

“The Four Great Realms of Heart:
The Family as the School of True Love”

Antonio Betancourt

Executive Director, The Summit Council for World Peace,
and President, World Institute of Development and Peace

Presented at
the Second Annual Meeting of Scholars for Social Justice, *
Pallotine Renewal Center, St. Louis, Missouri
• August 21-24, 1997 •

* SSJ is an ecumenical, non-profit, educational and research organization, affiliated with the Catholic Central Union of America, the Center for Economic and Social Justice, CESJ, and the World Institute of Development and Peace. SSJ brings together scholars of all disciplines and religions to promote ideas that encourage the empowerment and dignity of the human person and families.

“The Four Great Realms of Heart:
The Family as the School of True Love”
By Antonio Betancourt

Executive Director, The Summit Council for World Peace,
and President, World Institute of Development and Peace

Presented at
the Second Annual Meeting of Scholars for Social Justice, *
Pallotine Renewal Center, St. Louis, Missouri
August 21-24, 1997

Introduction:

I want to thank Father John Miller and the organizers of the second meeting of Scholars for Social Justice as well as Norman Kurland of the Center for Economic and Social Justice for inviting me to participate and to share with you some reflections and thoughts on the family in this important and timely gathering.

“The life of the family is, beyond doubt, the thing which suffers most from the great poverty of our times, whether in material or in spiritual things, and from the countless errors which are its miserable consequence.” (Summi Pontificatus, 52). Thus Pius the XII in the 1930s highlighted the need for taking care of the material as well as the spiritual needs of the family, both of which are seriously neglected today. Without an infusion of absolute values and a proper economic structure that takes into consideration the need to empower and protect the family unit against the unwarranted intrusion of outside forces, many of which are inimical to traditional family life, the family as the basic unit of society faces utter dissolution.

Therefore the importance of our gathering here to promulgate the formulation of a new paradigm that will allow individuals and families, as we move towards the 21st century, to address in a fundamental way the causes of poverty, the absence of real economic participation, and spiritual stagnation on the part of the majority, not only in a America, but around the world.

As the basis of my presentation, I refer to the “Universal Declaration on the Sovereignty of the Person Under God” that is being presented for your consideration and signatures. I have been asked to contribute to the draft of the document’s section on the family and its importance in the context of universal values upon which the declaration is based. I’d like to quote from the proposed declaration and share with you some thoughts regarding this important subject.

Let me also say for the record that the ideas introduced here on the family have been taken from the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, a global organization working actively in 185 countries and territories, and whose role is to uplift and restore the family to its original ideal. We recognize, however, that parallel with this, a movement for economic empowerment must be advanced to harness the goodwill of the families and to create a better world of justice for all.

The family, as the cornerstone of society, should be the school of true love. In this basic institution, created by God, individuals should be able to learn about and develop the 'Four Great Realms of Heart'.

The Four Great Realms of Heart expresses a new understanding of the totality of God's love and therefore human potential to reflect this love as the image and likeness of God.

Man is the imago dei, made in the image of God. Our responsibility in life, in fact, is to perfect the image of God in us, to perfect our "response-ability," our ability to respond to God, especially to the love of God through a loving process that enables our bodies to align themselves totally with the purpose and intent of our original mind.

God is the almighty creator, we are created beings. The difference is vast. Yet we are the image of God and are meant to become one with God (God said, "let's make man in our image and our likeness.") "Be ye perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect." The only way this can happen is through true love. To become one with God, to become perfect as God is perfect we must not just be loved by God, but learn to love as God loves. We must experience the love of God in all its intended forms. Where can this be done? In the family, which is the original institution established by our creator.

The development of the Four Great Realms of Heart enables individuals – male and female – to become mature in heart, mature in their capacity to give and receive love, mature in the resemblance of invisible God in creating and giving as true sons and daughters -- wholesome and complete.

As a child, being loved unconditionally by the parents, as brothers and sisters loving each other and living for each other, through the union of man and woman in conjugal love and through the procreation and raising of children. These different forms of intended love are the Four Great Realms of Heart.

