



In “From Sin to Wholeness” Brian Grant discusses the sin of gluttony. He contends that our created state is to consume or eat enough and no more, as evident in the lack of obesity in the non-domesticated animal world. Our spiritual task is to restore or keep our created regulator functioning.

Are there some issues that are too sensitive talk about?

The ELCA Pension Board Health Insurance has identified these issues in the following words:

A 51-year-old male with symptoms of depression, the patient has high blood pressure and is overweight, presenting a heightened risk of heart disease and other illnesses. He works 60-70 hours a week in a sedentary job, does not currently engage in any physical exercise, and reports work-related stress. Patient is married, with three children, one of whom expresses interest in following patient’s career path. Patient expresses little enthusiasm for encouraging child to do so.

While the case history may sound routine, Dr. Halaas and her patient are, in fact, remarkable - perhaps even historic. That’s because the patient is not a specific individual, but a statistically based overview of the typical Lutheran pastor. Halaas is the project director of the Ministerial Health and Wellness Program, a major new initiative by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to improve the health of Lutheran pastors and other church leaders.

One of our rostered persons suggested that we address the topic of obesity among our clergy. When church leaders do not manage their own weight, the anxiety tends to fall on their family members and/or the congregation to carry the concern regarding the leaders health. Ministry improves when the church leaders take back the rightful responsibility for their own health and their own weight issues.

If you have any reactions or suggestions for future items in the newsletter, email I-K Synod Pastoral Counselor Pr. Ted Stoneberg at tastoneberg@anderson.edu.



Visit the following Web sites for help in dealing with weight issues

(1) This Web site includes a helpful checklist (click on “helpful quiz”), but be aware that this is the site that wants you to pay for a program that we are not intentionally endorsing. www.clergyrecovery.com/?p=42

(2) This research article identifies the costs of obesity. www.divinity.duke.edu/programs/spe/resources/dukediv-clergyhealth.html

(3) This article focuses particularly on weight issues for women resulting from emotional eating. www.womentowomen.com/healthy-weight/emotionaleating.aspx

(4) This article focuses on the issues of emotional eating, identifying the variety of emotional issues that result in gaining weight. www.mayoclinic.com/health/weight-loss/MH00025

(5) This site provides five steps for addressing emotional eating issues. However, please be aware that this is a commercial site that is not endorsed by this newsletter. www.livestrong.com/article/74506-change-emotional-eating-habits/

(6) This is a short article about stopping emotional eating. www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/160656.php

(7) This article identifies the factors in emotional eating and provides a helpful list of alternative ways to satisfy the emotional need. www.medicinenet.com/emotional_eating/article.htm

31 So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

-Matthew 6:31-33

The power of 'We': Couples who think, talk as 'we,' 'our' and 'us' have an edge

By Mark Bennett

The Tribune-Star

Feb 10, 2010

TERRE HAUTE: Instead of euphoria, the New Orleans Saints could be unraveling in a swirl of chaos right now.

Imagine this scenario: Seconds after a dramatic 31-17 victory over Indianapolis on Sunday night, Saints quarterback Drew Brees looks into a CBS camera and declares, "I did it! I just won the Super Bowl." Then, later, in print and TV interviews, he repeats it again and again, "I won the Super Bowl."

"We would immediately know, 'Well, there goes the Saints.' If he said that, they would never win another game," Diane Sollee, director of the Coalition for Marriage, Family and Couples Education at Washington, D.C., said by telephone last week from her office.

Of course, Brees didn't say or even, undoubtedly, think such a thing. Instead, he heaped praise on his teammates and coaches, and even the beleaguered city of New Orleans. Serving as a symbol of hope for that town is not a burden, he said in post-game comments. "No, not at all. We look at it as a responsibility," Brees said. "Our fans, our city gave us strength, and we owe this to them."

