined as the number distributed.

Table 1. Distribution of Series by Churches

Church	Dist. Method	Denomination	Location	No. of Copies
Trinity	B	United Methodist	R-Fowlerville	130
Our Saviour	L	Lutheran	R-Hartland	350
1st Wesleyan	B	Wesleyan	T-Brighton	330
Holy Spirit	L	Catholic	R-Hamburg	340
St. Johns	L	Catholic	R-Howell	400
Grace	B	Lutheran	T-Howell	275
1st Baptist	B	Baptist	R-Fowlerville	150
Peoples	B	Evangelical Free	R-Pinckney	125
Oak Grove	L	United Methodist	R-Howell	135
HC Wesleyan	B	Wesleyan	R-Out of County	100
Cascades	L	Baptist	U-Out of County	125
B = bulletin group		R = rural		
L = literature rack		T = town		
		U = urban		

### Instrument Design and Distribution

To evaluate the project, a self-administered questionnaire was designed by the researcher to be distributed to the churches and through the mail. (See Appendix B.) To insure better return, the survey instrument was designed to be simple and brief. Two formats were used. Those sent to the churches were folded into a book format to fit easily into the bulletins. The mailed questionnaires were in letter format and folded to become self-mailers.

Questions 1-3 surveyed the level of involvement of respondents with the Cooperative Extension Service. Questions 4-8 referred to the usefulness of the "Free To Be . . . Family" leaflets. The final questions, 9-14, were demographic, including family style, number of children, employment, and age.

The surveys were color-coded to denote the method of leaflet distribution. Questionnaires sent to the bulletin group were white and questionnaires sent to the rack group were gold. Questionnaires sent by direct mail were blue.

Two Cooperative Extension Service secretaries, one volunteer homemaker, and three colleagues of the researcher pre-tested the instrument for understanding and clarity. A few minor changes were made before distribution.

Because the survey involved human subjects, the research proposal and questionnaire were submitted for approval to the Michigan State University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects. No changes were required, and approval was granted (see Appendix C).



### Response

Of the 11 churches involved in the project, only 9 responded with completed questionnaires. One church refused to use the questionnaire even though that had been one of the conditions for participating in the project. The other church intended to use the questionnaire but kept postponing distribution. The rate of mail response was excellent. Two hundred forty surveys were mailed along with the last leaflet and, within 1 week, 20 percent had been returned. Response rate will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

### Statistical Analysis

SL-MICRO, Statistical Language for Microcomputers, was the software used to analyze the data from the questionnaires. The program and data were run on a personal computer by the researcher. Frequencies and Chi-Square tests were used. An Alpha level of .05 was selected as the minimum level of significance.

In accordance with the definitions used in Chapter I, the following computation was made.

Level of involvement refers to the experience respondents had with the Cooperative Extension Service prior to the beginning of this project. Participants were asked to respond to three questions. The first referred to their knowledge of the Cooperative Extension Service. The second asked for the extent of their previous or current involvement in relation to 10 specific activities. The activities were given a "yes" or "no" answer by the respondent and later coded by the computer into categories. Four levels of involvement were thus created. If none of the "yes" answers were checked, the level of involvement was none, one to two "yes" answers was low, three to five "yes" answers was medium,

and six or more "yes" answers was high. The third question asked respondents for their self-rating of their involvement with Extension programs on a five point scale from none to extensive.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter includes the descriptive statistics and the results of the study. Each research question will be discussed separately. The chapter ends with a discussion of additional finding that occurred outside the realm of the questionnaires.

#### Descriptive Statistics

##### Response Rate

One hundred ninety-nine people responded to the questionnaires, 100 by mail and 99 from the churches. Table 2 shows the return by church and by mail. It was expected that the response from direct mail would be greater since those participants were already acquainted with the Extension home economics program. Also, those surveys were self-stamped for easy return. Of the mail recipients, 41.7 percent responded.

The returns from Grace Lutheran and Cascades Baptist churches were larger (9% and 11% of the total return) in part because the County Extension Director and Home Economist, for Livingston County, were members of these churches, respectively. There was probably a larger proportion of people in those churches acquainted with the Cooperative Extension Service and they were strongly encouraged to complete and return the questionnaires.

The Fowlerville Baptist Church accounted for 7.5 percent of the

Table 2. Source of Questionnaires Returned

Name of Church	Absolute Frequency	Adjusted Frequency
1st Wesleyan	12	6.0
Holy Spirit	1	0.5
St. Johns	8	4.0
Grace	17	8.5
Baptist	15	7.5
Peoples	7	3.5
Oak Grove	10	5.0
HC Wesleyan	8	4.0
Cascades	21	10.6
Mail	100	50.3
TOTAL	199	99.9
Valid cases = 199      Missing cases = 0		

total response. The minster encouraged use of the leaflets, incorporated them into his sermons, and urged his people to respond. He packaged extra copies to use with new families in the community.

For several reasons, it was impossible to get an accurate total of the number who used the leaflets. First, since the leaflets were distributed over a period of 8 weeks, it would be extremely unlikely that all eight would go to the same people, or that all people would receive all eight in the series. Second, even if people received the leaflets, there was no assurance they would read or use them. Third, as mentioned earlier, the plan had been to determine, weekly, the number of leaflets distributed by subtracting the number of those left after the services. The plan did not work, however, because the churches wanted to use the leftovers in other ways. Only one church returned any extras. Therefore, usage had to be determined by the responses on the questionnaires.

#### Description of the Respondents

Of the 199 respondents, 17.6 percent, or 34, were male, 82.4 percent, or 159, were female, and 6 left that question blank. The largest percentage of respondents, 60.8 percent, lived in two parent households. The second largest group of respondents, 30.9 percent, lived in two adult households without children. Many of these were in the direct mail group which included Extension Homemakers. Because there are many older women in that group, it was not surprising that there was a large percentage of couples with grown children. Only 4.1 percent of the total respondents were single parents compared to 6 percent (1980 Census) in the county population.

One hundred nineteen respondents (65.4%) had 2-3 children, 19.8 percent had 4-6 children, and 13.7 percent had 0-1 child.

Table 3 reports the frequencies for the number of children. Seventeen respondents left the question blank which could have indicated no children or they simply did not answer the question. The blanks were declared missing values.

Table 3. Number of Children

Number	Absolute Frequency	Adjusted Frequency (%)
0 to 1	25	13.7
2 to 3	119	65.4
4 to 6	36	19.8
> 6	2	1.1
TOTAL	182	100.0

Valid cases = 182

Missing cases = 17

Nearly 16 percent indicated they had children age 0-4 in the home. Thirty-two percent had children age 5-12, 25 percent had children age 13-18, and 11 percent had children age 19 or older living at home.

More respondents were in the 36-45 age group than any other age group. Table 4 shows the frequencies for age of the respondents. Just over half, 54.6 percent, were 45 years of age or younger.

Table 4. Age of Respondents

Age	Absolute Frequency	Adjusted Frequency (%)
Under 25	4	2.0
25 to 35	37	18.9
36 to 45	66	33.7
46 to 55	38	19.4
56 to 65	25	12.8
65 +	26	13.3
TOTAL	196	100.0

Valid cases = 196

Missing cases = 3

Participants were asked to give employment information for themselves and for their spouses. Table 5 gives the frequencies of work status. Percentages do not total 100 because respondents could check more than one category and not all respondents had a spouse.

Table 5. Work Status

Work Status	Respondent		Spouse	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Fulltime	65	32.7	118	59.3
Parttime	41	20.6	15	7.5
Unemployed*	47	23.6	14	7.0
Retired	36	18.1	36	18.1
Student	6	3.0	1	0.5
Other	9	4.5	2	1.0

\*Unemployed was stated "do not work outside the home" on the questionnaire.



Research Questions

Research Question 1

Will distributing family-child educational materials through churches be a way to reach people who have not used the Cooperative Extension Service?

Of the 199 respondents, 28 (14%) stated they had never before heard of the Cooperative Extension Service, and 171 (86%) reported having heard of it (see Table 6).

