EDITOR’S NOTES

MARRIAGE—YES. COHABITING—NO. 
AND HOW TO MAKE MARRIAGE WORK.

As Michael Medved explained, if Martians came to earth and watched a typical day of television, they’d think families in our society were mostly dysfunctional, that everyone slept around, and that almost no one bothered to get married. He went on to say that children are like little Martians—learning what’s acceptable in society from what they see on television.

So what is it about cohabiting; that is, a couple living together as if they were married without bothering with a ring, license—or ceremony? When my friends and I were students, we heard about an occasional inappropriate sleep-over. I suppose there have always been couples who cohabited. But I didn’t know any cohabiting couples back then. I can’t remember any cultural messages that made cohabiting seem like an acceptable, everyday thing. It wasn’t. And even though it is common today, it still isn’t acceptable. I think you’ll be interested in Professor Jeffry Larson’s article in this issue about the influence of cohabitation on marriage. Compare the myths to the reality measured by research that he shares with us, along with Professor Tom Holman’s comments about cohabiting, with the emphasis on "Don’t do it."

Everyone knows that getting married doesn’t guarantee success. Marriage can be tough. So whether you are looking forward to getting married, have just entered into a marriage covenant, or have been around the block with your spouse for a few years or several decades, I think you’ll find Dr. James Harper’s article, "The Marriage Dance," filled with helpful ideas. By the way, even if you are like me and don’t like dancing, I think you’ll like Jim’s metaphor of marriage and dancing. You’ll pick up some clues about how to show that you love each other and how to make your own marriage better—as well as ways to help others to make their marriages stronger. In other words, I’d suggest reading this issue from cover to cover, without missing a paragraph.

And if you want to share this issue (or earlier ones), both html and .pdf digital versions are available at http://marriageandfamilies.byu.edu
Everyone can get the html version—and with Adobe Acrobat Reader, which you can download at no cost by clicking the icon on the MARRIAGE & FAMILIES.pdf homepage, you can get the .pdf version. Then you can view every page of the magazine exactly as it appears in print, including every photograph and all the graphics. Also, you can print articles on your own color printer and the copy will have the same elements as the magazine.

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Marriage & Families is a peer-reviewed journal for young couples, husbands & wives, parents, and professionals—including educators, counselors, therapists, psychologists, physicians, social workers, nurses, public health people, teachers, clergy, experts in family law, and everyone interested in marriage and families. Our editorial board members belong to many faiths—with a common belief in the importance of traditional families. Marriage & Families is dedicated to strengthening families. Without apology, our name begins with the word marriage—a concept that many dismiss or completely ignore these days. However, since marriage and fidelity are essentials, not options, in a healthy society, we are pleased to bring you a publication containing credible data supporting this and other time-tested principles and values related to the family.
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