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Marriage Advocates Shed Light on the Practice and Impact of Cohabitation—And How the Church Can Change It

In today's culture, the fact that more than five million couples are living together outside of marriage doesn't come as a shock to many. It should. Studies show the mere act of cohabiting before marriage increases a couples odds of divorce by 50 percent.

Consider these recent statistics: 62 percent of couples who married in 2002 were living together. Yet 86 percent of all couples are married by clergy. "I've asked thousands of clergy in scores of cities if they've ever spoken on this issue from the pulpit," write Mike and Harriet McManus in their new book **LIVING TOGETHER: MYTHS, RISKS & ANSWERS** (Howard Books / A Division of Simon & Schuster; Hardcover; March 4, 2008; ISBN: 1-4165-5098-4; \$19.99). "One in fifty raises a hand...What explains the church's abject capitulation on this moral issue?"

The McManuses cite two reasons: "Protestant pastors are competing with one another for new members and are loathe to make demands that might lose new prospects... (Also) in fairness to ministers, most simply don't know how to address the sensitive issue of cohabitation."

In **LIVING TOGETHER**, the McManus' show how churches can offer a proven strategy they developed to help couples test their relationship in a more effective way by taking a premarital inventory, meeting with a trained Mentor Couple to discuss the issues it surfaces, and learning how to resolve conflict amicably and thus move into healthy, rewarding, long-term marriages.

Designed as a tool for church leaders, a guide for parents of cohabiting adult children and a call to couples in successful, long-term marriages who can make a difference by serving as Mentor Couples, **LIVING TOGETHER** is full of statistics and stories to illustrate the risks of cohabitation and the McManuses proven answers. **LIVING TOGETHER** addresses every facet of cohabitation to help pastors, parents, and mentors better reach cohabiting couples, including:

- Common Rationalizations for Cohabiting and How to Debunk Them
- Some Underlying Reasons for Cohabiting that Should Be Addressed
- Risks of Living Together
- The Profile of Typical Cohabiting Couples
- The Church's Responsibility
- A Proven Way to Help Cohabiting Couples
- The Importance and Role of Mentor Couples

GIVEAWAYS ARE AVAILABLE!



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“One of our primary goals is to put a tool into the hands of clergy who feel ill-equipped to address the growing number of cohabiting couples who ask to be married,” write Mike and Harriet McManus. “Most seminaries do not adequately prepare students to handle this issue. As a result, many pastors are unacquainted with how to deal with cohabiting couples—so they avoid the issue, unwittingly contributing to our nation’s high divorce rate.”

Also included in **LIVING TOGETHER** is a strategy to help any church to divorce-proof their marriages with thorough marriage preparation and by enriching existing marriages, restoring troubled ones, helping the separated to reconcile and stepfamilies to be successful. The last chapter outlines how the churches of 220 cities have adopted Community Marriage Policies that have reduced metro-wide divorce and cohabitation rates by a third, and raised marriage rates.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

MIKE AND HARRIET MCMANUS founded a premarital marriage ministry that pioneered the training of Marriage Mentors with a 97% success rate, are co-founders of Marriage Savers, an organization that has worked with 10,000 pastors and priests to create Community Marriage Policies. They have three grown sons, six grandchildren and live in the Washington, D.C. area.

Mike McManus has written *Ethics & Religion*, a syndicated newspaper column, since 1981.

LIVING TOGETHER

By Mike and Harriet McManus

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“We are living at a time when the very idea of biblical marriage is under attack. We need to help our young people understand what true marriage is, and why they should ‘accept no substitutions.’...Mike and Harriet McManus have a proven record...Their book is designed for pastors, parents and marital mentors who are confronted with couples who think they’ll be the glorious exception to the cohabitation statistics.”

--Chuck Colson, from his Foreword to **LIVING TOGETHER**

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