Table 6. Knowledge of Cooperative Extension Service

Knowledge of CES	Absolute Frequency	Adjusted Frequency (%)
No	28	14.1
Yes	171	85.9
TOTAL	199	100.0

Valid cases = 199

Missing cases = 0

Degree of Involvement With Extension

Seventy-five percent of those who reported they had not heard of CES were from the churches. Of those who checked yes, they had heard of CES, 54 percent, just over half, were from the mailed surveys. These findings were significant at the .01 level (see Table 7).

Table 7. Knowledge of Cooperative Extension Service by Method of Distribution

Method of Distribution	Knowledge of CES			
	<u>Yes</u>		<u>No</u>	
	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
Church	78	78.8	21	21.2
Mail	93	54.5	7	7.0

Chi-Square = 8.3110

df = 1

p < .05 level

N = 199

Question 2 on the survey measured previous or current contact with the Cooperative Extension Service by requesting specific information on activities with CES. The answers were computed to create four levels of involvement, none, low, moderate, and high. Table 8 shows the frequencies for each category.

Table 8. Extent of Involvement with the Cooperative Extension Service

Involvement Level	Absolute Frequency	Adjusted Frequency (%)
None	32	16.1
Low	40	20.1
Moderate	88	44.2
High	39	19.6
TOTAL	199	100.0

Valid cases = 199

Missing cases = 0

Comparison of the self-rating of involvement between the church group and the mail group showed 64 percent of those who reported no involvement were from the church group. Seventy-three percent of those who reported extensive involvement were from the mail group. It was interesting that those who reported limited involvement were nearly equally split from each group, as seen in Table 9. Differences were significant at the .01 level.

Table 9. Extent of Involvement with CES by Method of Distribution

Method of Distribution	Extent of Involvement							
	<u>None</u>		<u>Low</u>		<u>Medium</u>		<u>High</u>	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Church	27	27.3	33	33.3	30	30.3	9	29.0
Mail	7	7.0	11	11.0	60	60.0	22	22.0

Chi-Square = 38.2123

df = 3

p < .01

N = 199

On a self-rating of involvement with CES, 67 percent indicated limited or no involvement, or they left it blank. Blanks were declared zeros. Eighteen percent rated their involvement as moderate, 9.5 percent stated considerable, and 5.5 percent reported extensive involvement. See Table 10.

Table 10. Self-rating of Involvement with Cooperative Extension Service

Self-rating	Absolute Frequency	Adjusted Frequency (%)
None	63	31.7
Limited	70	35.2
Moderate	36	18.1
Considerable	19	9.5
Extensive	11	5.5
TOTAL	199	100.0

Valid cases = 199

Missing cases = 0

Question 2 on the survey, the sum of involvement with CES was analyzed by distribution groups and showed that almost 80 percent of those with no involvement were from the church group. Seventy percent of those indicating high involvement were from the mail. Differences were significant at the .01 level (see Table 11).

Table 11. Self-rating of Involvement with CES by Method of Distribution

Method of Dist.	Self-rating of Involvement									
	<u>None</u>		<u>Limited</u>		<u>Moderate</u>		<u>Consid.</u>		<u>Extensive</u>	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Church	23	28.8	38	47.5	10	12.5	6	7.5	3	3.8
Mail	13	14.1	32	34.8	26	28.3	13	14.1	8	8.7

Chi-Square = 14.4882

df = 4

p < .01 level

N = 172

In response to the first research question, the above results indicate that distributing materials through churches was a way to reach people who had not previously used the Cooperative Extension Service. More of the respondents who had not heard of the Extension Service, or had little or no involvement with it, were from the group who received the materials through churches.

Research Question 2

Is there a relationship between levels of involvement with the Cooperative Extension Service and level of participation and use of materials?

Questions 4, 5, and 6 on the survey were used to determine level of participation. The three questions referred to the number of leaflets read, the number of activities tried, and the perceived level of usefulness. Respondents were asked to check a specific category for each question. Tables 12-14 show the frequencies for each question.

Thirty-eight percent reported reading 7-8 of the leaflets, with 27 percent having read 4-6. Only 11 questionnaires were blank on this question (see Table 12).

Fewer people reported trying any of the activities, compared to reading the leaflets, but 37 percent reported trying at least 1-3 of the activities. Thirty-eight people left the question blank, perhaps indicating a zero answer; however, they were counted as missing data, rather than as zeros (see Table 13).

Respondents were asked to indicate their opinion of the leaflets as to their usefulness by checking either not useful, somewhat useful, or very useful. Of the 157 valid answers, only 6 percent checked not useful. Nearly half checked either somewhat or very useful (see Table 14).

Table 12. Number of Leaflets Read

Number	Absolute Frequency	Adjusted Frequency (%)
0	24	12.8
1-3	41	21.8
4-6	51	27.1
7-8	72	38.3
Blank	11	Missing
TOTAL	199	100.0

Valid cases = 188

Missing cases = 11

Table 13. Number of Activities Tried

Number	Absolute Frequency	Adjusted Frequency (%)
0	49	30.4
1-3	60	37.3
4-6	30	18.6
7-9	14	8.7
> 10	8	5.0
Blank	38	Missing
TOTAL	100	100.0

Valid cases = 161

Missing cases = 38



Table 14. Level of Usefulness of Leaflets

Level	Absolute Frequency	Adjusted Frequency (%)
Not Useful	10	6.4
Somewhat Useful	75	47.8
Very Useful	72	45.9
Blank	42	Missing
TOTAL	199	100.0

Valid cases = 157

Missing cases = 42

Using the computer definition of level of involvement with the Co-operative Extension Service for question 2, Chi-Square tests were run for level of involvement by numbers read, activities tried, and level of usefulness (see Tables 15-17). Differences in each case were significant at the .05 level.

Table 15. Number of Leaflets Read by Level of Involvement with CES

Involvement	Number Read							
	0	%	1-3	%	4-6	%	7-8	%
None	8	28.6	6	21.4	2	7.1	12	42.9
Low	8	20.0	12	30.0	12	30.0	8	20.0
Medium	8	9.6	16	19.3	27	32.5	32	38.6
High	0	0.0	7	18.9	10	27.0	20	54.1

Chi-Square = 25.2823

df = 9

p &lt; .05 level

N = 188

While reading the leaflets was one measure of use of the series, the number of activities tried was another. Chi-Square tests were run on the level of involvement by the number of activities tried. Very few activities were tried by those with no or low involvement with CES. The people who tried the most activities were those who were moderately involved with CES. Thirty-five (46%) of this group tried 1-3 activities and 18 (23.7%) tried 4-6 activities. The number of activities tried lessened for the group most involved with CES. This could be due to the older women on the mailing list who did not have children at home. Additional comments on many of the surveys indicated the series was being saved for later use, and/or passed on to a neighbor or grown child with children.

Table 16. Number of Activities Tried by Level of Involvement

Involvement	Number of Activities Tried									
	0	%	1-3	%	4-6	%	7-9	%	>10	%
None	8	40.0	6	30.0	2	10.0	2	10.0	2	10.0
Low	17	56.7	6	20.0	6	20.0	0	0.0	1	3.3
Medium	16	21.1	35	46.1	18	23.7	5	6.6	2	2.6
High	8	22.9	13	37.1	4	11.4	7	20.0	3	8.6

Chi-Square = 28.4588                      df = 12

p < .01 level                              N = 161

Participants were asked to indicate their perception of the usefulness of the series. Three categories, not useful, somewhat useful, and very useful were the possible choices. When compared against the level of involvement some interesting data appeared.

Eighty-one percent of those with no involvement with CES stated the series was very useful, while 62 percent of those with the most involvement responded in this fashion. Over half of those with a low level of involvement indicated the series was somewhat useful and almost a third of that group checked very useful. Of the group with no involvement with CES, none checked the not useful category. Definitely the respondents considered the series at least somewhat useful and this was overwhelmingly true for those with no or limited involvement with Extension (see Table 17).