1 - True Children's Realm of Heart

True Child's Love: Beyond the natural love of children for their parents, every child should be taught filial piety and reverence for each of his or her parents and God, the source of all true love. Within true child's love, the child's conduct is guided, not by fear, coercion or the desire for personal reward, but by the deep love and empathy the child feels toward each parent and toward God and to avoid the unbearable pain of knowing that he has hurt or betrayed his parent's love.

We relate to God as children relate to their parents and grandparents.

The first experience of God's invisible love for the individual is through his parents' unconditional love. This is also our first experience with authority, discipline, laws, and regulations. Through unconditional parental love, and countless giving by the parents, the child is prepared to deal with restrictions imposed upon him or her by the parents. Because of love the

child yields to parental authority.

All religions exalt filial piety.(Ten Commandments: Honor your father and mother)

Individuals function in society through a process – break and acceleration tendencies in their behavior, and a series of do’s and don’ts. In order for the child to shape his character and accept norms from parents on what to do and not to do -- true love, true giving -- an unconditional care has to be present otherwise this balance is broken.

Lack of parental loves damages a child’s heart.

- Parents who have not developed good character cannot give true love to their children. Their children’s personalities become crippled, unable to relate evenly with all types of people. When children’s love is lost later in life they distrust and disobey their elders and all forms of social authority, including teachers, law enforcement officials, etc. Children with damaged hearts often become dysfunctional and live a life of violence and disorder:
- In the 1990s, more than one-third of all murders were committed by someone under the age of 21.
- Since 1960, the juvenile crime rate is up 600%. 135,000 teenagers bring a gun to school daily. Many schools are scenes of senseless violence, one child beats another who accidentally bumps him in the hallway. Such random violence scars children for a lifetime.
- They also turn to sexual promiscuity, as they seek to fill the void in their hearts from lack of true parental love.

The child’s conscience is shaped through relationship with parents, the heart of filial piety.

FATHER’S LOVE: Prov. 3:11-12, 4:3-4. “...as a man disciplines his son, so the Lord your God disciplines you.” Deut. 8-5

MOTHER’S LOVE: Hasidic saying: God could not be everywhere at once, so He gave each child a mother.” Isa. 66:13, “As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you.”

“If the proper bonding and subsequent attachment does not occur -- usually between the child and the mother -- the child will develop mistrust and a deep-seated rage. He becomes a child without a conscience.” Dr. Ken Magid and Carole A. McKelvey, High Risk: Children without a Conscience (New York: Bantam, 1987) , p.3

We receive life and unconditional love from parents which are the image of invisible parents, God. Therefore, we have a debt of life and unconditional love to parents and God.

The child should be taught to create a virtuous circle of receiving love and then giving back love. In this virtuous circle, joy is created. As children grow to adulthood they understand their parents’ and grandparents’ deepest ideals and longings. Children of filial piety fulfill their parents’ dreams to be and to develop as good as they can be. Children should pay the debt of life and love to God and their parents through learning to live through serving others.

One of the greatest forms of filial piety is sexual purity on the part of the child. All parents dream that children will find true joy in marriage and family. Sexual purity is the best foundation for true brother and sister love.

Filial maturity brings spiritual authority. The goal and purpose of children's realm of heart is to learn the way of true love, through practicing filial piety. Children learn to go beyond themselves and become aware of and sensitive to others. Thus children develop the capacity to give of themselves and be responsible for others and grow to become true patriots for the nation, saints for the world and eventually true sons and daughters of God which is our highest possible value and position.

2 - True Brother / Sister Realm of Heart

True Sibling Love: All children should share their love with their brothers and sisters and other family members, and, by extension, with all members of the community. To express this love, every child should be taught to live for others.

In the family, as we grow from infancy, we are challenged to master a different level of love from the passive love of the newborn infant to the greater sharing between brothers and sisters, the individual becomes aware that not only does he or she have parents, but also has brothers and sisters or other relatives in the horizontal plane.

With the help of the parents the relationships between siblings do not need to develop in the Cain-Abel type of relationship. But rather, the understanding comes that all siblings are equally loved by their parents and because of my parents' love I have to give myself to my brother and sister. For this to take place, the role of the mother is essential as a peacemaker, unifier and harmonizer of the natural tendencies of competition and rivalries between the siblings. Any negative feelings between the siblings can be resolved in the realm of the love of God under parents.