Likewise, the power of 'we' is relevant to marriages, too, Sollee said. A University of California at Berkeley study, released just three weeks before today's Valentine's Day holiday, supports the value of 'we-ness' thinking and language.

Couples who routinely use pronouns such as 'we,' 'our' and 'us' behave more positively toward each other and show less psychological stress. Researchers analyzed conversations between 154 middle-aged and older couples about points of disagreement in their relationships. Couples who emphasized their separateness by using 'I,' 'me' and 'you' showed less marital satisfaction and more unhappiness. Also, older couples tended to identify themselves as 'we' more often than middle-aged pairs, which suggests that overcoming adversities together over time may instill a stronger sense of shared identity, the study found.

"This balance," Hargrave added, "in turn translates into relationship satisfaction."

Sollee compared the concept to climbing Mount Everest. Decades ago, only a rare handful of individuals dared to ascend the world's tallest mountain.

Then, as team climbing gained popularity, groups began tackling Everest regularly. Reaching its 29,029-foot summit, represents great individual achievement, but climbers must coordinate with each other or they'll endanger their mission and the lives of their teammates. One of the ultimate 'we-ness' qualities, trust, is essential to survival on the way up and down the mountain.

"Just think how important trust is when you're trying to do something that hard, or do anything like win a Super Bowl," Sollee said.

“Being able to identify yourselves as a team, rather than individuals, is a huge advantage to couples in terms of resolving conflicts,” Benjamin Seider, co-author of the study and Cal-Berkeley psychology graduate student, said in a phone interview Monday.

That requires some personal sacrifice, Robert Levenson, co-author and psychology professor at Cal-Berkeley, explained in a university release. “Individuality is a deeply ingrained value in American society, but, at least in the realm of marriage, being part of a ‘we’ is well worth giving up a bit of ‘me,’” Levenson said.

Pete and Frances Farmer marked their 60th anniversary in November. Pete, 88 and a lifelong farmer, and Frances, 83 and a lifelong homemaker, are now retired and live in the Westminster Village community on Davis Avenue in Terre Haute. They raised three sons, who now share responsibility for the family farm in southern Vigo County. They have eight grandchildren and one great-grandchild, which “is fun,” said Frances. Now, with just themselves in their household, ‘we-ness’ means something special to the couple. “In these later years, it is just we,” Frances said, “because that’s what we have, each other.”

The Farmers eloped in 1949, and wed in Henderson, Ky. The key to their marital longevity, Frances said, is “giving and sharing, being broad-minded, just kind of growing up and being adult with your problems.” They also leaned on “faith in God,” she added. “Raising a family, you have hardships. You sort of have to go with the times, and keep [your faith].”

Community involvement has also been a big part of their lives, said Pete, who served on the Vigo County School Board and as a Cub Scoutmaster.

“I guess what I’m worried about is that people are afraid of becoming a ‘we,’” Sollee said. “They’re afraid of losing themselves if they becoming part of a ‘we,’ and it’s just the opposite.” “I guess what I’m worried about is that people are afraid of becoming a ‘we,’” Sollee said. “They’re afraid of losing themselves if they becoming part of a ‘we,’ and it’s just the opposite.”

This year, Sollee’s organization will step up its efforts to counter the pop-culture assertion that thinking and behaving as a team forces spouses to relinquish their individuality. The strength found in a giving relationship enhances a person’s abilities, she said.

The research at Cal-Berkeley boils down to competitiveness versus cooperation, said Terry Hargrave, author of “The Essential Humility of Marriage.” Spouses discover that what’s good for ‘us’ is good for ‘me.’

“Instead of fighting it out competitively of what is good for me, you or I, the individuals in the marriage are committed to seeking what is good for their relationship,” Hargrave told the Tribune-Star. “When they consider the relationship just as important as their individual interests, they move into a position of cooperating together, instead of competing. It does not mean they lose their individuality; rather, it means that the couple has learned how to look out for the best interest of the relationship while balancing individual interest.”