Table 17. Level of Usefulness of Leaflets by Level of Involvement

Involvement	Not Useful		Level of Usefulness Somewhat Useful		Very Useful	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
None	0	0.0	3	18.8	13	81.3
Low	4	12.9	17	54.8	10	32.3
Medium	4	5.3	44	57.9	28	36.8
High	2	5.9	11	32.4	21	61.8

Chi-Square = 18.5664                      df = 6

p < .01 level                              N = 157

Chi-Square tests were run on the same three questions for those who had and had not heard of CES. There was not a significant relationship between number of activities tried nor level of usefulness and whether or not they had heard of CES. There was a significant relationship between having heard of CES and the number of leaflets read. Differences were significant at the .05 level (see Table 18).

Twenty-nine percent of those who had not heard of CES reported they had not read any of the leaflets, compared to 10 percent of those who had heard of CES. However, nearly equal percentages of those who had not heard of CES (39%) and those who had heard of CES (38%) had read between 7-8 leaflets. Ninety percent of those who had heard of CES read one or more, and 71 percent of those who had not heard of CES had also read one or more.

Table 18. Number of Leaflets Read by Knowledge of CES

Heard of CES	Number of Leaflets Read							
	0	%	1-3	%	4-6	%	7-8	%
No	8	28.6	6	21.4	3	10.7	11	39.3
Yes	16	10.0	35	21.9	48	30.0	61	38.1

Chi-Square = 9.7159

df = 3

p < .05

N = 188

Participants were asked for a self-rating on their level of involvement with CES, in question three on the survey, with a five point scale from none to extensive. This variable was compared to the number of leaflets read, the number of activities tried, and the respondents' perception of the usefulness of the series. There was not a significant relationship between the self-rating of involvement and the level of usefulness perceived.

There was a significant ( $p < .05$ ) relationship between self-rating of involvement and the number of leaflets read. Of those who considered their involvement extensive, nearly 64 percent read between 7 and 8

leaflets compared to those with no involvement, 32 percent of whom read between 7 and 8. Of those with no involvement, 30 percent had read none of the leaflets (see Table 19).

Table 19. Number of Leaflets Read by Self-rating of Involvement with CES

Self-rating			Number of Leaflets Read					
	0	%	1-3	%	4-6	%	7-8	%
None	19	30.2	15	23.8	9	14.3	20	31.7
Limited	9	12.9	19	27.1	18	25.7	24	34.3
Moderate	3	8.3	4	11.1	16	44.4	13	36.1
Considerable	2	10.5	3	15.8	6	31.6	8	42.1
Extensive	2	18.2	0	0.0	2	18.2	7	63.6

Chi-Square = 26.1917

df = 12

p < .05 level

N = 199

There was an interesting finding when comparing the self-rating to the number of activities tried. Nearly equal percentages of those who had no involvement (57%) and those with extensive involvement (55%) had tried none of the activities. However, 18 percent of those in the extensive category had tried 10 or more activities compared to only 3 percent of those not involved. These differences were significant at the .01 level (see Table 20).

Table 20. Number of Activities Tried by Self-rating of Involvement with CES

Self-rating	Number of Activities Tried									
	0	%	1-3	%	4-6	%	7-9	%	>10	%
None	36	57.1	14	22.2	6	9.5	5	7.9	2	3.2
Limited	28	40.0	26	37.1	13	18.6	3	4.3	0	0.0
Moderate	8	22.2	12	33.3	9	25.0	5	13.9	2	5.6
Considerable	9	47.4	7	36.8	1	5.3	0	0.0	2	10.5
Extensive	6	54.5	1	9.1	1	9.1	1	9.1	2	18.2

Chi-Square = 32.3853      df = 16

p < .01 level      N = 199

Because the mailing list included MAEH study group members and because those members are traditionally older women without children living at home, it was thought results might be skewed by a large number of older women with high levels of involvement with CES. A Chi-Square test was run on age by method of distribution. While not statistically significant, the percentage (50%) of respondents 46 years of age and older (typically, those age groups with grown children) in the church

group was slightly higher than the percentage (40%) of those 46 years of age and older in the mail group.

The above data indicate that in response to research question 2, those with greater involvement with CES had higher levels of participation and use of the leaflets, but those with little or no involvement also found the material useful.

### Research Question 3

Is there a difference between level of participation by method of distribution within the churches?

Survey instruments were color-coded by method of distribution. Those churches that distributed "Free to Be . . . Family" in their church bulletins, called the bulletin group, were given white survey forms. Those who distributed the series in literature racks, the rack group, were given gold forms. The mailed surveys were blue self-mailers.

Chi-Square tests were run on the number read, activities tried, and level of usefulness by the method of distribution. Significant differences were found. As expected, more respondents in the bulletin group reported reading 7-8 (43%) of the leaflets, compared to the rack group (7%). Forty-two percent of the latter group reported they read no leaflets. Differences were significant at the .05 level (see Table 21).

Table 21. Number of Leaflets Read by Method of Distribution

Method of Distribution			Number of Leaflets Read					
	0	%	1-3	%	4-6	%	7-8	%
Bulletin Group	7	12.5	12	21.4	13	23.2	24	42.9
Rack Group	17	41.5	13	31.7	8	19.5	3	7.3
Mail	0	0.0	16	17.6	30	33.0	45	49.5

Chi-Square = 56.5319

df = 6

p < .01

N = 199



Twice as many respondents from the bulletin group (14%), compared to the rack group (7.7%), tried at least 4 activities. Of the former group, 11 percent tried seven or more activities. Of the rack group, under 8 percent tried 4-6 activities and no one tried 7 or more (see Table 22). Differences were significant at the .05 level.

Table 22. Number of Activities Tried by Method of Distribution

Method of Distribution	Number of Activities Tried									
	0	%	1-3	%	4-6	%	7-9	%	>10	%
Bulletin Group	19	43.2	14	31.8	6	13.6	2	4.5	3	6.8
Rack Group	11	42.3	13	50.0	2	7.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
Mail	19	20.9	33	36.3	22	24.2	12	13.2	5	5.5

Chi-Square = 18.4385

df = 8

p < .05 level

N = 161

There were no significant differences between the church groups on the usefulness of the leaflets.

In response to research question 3 there were some differences in participation by method of distribution within the churches. Those who received the leaflets in the bulletins read more leaflets and tried more activities, however, the groups did not differ on usefulness of the leaflets.

#### Research Question 4

Is there a difference between level of participation within churches and level of participation through direct mail?

The responses from the two church groups were combined in the data

analysis for this question. There were differences in the number of leaflets read between those who received them through the church and those who received them in the mail. All respondents who received the series in the mail reported they had read at least one of the leaflets, and 50 percent had read 7-8 leaflets, compared to 28 percent who received the series at church. Twenty-five percent who received the leaflets at church had read none of them. The differences were significant at the .005 level (see Table 23).

Table 23. Number of Leaflets Read by Source of Leaflets

Source of Leaflets			Number of Leaflets Read					
	0	%	1-3	%	4-6	%	7-8	%
Churches	24	24.7	25	25.8	21	21.6	27	27.8
Mail	0	0.0	16	17.6	30	33.0	45	49.9

Chi-Square = 31.9049

df = 3

p < .005 level

N = 188

There were significant differences between the number of activities tried and the method of distribution. Of those who received the series in the mail, 37 percent had tried 4-9 of the activities, while of the church group, only 14 percent had tried 4-9 activities. The percentage that had tried 10 or more activities was similar for both groups (4-5%). This was perhaps because the time period of the project was so short (see Table 24).

Table 24. Number of Activities Tried by Source of Leaflets

Source of Leaflets	Number of Activities Tried									
	0	%	1-3	%	4-6	%	7-9	%	>10	%
Churches	30	42.9	27	38.6	8	11.4	2	2.9	3	4.3
Mail	19	20.9	33	36.3	22	24.2	12	13.2	5	5.5

Chi-Square = 14.7575

df = 4

p < .01 level

N = 161

There were no significant differences between the expressed level of usefulness and the method of distribution.

In response to research question 4, the level of participation as measured by number of leaflets read and activities tried was higher for the mail group compared to the church group, but the groups did not differ on usefulness.