Children should learn to relate to individuals of every sort of personality, becoming big-hearted, generous and caring, learn not to be insecure or grasping in love within the extended family of brothers and sisters, cousins, uncles and aunts and beyond that to neighbors, communities, cities, nation, and the world. These qualities of love cultivated through many mutual relationships make for harmonious individuals and later successful marriages.

Sexual purity as a precondition to mature true sibling love. Children should be allowed to be children and to relate to each other in brotherly and sisterly love devoid of erotic content or spirit. Brotherly and sisterly love should never be confused with the sexual love that should develop at a later stage in preparation for marriage. The tragedy today is that children are misguided through peer pressure either by personal relations or by cultural influence of TV, music, movies, etc. to experience adult situations which damage the children's realms of heart. The tragedy of pre-teens and teenagers to not only lose their sexual purity but prematurely become parents themselves creates an epidemic of children having children with all the consequences of pain, dislocation and broken lives.

In preparation for marriage children should learn to respect and have reverence for their sexual

organs and sexual energy as the most supreme and sacred since its through this part of the body and energy that life, love, lineage and conscience is multiplied. No other organ of the body – heart, lung, eyes, stomach -- and no other energy has this important function. The girl and the boy should be taught early not to fear or feel dirty about their sexuality, but rather to have a profound respect for it since it is through the capacity of multiplication and continuity of life, love, lineage, and conscience that we truly inherit the attributes of God who is the origin of life, love, lineage, and conscience. Therefore these tools and this energy should be handled after proper training, education, and maturity. The individuals who spread their sexual love cheaply are also spending or wasting the potentiality of true conjugal and parental love.

True conjugal and parental love has two elements of physical and spiritual. Both can be crippled by the experience of cheap, false sexual love. The child should be taught in preparation for true marriage, that within him or her, there is a prototype of a true family. They should be challenged to dream, dream big to see themselves as a happy person, loved and being loved by a partner, children and grandchildren for eternity, since their encounter of the first love always has the ideal element of eternity.

True brother and sister love should eventually mature into a perfect empathy for the extended family from every race and nationality. This love should allow the individual to develop true solidarity with all humanity and the creation, to feel the pain and anguish of those in need of shelter, food, clothing, or health, to fight for justice and freedom for the weak and the voiceless, to restore the beauty and health of the natural environment, and to truly see and feel everyone as one human family under the invisible Fatherhood and Motherhood of God.

3 - True Husband - Wife Realm of Heart

True Conjugal Love: Every child should be taught the responsibilities of true marriage, where both spouses subordinate themselves voluntarily to the sovereignty and dignity of the other, and both give total loyalty and commitment to the well-being, development and happiness of the other.

Conjugal life between husband and wife is meant to follow on the maturity of the children's and sibling's realms of heart. Sexual fulfillment is an essential dimension of happiness. Its proper expression occurs in the conjugal love between husband and wife. God created human beings in two kinds and ordained that they become one in sexual love. Genesis suggests that the image of God is not totally to be found in individuals, but in man and women together (God said: "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness...male and female He created them.") Jesus said, "Have you not heard that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female and said, 'for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and become one in flesh?'" So they are no longer two but one flesh. What God has brought together let no one bring asunder." Matthew 4:6. Sexual love is not just for procreation, the Bible counsels husband and wife to enjoy each other. "Rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely hind, a graceful doe. Let her affection fill you at all times with delight, be infatuated always in her love." Proverbs 5:18.

All mating behavior in the animal kingdom is for reproduction only but human beings were created to enjoy conjugal love throughout their adult lives. This is because human conjugal love sustains a relationship, both physical and spiritual, soul to soul, as well as body to body. God has

given humanity this special privilege as the lord of all creation that we have the blessing of love's unlimited joy. Although sexuality begins with infancy it remains latent through childhood developing deep within in preparation for love's expression, each boy and girl should cultivate his or her love through the child's and fraternal realm of heart. Each develops his or her conscience, the higher manifestation of God within.

