

# In Five Years We Will Change the World

By Father Charlie Knapp  
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One of the exciting talks on our Weekend is always that part of the Sacrament talk where the team couple dreams again of their wedding. As you listened, you floated back to your own planning for your wedding day. From the time of your engagement, through whatever obstacles you had to work through, you recall the moments clearly, and then, finally, the vision of seeing each other in church and you knew all your work and dreams had come to fruition. This is what it all had been for. The struggles, misunderstandings, romantic walks and talks, and expense have been worth it. Your beloved makes it worth it.

But without some day to work for, would you have ever gotten married? I mean, if your plans were only to get married, some day, not on May 1 next year, what would have ever happened? Probably nothing. We all know that a commitment must have a date attached to it. It must be caught up somehow on a calendar.

Several years ago, we were speaking of how to change our behavior, our life style. No matter what was being changed, it had to be done in little bits, clearly and simply stated, possible and within a time limit and for a time limit. It had to be SMART: Simple, Measurable, Achievable, Repeatable and Timed. Otherwise there would be no measurable success, and no continuing work. As a priest who has struggled with alcoholism, I know that goals can only be met with clear time limits. I was never allowed to say to my counselor: "I will never drink again." How could I ever know success at that? But successful I have been, about 3300 times successful, one day at a time.

Many dioceses are gearing up for a flood of divorces and the ministries that will be necessary afterwards. In whatever way we can support those works, we must. And it is projected that by the year 2000 over 60% of American Children will be raised in single parent's homes. That is something that the Church must address. But is it inevitable? Must it be that way?

NO. It will not be like that. We will make a difference.

Our goal: by the year 2000 only 30% of our children will be raised in single parent homes. WE WILL BE THE DIFFERENCE.

How: by the year January 1, 1995, we will have built up our Weekends to four times what they are today in every encounter area. Add just 1 more Weekend out of 2 you give now, each year, and you have one year extra to try for more. I need only recruit one couple for every Weekend.

By the year 1995, every encounter will boast of at least one viable and self-perpetuating sharing group in 25% of the parishes of your encounter. That means 5 couples gathering out of 50. 10% of those who make the Weekend will make an ongoing difference as they study the Weekend and Marriage in our Church.

By the year 1995, your team community must be large enough to support 4 times as many Weekends as you have now. Your team community needs 4 times as many priests and couples as you have now. Have a fire burning in you; be anxious to see the world enflamed with love.

By the year 1995, Weekend talks need to be sharpened and excitingly alive. All presenting team couples and priests must have dedicated themselves to rewriting all their talks within that time. One new talk every 4 months. Quality movements demand quality work.

Hard work, yes? So was Pentecost and Good Friday. So was preparing for your wedding, and look at how well your preparations sewed you. Our Church is worth your effort. Our Savior deserves the best you are. Your Sacrament deserves this chance to shine wildly for the next 5 years.

Then, you can pass on to another group of dreamers (and you may be part of that group too!) the right and joy of changing the direction of family life in our country and in our world. We are called to work like this for our Church and its mission to offer Salvation to all. We will be like our Savior who first yearned for our love, and thereby changed our lives.

This may sound strange. But I remember the excitement of that same rumor that we heard in the mid 70's: "In five years we will change the world." The vision was within reach, our reach, then. It still is, and is more pressing now than then.

So help us, Father.  
So, help us, Father.