#### Research Question 5

Is there any difference in level of participation by age, employment, sex, or number of children?

Age

There were no significant differences in number of leaflets read nor in the level of usefulness according to the age of respondents. There were, however, differences in the number of activities tried, but no clear pattern developed. Table 25 shows that in the 25-35 year old age group, 71 percent reported trying between 1 and 9 activities. Seventy-four percent in the 36-45 year old age group tried between 1 and 9 activities.

Table 25. Number of Activities Tried by Age of Respondents

Age of Respondent	Number of Activities Tried									
	0	%	1-3	%	4-6	%	7-9	%	>10	%
< 25	2	50.0	2	50.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
25-35	10	28.6	12	34.3	7	20.0	6	17.1	0	0.0
36-45	10	18.2	29	52.7	12	21.8	2	3.6	2	3.6
46-55	12	41.4	8	27.6	6	20.7	1	3.4	2	6.9
56-65	5	27.8	4	22.2	3	16.7	2	11.1	4	22.2
65 +	9	50.0	4	22.2	2	11.1	3	16.7	0	0.0

Chi-Square = 36.1419

df = 20

p &lt; .05 level

N = 159

### Gender Differences

There were no significant differences in the number of activities tried nor the level of usefulness by sex of the respondent. There was a difference in the number of leaflets read. Table 26 indicates more males than females read none of the series, 34 percent against 8 percent. More females (72%) read 4-8 of the leaflets while only 8 percent read none. These differences were significant at the .01 level.

Table 26. Number of Leaflets Read by Gender of Respondents

Gender	0		Number of Leaflets Read					
		%	1-3	%	4-6	%	7-8	%
Male	11	34.4	9	28.1	4	12.5	8	25.0
Female	12	7.9	30	19.7	46	30.3	64	42.1

Chi-Square = 20.7526

df = 3

p < .01 level

N = 184

Employment Status

When looking at employment status, there were no differences in the number of leaflets read nor in the number of activities tried. There was a significant difference in the number of leaflets read by employment status. Table 27 indicates that of those who were not employed fulltime, 44 percent read between 7 and 8 of the leaflets. Those who were employed fulltime were nearly equally divided among the categories with approximately one quarter of the group in each category. These differences were significant at the .01 level.

Table 27. Number of Leaflets Read by Employment Status

Fulltime Employment			Number of Leaflets Read					
	0	%	1-3	%	4-6	%	7-8	%
No	9	7.2	26	20.8	35	28.0	55	44.0
Yes	15	23.8	15	23.8	16	25.4	17	27.0

Chi-Square = 12.4976

df = 3

p &lt; .01 level

N = 188

There also was a difference among those who were retired. Nearly 60 percent of those retired versus 34 percent of the non-retired, read between 7 and 8 of the leaflets. This difference was also significant at the .01 level, as shown in Table 28.

Table 28. Number of Leaflets Read by Retirement Status

Retired	Number of Leaflets Read							
	0	%	1-3	%	4-6	%	7-8	%
No	18	11.5	37	23.7	48	30.8	53	34.0
Yes	6	18.8	4	12.5	3	9.4	19	59.4

Chi-Square = 11.5675

df = 3

p < .01 level

N = 188

#### Number of Children

There were no significant differences in participation by the number of children in the family.

Overall, in response to research question 5, there were few differences by age, sex, or employment, and there was no difference in participation by number of children in the family. The only differences were that the 25-45 year old age group tried more of the activities, and females, retired people, and those not working fulltime read more of the leaflets. None of these findings was unexpected.

#### Additional Findings

Question number 8 on the survey was a scale designed to measure the use of each of the eight leaflets. For each title, respondents were asked to designate the phrase best describing how they had used

the leaflet. The six choices were as follows: did not read, skimmed through it, read well, tried an activity, saved to use later, and can't recall. A sum was then derived for each of the six categories. Scores for each category could range from 0 to 8.

A mean score was calculated for each category, as shown in Table 29. It was hoped that there would be low scores for "did not read" and "skimmed through it" and those results were obtained with a mean score of 0.27 and 0.75 respectively. The mean scores were much higher for "read well," "tried an activity," and "saved til later." These results were not used for analysis of the research questions but they did indicate a level of use for the leaflets.

Table 29. Mean Scores for Each Category of Use of Leaflets

Leaflet	Mean Score
Did Not Read	0.27
Skimmed Through It	0.75
Read Well	2.37
Tried An Activity	1.14
Saved Till Later	1.22
Cannot Recall	0.12

There were no significant differences in the use of one leaflet over another. In general, if respondents read one well they read them all well. Some tried activities from different leaflets but with no consistent pattern. If they saved one to use later, they saved them all to use later or to pass on to someone else. Many made comments that



they passed them on to adult children, neighbors, or friends. This was especially true for older respondents.

Some of the most interesting results of the project were outside the realm of the formal research instrument. Several requests were made for use of the series as a result of receiving the leaflets at church.

One woman who received the series shared it with a friend from another church, not in the study. The friend showed the leaflets to her pastor and contacted the Extension office to get the set for her church. Three hundred more people received the series in her church after an extra printing was run.

The director of an inner city pre-school from Detroit requested copies to share with the parents of her students. She sent regular mailings to 170 parents monthly and felt the material would be very useful to them.

The assistant superintendent of schools in a neighboring county requested permission to reproduce the series in a monthly newsletter to all families in the district. He had received the leaflets at his church in Livingston County.

One request came from the director of the Michigan Lottery in Lansing, requesting permission to reproduce the series in a newsletter to his 200 employees. He had seen some of the leaflets at a friend's house and felt them appropriate for his employees.

A homemaker, who is also a retired home economics teacher, received the series at her church and asked permission to write about the series for the Michigan Council on Family Relations newsletter. This resulted in six requests from the private and public sector.

The spin-offs from the project indicated many families were reached, even beyond the scope of the county, by distributing the series through churches. Many of the recipients of the series shared the leaflets with others. The end result was the development of a much wider audience than those in the churches or on the mailing list alone.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Summary

During the fall of 1987, a series of eight family strengths leaflets, entitled "Free To Be . . . Family," (later retitled "Growing the Family Tree") was written by the researcher and distributed through selected churches and by direct mail. The goal of the project was to determine whether families could be reached, through churches, with family-child educational materials.

Half of the churches were asked to distribute the series as inserts in their regular, weekly bulletins. The other half were requested to place the leaflets in a literature rack and announce their availability. Analysis was completed to determine which method of distribution was most effective.

As a control, the series was mailed to the existing home economics mailing list, a traditional audience for Extension programming. There were 240 participants on the mailing list, and 2,460 leaflets were distributed to the churches each week. With the final issue in the series, a questionnaire was included to elicit feedback on the usefulness of the materials and the method of distribution. One hundred ninety-nine questionnaires were returned, 100 from the mailing list participants and the remaining 99 from the churches.

Five research questions were posed and analyzed for the project.

1. Will distributing family-child educational materials through churches be a way to reach people who have not used the Cooperative Extension Service?

2. Is there a relationship between levels of involvement with the Cooperative Extension Service and level of participation and use of materials?

3. Is there a difference between level of participation by method of distribution within the churches?

4. Is there a difference between level of participation within churches and level of participation through direct mail?

5. Is there any difference in level of participation by age, employment, sex, or number of children?

Results clearly indicated that distribution of family-child education through the churches was a method to reach families who had never used the resources of the Cooperative Extension Service. As noted in the descriptive statistics, even those with low levels of involvement with the Cooperative Extension Service participated in the program. One woman stated she thought the material was good but inappropriate for distribution through the churches. No other negative comments were made concerning distribution. Many comments were made in appreciation of the series and for the distribution through the churches.

There was evidence of a relationship between levels of involvement with CES and level of participation and use of the materials. The data indicate that those with the most involvement with CES were more likely to read a larger number of leaflets. Over 50 percent of those with the most involvement with CES reported having read 7 to 8 of the leaflets. Also, all of those with the highest level of involvement read at least one of the leaflets. However, the findings also indicated that of the 15 percent of the respondents who had no prior contact with CES, nearly 43 percent had read 7 to 8 of the leaflets. Thirty percent of those with a low level of involvement read from 1 to 3 in the series and

another 30 percent read between 4 and 6 of the leaflets.