Conjugal love is also meant to occur after cultivating and maturing true fraternal love. For couples who have not experienced true fraternal love, marriage has a way of exposing every flaw in each partner's character leading to quarrels and strife. If our love is immature and impartial, sooner or later we will discuss incompatibilities with our partner. Couples will then be tested and may want to divorce and look for that ideal mate with whom they will be completely happy. This is an illusionary dream leading couples nowhere.

Couples should better utilize the challenges of marriage to work on themselves and smooth those sharp edges. When rough rocks are put in a tumbler and ground together eventually they become smooth and lustrous stones. Marriage is a tumbler where we can work to perfect ourselves by surrendering to the sovereignty of each other. The physiologist M. Scott Peck appreciates this aspect of marriage as a arena for spiritual growth, "Marriage is generally the best vehicle for whittling away at our narcissism The tentacles for narcissism are subtle and penetrating and must be hacked at one by one, week after week, month after month, year after year."

Ownership of the Sexual Organs. St. Paul says, "The husband should give to his wife his conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not rule over her own body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not rule over his own body, but the wife does. Do not refuse one another except perhaps by agreement for a season, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, lest Satan tempt you through lack of self control." 1 Cor. 7:3-5

True conjugal love creates such a unity that the partners belong to each other. The husband is the owner of the wife's sexual organ and the wife is the owner of the husband's sexual organ. Each no longer owns this part since they have surrendered to each other. As was mentioned earlier, the most important organ of the human body – male/female – is the sexual parts and the most important and sacred energy that humans can exchange is the sexual energy due to the fact that through this we can give and multiply life, love, lineage and conscience. If husband and wife have been educated as children to have this kind of respect for their sexuality, then the idea of being unfaithful would be unthinkable. Also, since every embryo in the mother's womb is the carrier and continuity of life, love, lineage, and conscience, the idea of abortion would also be unthinkable.

The highest experience of God's divine love, happens through husband and wife. Just as the bodies of men and women are constructed differently, hard and soft, convex and concave, wide shoulders and wide hips, the marriage relationship requires different roles. The husband gives his seed to his wife; she receives it and allows it to fertilize her womb. The husband is like heaven; the wife is like the earth. Heaven sends rain and scatters its seed on the earth; the seeds sprout and grow within her rich soil. It is the nature of a man to be forthright and initiate love. It is the nature of a woman to be modest and wait for love, to be filled with love which she stores to later give to her children.

The complementary roles of husband and wife in a relationship make for a strong and delightful attraction. In their love, they honor each other's distinctive roles and contribute their different abilities to the welfare of the whole. Moreover, as they become one in love, they revolve about each other in circular motion, moving in and out of each other's roles. In true love, therefore, husband and wife are equal.

Contemporary feminists have advocated absolute equality based on rights not on love. The focus on rights and the neglect of love has done a disservice to family life. It is paradoxical but true that spurning the natural differences between men and women, feminism has impoverished and weakened the family. Families centered on true love start by honoring the natural diversity of roles out of which love grows and end by achieving true equality.

Divine conjugal love has two elements of male and female love that comes from the origin, the cosmic mind that exists as the essence and source of male and female love, therefore husband and wife should bring God into their union in sexual love making a conscientious effort to be a vehicle for God's love, male and female to attend and bless each other.

Each man represents cosmic masculinity and as such, masculine divine love. Every woman represents cosmic femininity and as such is the vehicle for divine female love. When their relationship brings God at the center, each partner fills the other to the fullest extent.

This experience of true conjugal marriage manifested by God's expression in the love relationship will help them deal with the roughness of character and differences of personality, taste, views, etc. which are sources of conflict, and later, divorce. Love should increase and transform the couple as they grow older in grace to become parents, grandparents, and even great grandparents in love, and after, to continue their eternal union in the realm of the spirit.

4 - True Father and Mother's Realm of Heart

True Parental Love: Just as God offers absolute love to each human as a child of God, every parent should provide unconditional love to each child and raise each one to become a responsible and loving citizen, with a true parental heart beyond the family toward all others and all of creation.

The first three stages of the realm of heart allow us to share and experience the heart and love of God, and prepare us for the most significant of the four which is the true father and mother realm of heart.

