



# Orange County Marriage Education Initiative

## Marriage Education Agreement

We, as leaders from churches and congregations representing many different denominations and congregations, come together on May 20, 2008 to declare our commitment to strengthen marriages and reduce divorces in our community through **Marriage Education (M.E.)**. Because church and congregational leaders perform three-quarters of the weddings, regularly teach about marriage relationships, and are often sought out by distressed couples for marital support, we also affirm these five core beliefs that act as a foundation for this Proclamation.

We believe that...

- *The quality and health of marriages impact the quality and health of our community.*
- *The whole community is negatively affected when families break apart or fail to form.*
- *Too many marriages needlessly suffer due to lack of support and ongoing encouragement.*
- *Relationships greatly benefit when couples prepare, enrich, and when necessary, restore their troubled relationship by participating in M.E.*
- *It is in the best interest of our churches and community for our congregations to provide M.E. to couples.*

To give marriages the best chances to thrive and succeed, we are committed to **M.E.!** We begin by pledging to start or expand **M.E.** programs for engaged couples, married couples, and for troubled marriages. We commit to **M.E.** in at least one of the following ways:

- 1 Promote** M.E. programs and services in the community by informing people about its importance.
- 2 Recruit and Train** healthy married couples, volunteers, and staff to facilitate expanded M.E. programs and services.
- 3 Provide** M.E. including pre-marriage, marriage enrichment, and for troubled marriages.
- 4 Invite** others to M.E. and help them feel welcome regardless of their church involvement or affiliation.
- 5 Support** M.E. by encouraging married couples to regularly invest in their relationship, including participating in M.E. activities at least once a year.

Our goal by signing this **M.E. Proclamation** is to decrease the rate of divorce, and increase the rate of marriage satisfaction in our community.

Therefore, as church leaders who care for the wellbeing of marriages and families, we unite together in an effort to give marriages in our community the best chances to succeed by committing to promote, provide, and expand **Marriage Education** in our community.

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*Church name here*

*Signed this day, May 20, 2008*

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*John Erwin, Project Director  
Orange County Marriage Education Initiative*

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*Dennis Stoica, President  
California Healthy Marriages Coalition*