Very few tried 10 or more activities which may be due in part to the length of distribution time for the project. In eight weeks it would have been difficult to use many of the activities.

In response to research question 2, there is evidence of a relationship between levels of involvement with the Cooperative Extension Service and level of participation and use of the materials. In general, there was more use by those with high involvement with CES; however, many of those with very little involvement indicated reading the leaflets, trying some of the activities, and rating them as somewhat or very useful.

There was a difference between the level of participation by method of distribution within the churches. A larger number of those who received the leaflets in their church bulletins reported reading more leaflets and trying more activities than those who received the series in a literature rack. There was no significant difference between the groups on the usefulness of the series.

As expected, the level of participation was greater for those who received the series by direct mail than for those who received the series at church. Those who received them in the mail were used to receiving educational information from CES through the mail. Church recipients were not accustomed to receiving such a series in their church bulletins. They also were not as likely to receive a complete set of the series as were those on the mailing list.

When analyzing level of participation by age, sex, number of children, and employment status of the participant, few differences were found. Those in the 25 to 45 year old age group tried more of the

activities than other age groups. More leaflets were read by females, retired individuals and those not working fulltime. There were no differences by numbers of children.

Some of the most valuable results of the project did not show up in the analysis of the questionnaires. Requests for use of the materials came from several sources as a result of the distribution through the churches. Consequently, many more families were reached than originally expected.

The findings did confirm that distribution of family-child information through churches is a way for Extension home economics programs to reach new audiences.

### Implications

Comments were made on some of the surveys giving suggestions for further use of the series. One person suggested distribution through libraries, doctors' offices, and beauty shops as possibilities. Other suggestions were made by colleagues for distribution via mail to target audiences, through businesses in paycheck envelopes, and as a resource for child development classes.

This study proved that distribution through churches may be one way to reach new families, and may stimulate others to seek out additional methods for reaching families.

Further research on use of varying delivery methods is needed. Audio and video tapes, computers, and cable television should all be researched for effectiveness in reaching families.

One factor for consideration before launching a mass distribution project must be cost. This project was within the confines of the county budget for Extension both for printing and postage. If this

were not the case, outside funding would have been required. To expand the program beyond the initial group of churches, additional funding would be required in Livingston County as well.

Another factor to consider must be personnel time for writing, printing, packaging and mailing. The project was labor intensive, especially in terms of secretarial time.

### Conclusions

America's families are changing with more single parents, step-families, both parents working, and changing lifestyles. Family-child education is important for families struggling to cope with contemporary problems. Education in a traditional classroom setting often does not fit into the schedule of busy adults, and formal classroom instruction simply does not appeal to some adults. Adults want to receive information but in a way that is convenient, meets their needs, does not take them away from their families, and fits into their lifestyle and ecosystems. Professionals seeking to reach families with important educational information must become more creative in developing delivery methods to meet those needs. Research has shown that adults learn best when they can set their own pace, have flexible hours, and the subject matter meets their needs.

One of the subject areas most requested by adults is education on the home and family. They want practical ideas that can be learned at home, but often they do not know where to find such information. "Free To Be . . . Family" met those criteria and was available to families through a familiar source, their church.

The project succeeded beyond expectations through requests brought about by people sharing the materials with others outside their churches.

The research has shown the importance of trying new methods and the use of church bulletins (not literature racks) was a good method. It is a way for Extension to reach people.



## APPENDICES

**APPENDIX A**

**"GROWING THE FAMILY TREE" LEAFLETS**



Cooperative Extension Service  
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## ***Growing the Family Tree***

### **Sharing Leisure Time**

Family members need to invest time in each other. By sharing leisure time, families not only strengthen communications, but develop new interests, foster play and humor, and generally enhance family life.

Work is probably considered the biggest infringement upon family time. But perhaps the second greatest thief of family time is television.

Families often watch T.V. in the same room without any communication. In many families, members watch their own choice of T.V. in separate rooms.

Statistics tell us that the average American child has watched 17,000 hours of T.V. by age 18. It is pretty hard to have good communication or shared activities during T.V. programs.

Whether the family controls the T.V. or the T.V. controls the family in large part determines the quality of shared time and communication within that family. By turning off the T.V., families can begin to explore family-centered activities.

Even singles and older adults often find that T.V. robs them of time that might be spent more productively. It can become easier to turn on the T.V. than to cultivate friendships or learn new skills.

### Some Ideas To Try

- Keep a log for one week, of hours and programs watched by family members.
  - Have a family meeting to discuss findings.
  - At a family meeting, take the T.V. listing for the week and cross out forbidden programs. Highlight acceptable programs setting the amount of daily time allowed for T.V.
  - Plan some activities to try to replace T.V. programs.
- Some suggestions follow:



#### Physical play

bicycling, hiking, throwing a frisbee

#### Hobbies

sewing, gardening, needlework, woodwork,  
clay/model building

#### Reading

books/magazines

#### Music & Art

listen to, play, sing, paint, draw,  
cut and paste

#### Cooking together

plan a meal, prepare a meal, make ice cream,  
cook outside

#### Play

outdoor games, board games, create a game

#### Work

chores, laundry, washing the car

#### Field trips

library, attic/basement,  
neighborhood

#### Write

letters, a story, a diary

#### Drama

make up a play, make puppets,  
charades, read a play

#### Visit

relatives, shut-in's, friends,  
at a farm

#### Sharing

day's events, feelings, dreams,  
family history

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## Growing the Family Tree

Build Up - Not Put Down

"You stupid jerk!" "Your feet are so big you don't need skis." "Hey, four eyes!" "You bonehead."

Sound familiar? The 'Great American Put Down' is often part of family life in our society. But strong, healthy families learn to minimize comments that hurt.

Dolores Curran, in *Traits of a Healthy Family* identifies family affirmation (giving a sense of personal worth) and support as one of the important characteristics of healthy families. Speaking loving, encouraging words and listening to each other to give support helps bind a family together.

Put downs, sarcasm, and critical disapproving words not only stop communication, they chip away at self-esteem. Children and adults need support and encouragement of family members to feel good about themselves as people and create a safe environment in which to grow.

Single parents especially need affirming words from children and other family members. Older family members and singles also need kind affectionate words from extended family and friends.

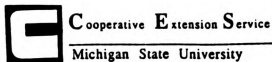
Put downs often become a habit. They are not intended to hurt but they do. Couples sometimes snipe at each other in a joking manner but it isn't funny to the object of the remark. It takes effort to break the put down habit but it can be broken. Some of the following activities may help.

- List four family members or friends that you see often, determine to speak some affirming words to each one this week.
- For a few days keep track of the harmful words, put-downs, times of stoney silence or turn-off words spoken in your family. Have a family meeting to determine how you will minimize these words.
- Write a letter (or even better, make a tape) to some family member with affirming words that say how special he/she is.
- Call single or older family members and tell them why they are special to you.
- Keep a family chart awarding stars to everyone who speaks affirming words to others.
- Watch a favorite family T.V. show. Count the kind, supporting words or phrases spoken and the put-down words and phrases. Discuss how the people felt when those words were spoken.
- For parents, let your children hear you say good things about them to other people.
- For children, let your parents hear you say good things about them to your friends.
- To help you get started, practice finishing the following sentences (remember, only positive comments!).

I was proud of you when \_\_\_\_\_  
It was a nice thing you did when you \_\_\_\_\_  
You are always \_\_\_\_\_  
Today was special when you \_\_\_\_\_  
You are important to me because \_\_\_\_\_



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## Growing the Family Tree

### Enjoying Family Time

Family stress is real! Families are squeezed to the limit with economic problems, work responsibilities and problems in society. But perhaps the biggest stressor of all is lack of time. Work and school responsibilities of necessity take large amounts of time but somehow families must make time to be together.

Family time strengthens the bonds that hold families together and promotes a sense of belonging. Whether in a play or work activity, time together helps family members understand each other and improves communication.