How can we become one with God, share the heart of God, unless in some way we have shared God's experience? But how can we, as creatures, ever share the experience of God as creator, of creating new life out of His love and relating to that new life with unconditional love, a love that does not count the cost?

The answer is that in marriage we can share what it is like to create new life out of love. And as parents we have the opportunity to love our children unconditionally, as God loves us. This more than anything is why marriage and the family is not just a social institution, culturally

conditioned, but is the school of love in which we can meet God to a depth not possible in any other way.

In resembling God, men and women share His creative nature. They can bear children, just as God created human beings to resemble himself – the parents can produce another entity – their child – who can fully resemble themselves. Just as God pours His love into the married couple, they pour their love in to the child. When God sees the smile of an exhausted new mother on her hospital bed cradling her new born baby, He recalls His own difficult labor at bringing the creation in to birth. There is incredible joy and peace in that moment of communion between the two, the creator and the co-creator, the parents. Here is the starting point of parental love.

In the parental realm of heart, parents share God's creative nature as they invest their love to raise and educate their children. Parental love should be as true and faithful as God's love. In raising their children, parents must be sacrificial, generous, patient and forgiving. In creating the world and conducting his saving work, God gives and gives and forgets what He has given.

The parental heart bequeathed to children and grandchildren sees all people, regardless of their nationality, religion, or socio-economic status, as God's sons and daughters. The voice of the weak and the poor is heard, as well as the oppressed, the handicapped, the elderly, and the enfeebled.

Individuals with a mature parental heart experience a deep love and respect towards the creation and the environment. They develop a protective and loving attitude that recognizes our planet's natural resources and the sanctity of this larger home, we call earth and the surrounding cosmos. They will care and leave behind a legacy of a much gentler, caring world for future generations.

Parents want their children to grow up to be successful in life. (Prov. 23:24) Should their child surpass them, they are not jealous. Even Jesus looked to the time when his followers would surpass him, saying, "he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, for I go to the Father.

Parents also share the pain of God as they discipline their children and strive to bring a wayward child back to the right path. God has suffered over the millennia trying to reach out to His people who stubbornly turned their backs to the truth and sank ever more deeply into the mire of fallen life. When a father disciplines a delinquent he feels his child's pain, but his heart aches even more over the fact his offspring's wounds will continue should they remain on the path to ruin. How much more painful it is for the parent when their grown child no longer takes discipline or instruction. What then can bring a prodigal son or daughter to their senses? Until they decide to change of their own free will their parents can only endure in silence, just like God has endured for thousands of years.

Conclusion

In these diverse ways, the parental realm of heart affords us opportunity to fully embody the love of God. Parents share God's nature. They embody God. When their child sees them, he sees

God. This is the perfection of the Four Great Realms of heart when human beings and God become inseparably one. By cultivating the parental realm of heart we complete the purpose for which God created which is the purpose of our life. We call such complete human beings true parents.

Upon becoming true parents, people then initiate a new cycle of the Four Great Realms of heart in their families. Their parental love for their child induces in him a loving response which flowers as children's love. As they bear more children, their love for each child unites them in bonds of fraternal love. Furthermore, by inculcating the ethic of sexual purity in their children they are preparing them for the day when they can stand before the altar as brides and bridegrooms and enter the realm of conjugal love. Through their constant love and guidance, the parents help the next generation to fulfill the Four Great Realms of Heart and grow into new generation of true parents. Generation after generation, the parents use their authority and wisdom to bring their family to its fruition.

To reemphasize, as previously stated, in marriage and as parents we can share what it is like to create new life out of love and have the opportunity to love our children unconditionally as God loves us. This more than anything is why the family is not just a social institution, culturally conditioned, but it is the school of true love, in which we can meet God to a depth not possible in any other way. And the road to achieve this is the development of the Four Great Realms of Heart. Thank you.

I would like to acknowledge the foundational work, "True Family Values" by Rev. Joong Hyun Pak, Secretary General, Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, and Andrew Wilson, Ph.D., Professor of Biblical Studies, Unification Theological Seminary, NY. Without their work and reference, it would've been impossible to write this paper. I would also like to express my appreciation to Michael Marshal, Executive Editor, "The World & I," and Dr. Tyler Hendricks, Vice President, Family Federation for World Peace and Unification.