It doesn't just happen. Family time must be planned and guarded carefully. The following ideas may help you get started.

1. Set aside time each week to spend as a family. As often as possible, make it the same day of the week so that family members can plan accordingly.
2. Make family time fun so everyone can look forward to it. Even if the planned activity is a work project, build in a special treat or reward to be enjoyed at the end of the project. For instance, after raking leaves have a wiener roast.
3. At a weekly family meeting, look at everyone's calendar and set some priorities. Some events may have to be eliminated. Determine as a family to start making time to be together.



4. Enjoy some leisure activities as a family during your special time.

5. Holidays and vacations can be a stressful time for many families when everyone wants to do something different. Let everyone discuss their expectations about the event and then make plans together.

6. Plan a family activity that benefits someone else.

- As a family do Grandma's yard clean up.
- Go to a nursing home and visit or sing for the patients.
- Volunteer as a family for a workday at your church.
- Work together in support of a favorite charity.
- Grandparents, aunts and uncles volunteer to watch little ones so that parents can have some time alone.
- Fix a meal for a family or person who is ill or alone. Make it a family project.

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## Growing the Family Tree

"We Always Do..."

What was happening in your family the last time someone said, "but we always do...?" Was it a special holiday, vacation, or just a routine Sunday afternoon? Whatever the occasion, "what you always do" was a family tradition or ritual that makes your family unique. No two families are exactly the same and in many cases rituals and traditions are what set your family apart from other families.

Traditions create memories and security for family members. Knowing what to expect and repeated rituals help strengthen a family by giving members a sense of belonging. The traditions may be as simple as favorite family expressions or as involved as where to spend vacations. But, whatever they are, they build memories and security.

It takes time and effort to build family traditions and time is at a premium in our society. But the bond created for family members is well worth the effort.

Listed below are some activities you might try with your family to build some memories and continue some traditions.



1. List the traditions your family shares for holidays or other special days. Don't forget to include favorite foods along with activities.
2. Have children interview grandparents and record the interview on tape. Some questions they might ask are:
  - Who were their best friends as children?
  - Did they have nicknames?
  - What did they like to do for fun as children?
  - How did they meet?
  - What was it like during W.W. II, or Vietnam, or the depression?
  - What was it like in school when they were kids?
  - What did they think of their parents when they were your age?
3. Start a family scrapbook. It might include pictures, events, favorite recipes, big and little successes, pictures of pets.
4. Get out some old photographs, identify the people and record the date of the photo.
5. Think of some family words or phrases unique to your family. How did they start?
6. With other family members, trace the origin of your family name.
7. Grandparents - you make a tape for your grandchildren (see #2 for ideas). If you live a long way from your grandchildren this is a great way to let them get to know you.
8. List some new activities you want to do that might become a tradition.

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### ***Growing the Family Tree*** **Making Mealtime Count**



Our hurried lifestyle has made mealtime around the table a thing of the past for many families. Sports activities, work schedules and television have all helped keep families apart at mealtime.

Time around the table is important for communication to occur and for family members to touch base with each other. It needs to be a priority as often as possible. Certainly it is not always possible but making it a priority will help.

When the family is together at mealtime, table talk is important. Non-judgmental conversation will help improve communications with all family members. Everyone can review the events of the day (or plans for the day at breakfast time) and use the time to bring each other closer together. Below are some ideas that may help.

- Have a family meeting once a week to coordinate schedules to allow for family mealtimes.
- Eliminate some activities so that the family can be together.
- Turn off the television during meals. When the telephone rings during meals, arrange to return the call after the mealtime.
- Begin each meal with a time of prayer or thanksgiving.
- Plan a special company meal where everyone gets dressed up and the table is set nicely. The secret company can be your children, the grandparents, friends or neighbors. It's an especially nice way to make family members feel special.
- Once a month each child is responsible for a meal. With the help of an adult (if needed), the menu is planned, shopping completed, meal prepared, table set, and meal served. Even very young children enjoy helping in this way.
- Older children might plan a surprise night for parents and fix dinner by themselves.
- Break-up winter boredom with an indoor picnic. Hot dogs and other summer foods spread out on a blanket on the living room floor is a picnic with no ants.
- Or try a winter outdoor picnic with hot soup, sandwiches and a hot drink. Winter clothes will keep you warm while you eat.
- Each person at the table tell the most interesting thing that happened in the last twenty-four hours. Do it everyday and family members will begin to look forward to the time together. (For reluctant or grumpy family members, impose a 25 cent fine for not participating.)
- Whatever the mealtime, keep the conversation lively and positive. Save lectures on behavior, school grades, etc. for private time. Make the family time fun at the table.

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Cooperative Extension Service  
Michigan State University

Extension Home Economics  
Family & Child Ecology  
203 Human Ecology  
East Lansing, MI 48824-1030

## Growing the Family Tree

### Showing Respect for Others

Individuals in healthy families show respect to each other in actions and in words. They also show respect for people outside the family including those who are in some way, different from themselves.

When family members respect each other's differences they not only encourage respect for those outside the family unit, they encourage self-respect as well. Helping children develop self-respect will give them the confidence to stand up to a peer group.

Members of strong families show respect for individual decisions even if they differ. For example, mom and dad may not like their son's choice of clothing, but respect him enough to help him with his decisions rather than belittle him.

Respect for other person's property is taught to children in strong families. Library books are cared for. Borrowed toys are returned in good condition. Children who grow up respecting others' things will be less likely to be abusive as teenagers or as adults.

How is your family doing at developing respect? Some of the following ideas may be helpful.

Parents, aunts and uncles, and grandparents can model respect for others in many ways.

- using good, old fashioned manners
- helping someone who needs it without being asked
- not shouting derisively at referees during ball games
- waiting your turn in line
- speaking to others kindly, in a pleasant tone of voice



During (or after) a heated family discussion, analyze what was said.

As a family talk it over. Were individual opinions respected even though there was not agreement? Was the conversation aimed at personalities or ideas? Discuss as a family how respect can be shown for someone even though that person's actions may not be respected.

Children could interview grandparents on the topic of respecting other people and their property. Some questions might be:

- What does it mean to show someone respect?
- How were you taught to respect someone?
- Did you ever show disrespect to someone's property?
- What happened?

Grandparents, you could help teach small grandchildren the concept of respect. Using magazine pictures, help them make a scrapbook of people they should respect, i.e. police, teachers, parents, etc.

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East Lansing, MI 48824-1030

## Growing the Family Tree

Religious Beliefs -  
A Foundation for Families

Developing a strong religious base has been identified as one of the most important characteristics of healthy families in recent family research. Sharing religious beliefs within the family provides a purpose for living and a source of strength. Common beliefs bind the family together in a way nothing else can do.

Without a religious base, children grow up tending to be preoccupied with themselves. It is more difficult for them to develop a moral sense of right and wrong. Religious beliefs also give the strength to reach beyond themselves and to love others.

Families with strong religious faith practice it at home in their daily lives. They don't just learn about it in religious education classes, they make it part of themselves. Passing that faith on to children works best by example rather than by words.

A shared religious base strengthens the support system for families. Friends who share common beliefs become the closest friends and give support to each other.



Try some of the following ideas to strengthen your faith within your family.

1. Invite your pastor for a meal so that children can get better acquainted.
2. As a family discuss the holidays you celebrate that have a religious origin.
3. On each religious holiday, make a special effort to observe it in a religious, not just secular manner. For instance:
  - Emphasize Christmas with a birthday cake for Jesus.
  - Easter baskets might have a chocolate cross instead of a chocolate bunny.
  - For Thanksgiving, have everyone write a short letter of thanks to God, to be read at the dinner table.
4. Grandparents can play a very special part in passing on shared religious beliefs. Tell stories, sing songs or share events from your childhood religious experiences with your grandchildren.
5. Give thanks before every meal.
6. Read the Bible or other religious books aloud together.
7. As a family discuss some family rules. Do any of them stem from your religious beliefs?
8. Write a letter to a missionary.
9. Volunteer, as a family, to do some work around your church.

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Cooperative Extension Service

Michigan State University

Extension Home Economics  
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203 Human Ecology  
East Lansing, MI 48824-1030

## ***Growing the Family Tree***

**What's Right? What's Wrong**

Children begin to know the difference between right and wrong by three years of age. They are beginning to develop a moral sense.

One goal parents have is to help children develop self-control. This comes from having a strong sense of right and wrong.

Parents and other family members can help most by being an example and modeling acceptable behavior. They can also help by allowing children to accept responsibility for their own behavior.

Helping children learn to make wise decisions is an important task for parents. If children learn to make good decisions when young they will be better equipped to make wise decisions later. Practicing the following steps with children may be helpful.

1. Help children identify how they feel about the problem.
2. Decide exactly what the problem is.
3. What is the goal they are trying to reach?
4. Think of as many solutions and consequences of those solutions as possible.
5. Choose the best solution.
6. Try it and think through the results.
7. Let children live with the consequences.

Some other activities and ideas for teaching right and wrong.

-Make family rules specific and as children get old enough, explain the reasons behind the rules.

-Grandparents, back the parents' rules but don't be afraid to enforce your own rules in your home.

-Aunts and Uncles can be great listeners and encouragers.

-Watch a favorite T.V. show and pick out choices that are made. As a family, discuss whether you think they are right or wrong.

-Stories can also be sources of discussion about right and wrong.

-Parents discuss with your children a situation when you had to make a decision between right and wrong. Let them know your choices, what you decided, and the outcome. Don't let it become a lecture, keep it light.



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## **APPENDIX B**

### **RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS**

# APPENDIX B

## RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

### "FREE TO BE...FAMILY" QUESTIONNAIRE

For the past few weeks you have been receiving "Free to Be...Family" leaflets through the mail. Please take a few minutes to fill out the following questionnaire. Your replies will be anonymous.

1. Had you ever heard of the Cooperative Extension Service before seeing this questionnaire or the "Free to Be...Family" leaflets? (Check the appropriate line).

☐ YES (If YES, go to question 2).  
☐ NO (If NO, go to question 4).

2. Please circle "YES" or "NO" for each of the following statements.

- a. I have received information from the Cooperative Extension Service through:

Radio	YES	NO
T.V.	YES	NO
Newsletter	YES	NO

- b. I have called the Extension office for information YES NO
- c. I have visited the Extension office YES NO
- d. Children in my family were/are 4-H members YES NO
- e. My spouse or I was a 4-H member YES NO
- f. My spouse or I was/is a 4-H leader YES NO
- g. My spouse or I was/is a member of an Extension study group YES NO
- h. I receive the "Livingston Linkage" newspaper in the mail YES NO
- i. Please specify other Extension contacts you may have had \_\_\_\_\_

3. In general, how would you rate your overall involvement with Extension programs? (Check the appropriate answer).

☐ Extensive  
☐ Considerable  
☐ Moderate  
☐ Limited  
☐ None

Questions 4-8 refer to the "Free to Be...Family" leaflets.

4. Indicate the approximate number of leaflets you have read. (Check the appropriate space).

☐ 0    ☐ 1-3    ☐ 4-6    ☐ 7-8  
 If you have checked zero, go to question 9.

5. Indicate approximately the number of activities from the leaflets you have tried. (Check the appropriate space).

☐ 0    ☐ 1-3    ☐ 4-6    ☐ 7-9    ☐ 10 or more

6. How useful have you found the leaflets? (Check the appropriate space).

☐ not useful    ☐ somewhat useful    ☐ very useful

7. The titles of each of the "Free to Be...Family" leaflets are listed below. For each of the titles circle the number(s) of the phrases that best describe how you used that leaflet. (You may have more than one answer for a single title).

	did not <u>read</u>	skimmed through <u>it</u>	read well <u>  </u>	tried an <u>activity</u>	saved to use <u>later</u>	can't recall <u>  </u>
Sharing Leisure Time (turn off T.V.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Build Up- Not Put Down (positive talk)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Enjoying Family Time	1	2	3	4	5	6
We Always Do... (family traditions)	1	2	3	4	5	6

	did not <u>read</u>	skimmed through <u>it</u>	read well <u>  </u>	tried an <u>activity</u>	saved to use <u>later</u>	can't recall <u>  </u>
Making Mealtime Count	1	2	3	4	5	6
Showing Respect for Others	1	2	3	4	5	6
Religious Beliefs=A Foundation For Families	1	2	3	4	5	6
What's Right? What's Wrong?	1	2	3	4	5	6

8. Please write any comments concerning any of the leaflets or activities:

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Finally, we would like to ask some questions about you to help interpret the results. (Please check the appropriate spaces).

9. Your sex:        male        female

10. Your present family style:

       two parent        single adult, no children  
       two or more adults, no children at home  
       single parent Other, please specify                     

11. How many children (including stepchildren and foster children) do you have?

List the ages of all the children you have and circle the ages of those living at home.                                     

12. Into what age group do you fit? (Check the appropriate space).

       under 25 years of age        25-35        36-45  
       46-55        56-65        66 and over

13. What is YOUR employment status? (Check all that apply).

☐ employed full time                      ☐ retired  
☐ employed part time                      ☐ student  
☐ not employed away from home  
☐ other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

14. What is YOUR SPOUSE'S employment status? (check all that apply).  
If not married, skip this question.

☐ employed full time                      ☐ retired  
☐ employed part time                      ☐ student  
☐ not employed away from home  
☐ other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

Please fold as directed and mail to the Extension Office.

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this questionnaire!!

*Phyllis Cooper*

-----

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cooperative Extension Service  
314 East Clinton Street  
Howell, MI 48843

Attn: Phyllis Cooper, Extension Home Economist

# "FREE TO BE...FAMILY" QUESTIONNAIRE

For the past several weeks "Free to Be...Family" leaflets, have appeared in your church bulletins or in a literature rack at your church. Please take a few moments BEFORE OR AFTER THE SERVICE, to fill out the following questionnaire. When completed, please drop it in the box provided in the lobby of your church. Your replies will be anonymous.

1. Had you ever heard of the Cooperative Extension Service before seeing this questionnaire or the "Free to Be...Family" leaflets? (Check the appropriate line).

☐ YES (If YES, go to question 2).  
☐ NO (If NO, go to question 4).

2. Please circle "YES" or "NO" for each of the following statements.

- |  |            |     |    |
|--|------------|-----|----|
| a. I have received information from the Cooperative Extension Service through: | Radio      | YES | NO |
|  | T.V.       | YES | NO |
|  | Newsletter | YES | NO |
| b. I have called the Extension office for information                          |            | YES | NO |
| c. I have visited the Extension office   |            | YES | NO |
| d. Children in my family were/are 4-H members                                  |            | YES | NO |
| e. My spouse or I was a 4-H member   |            | YES | NO |
| f. My spouse or I was/is a 4-H leader  |            | YES | NO |

3. In general, how would you rate your overall involvement with Extension programs? (Check the appropriate answer).
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Extensive
<input type="checkbox"/> Considerable
<input type="checkbox"/> Moderate
<input type="checkbox"/> Limited
<input type="checkbox"/> None
4. My spouse or I was/is a member of an Extension study group YES NO
5. I receive the "Livingston Linkage" newspaper YES NO
6. Please specify other Extension contacts you may have had \_\_\_\_\_

Questions 4-8 refer to the "Free to Be...Family" leaflets.

4. Indicate the approximate number of leaflets you have read. (Check the appropriate space).  
 If you have checked zero, go to question 9.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 0 \_\_\_\_\_ 1-3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4-6 \_\_\_\_\_ 7-8
5. Indicate approximately the number of activities from the leaflets you have tried. (Check the appropriate space).  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 0 \_\_\_\_\_ 1-3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4-6 \_\_\_\_\_ 7-9 \_\_\_\_\_ 10 or more
6. How useful have you found the leaflets? (Check the appropriate space).  
 \_\_\_\_\_ not useful \_\_\_\_\_ somewhat useful \_\_\_\_\_ very useful



7. The titles of each of the "Free to Be...Family" leaflets are listed below. For each of the titles circle the number(s) of the phrases that best describe how you used that leaflet. (You may have more than one answer for a single title).

did skimmed read tried saved can't  
not through well an to use recall  
read it activity later

Sharing Leisure Time (turn off T.V.)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Build Up- Not Put Down (positive talk)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Enjoying Family Time (plan family time)	1	2	3	4	5	6
We Always Do... (family traditions)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Making Mealtime Count	1	2	3	4	5	6
Showing Respect for Others	1	2	3	4	5	6
Religious Beliefs-A Foundation for Families	1	2	3	4	5	6
What's Right? What's Wrong?	1	2	3	4	5	6

8. Please write any comments concerning any of the leaflets or activities:

---



---



---

Finally, we would like to ask some questions about you to help interpret the results. (Please check the appropriate spaces).

9. Your sex: male female

10. Your present family style:

two parent single adult, no children  
two or more adults, no children at home  
single parent Other, please specify

11. How many children (including stepchildren and foster children) do you have?

List the ages of all the children you have and circle the ages of those living at home.

12. Into what age group do you fit? (Check the appropriate space).

under 25 years of age 25-35 36-45  
46-55 56-65 66 and over

13. What is YOUR employment status? (Check all that apply).

employed full time retired  
employed part time student  
not employed away from home  
other, please specify

14. What is YOUR SPOUSE'S employment status? (check all that apply). If not married, skip this question.

employed full time retired  
employed part time student  
not employed away from home  
other, please specify

Please place completed questionnaire in the drop box in the lobby of your church.

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this questionnaire!!

*Phyllis Carpenter*

**APPENDIX C**

**APPLICATION TO MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**

APPENDIX C

APPLICATION TO MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

3904 Allston Drive  
Jackson, MI 49201  
August 20, 1987

Dr. Henry E. Bredeck  
Chairpaerson  
University Committee on Research  
Involving Human Subjects  
238 Administration Building  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, Michigan 48824

Dear Dr. Bredeck:

Enclosed are six copies of the human subject attachment, one copy of my thesis proposal and a letter of approval from Dr. Margaret Bubolz, my major professor. I am requesting approval from the human subjects committee to proceed with the project.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

*Phyllis L. Cooper*  
Phyllis L. Cooper

slj  
encl.

ATTACHMENT ON HUMAN SUBJECTS

Proposal: Utilizing Churches to Reach Families With  
Livingston Extension Family-child Education in  
County, Michigan

Investigator: Phyllis L. Cooper, Extension Home Economist

1. Abstract of Project

Purpose:

Livingston County is made up of 30,445 households, 74% of which are married units and 6% single parent households with children. In 1986, 18% of the total families were reached with Extension home economics programming and far less than that with family-child programming. Fifty-three percent of the labor force commutes out of the county, at least 50 miles, for employment and over 50% of the employed are women. These factors result in reduced family time together, and strained budgets from transportation costs and new expensive housing. Consequently, attendance at evening or weekend meetings is very limited as families are reluctant to commit time or money to attending programs in centrally located areas.

There are eleven Extension study groups with approximately 140 members. The average age of the members is 60 years, therefore limiting programming in the family-child area. There is no one radio station, television station, nor newspaper that reaches the entire county. A monthly newsletter currently reaches 4500 families with information from all areas of the Cooperative Extension Service. Funding for Extension home economics programming is scarce, thereby further limiting outreach possibilities. If Extension home economics programming is to have any impact on families in the county, new methods of delivering education must be identified.

The purpose of this research will be to explore the effectiveness of a different delivery method for family-child education among adults living in Livingston County, Michigan. Specifically it will determine the effectiveness of working through churches to reach families with Extension family-child education. An educational program will be conducted through churches within the county and evaluated for any changes in participation levels over previous years.

**Objectives:**

1. To develop an educational program in family-child education to be delivered through churches in Livingston County, Michigan.

2. To determine the effectiveness of working through churches, in family-child education, to increase participation in Extension programs among adults in Livingston County, Michigan.

**Method of Procedure:**

The basic method of procedure for the research will be to develop a series of leaflets, entitled "Free to Be...Family", and to evaluate the use of the leaflets through self-administered questionnaires.

Specific methods for achieving the objectives are as follows:

**Objective 1:**

A series of eight leaflets, entitled "Free to Be...Family" will be developed with information about strengthening families and activities to use with the families. Ten churches will be identified within the county to test the use of the leaflets. Five of the churches will include the leaflets in their weekly bulletins and five will make them available in a literature rack in the narthex. Approximately 350 leaflets will be mailed weekly to the names on the Extension home economics mailing list as a control group.

**Objective 2:**

Included with the eighth issue of "Free to Be...Family" will be a questionnaire for participants to complete for evaluation.

Respondents will be self-selected from the churches and the mailing list and the questionnaires will be self-administered.

The questionnaires will be used to evaluate relationships between levels of interaction with the Cooperative Extension Service and levels of participation and use of the leaflets. The difference between level of participation by method of distribution will also be assessed by the questionnaires.

**2. Subject Population**

The research will be conducted through ten churches in the county willing to participate in the study. The researcher will select the churches on the basis of variety in size, location and denomination. Alternate choices will

be made in the event a church wishes not to participate. The Extension home economics mailing list will be the control group.

Respondents to the questionnaire will be self-selected from the churches and the mailing list. The questionnaires will be anonymous and data collected will all be summarized.

### **3. Risk/Benefit Ratio**

#### **A. Potential Risks:**

Questions pertaining to family-child relationships have the potential of being sensitive issues for families. Anonymity is therefore important. Loss of anonymity is a risk in any kind of survey procedure.

#### **B. Procedures for Minimizing Risks:**

Completion of the questionnaires is completely voluntary. There will be nothing on the instrument itself that would reveal the identification of the individual completing the questionnaire. The questionnaires will be color coded to indicate the method of distribution of the leaflets. All information obtained will be summarized statistically thereby further assuring anonymity.

#### **C. Potential Benefits to Subjects and Society:**

Families participating in the program will have the opportunity to improve relationships within the family and develop stronger, healthier families as a result. As an additional benefit they may become aware of the Cooperative Extension Service as a source of information in other subject matter areas as well.

The materials and the results of the study will be available to other Extension home economists for use in their counties. Summarized results will give indication of effectiveness of the program as designed and the need for modification of future efforts.

### **4. Consent Procedures**

Because the program and the questionnaires are completely self-selected and voluntary, there is no need for consent forms. Participation by completion of the questionnaire is in itself consent.

### **5. Consent Forms - not applicable**

6. Copies of Information

See enclosed copies. The method of administering the questionnaires has been previously described in section 2 of this report.

7. Statement from Major Professor - see attached statement.

8. Research proposal - One copy of the proposal is enclosed.

## MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH INVOLVING  
HUMAN SUBJECTS (UCRIHS)  
238 ADMINISTRATION BUILDING  
(517) 355-2186

EAST LANSING • MICHIGAN • 48824-1046

September 15, 1987

Ms. Phyllis L. Cooper  
3904 Allston Drive  
Jackson, Michigan 49201

Dear Ms. Cooper:

Subject: Proposal Entitled, "Utilizing Churches to Reach Families  
with Extension Family-Child Education in Livingston County,  
Michigan"

UCRIHS' review of the above referenced project has now been completed. I am pleased to advise that the rights and welfare of the human subjects appear to be adequately protected and the Committee, therefore, approved this project at its meeting on September 14, 1987.

You are reminded that UCRIHS approval is valid for one calendar year. If you plan to continue this project beyond one year, please make provisions for obtaining appropriate UCRIHS approval prior to September 14, 1988.

Any changes in procedures involving human subjects must be reviewed by the UCRIHS prior to initiation of the change. UCRIHS must also be notified promptly of any problems (unexpected side effects, complaints, etc.) involving human subjects during the course of the work.

Thank you for bringing this project to our attention. If we can be of any future help, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Sincerely,



Henry E. Bredeck, Ph.D.  
Chairman, UCRIHS

HEB/jms

cc: Dr. Margaret Bubolz



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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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